

spark!

**KICK
STARTING
CAREERS**

**A high quality and youth-centred
Kickstart placement**



About Spark!



Spark! is a charity with 40 years experience working in partnership with schools, communities and alongside a large and diverse range of local and national employers.

We support young people's employability skills, knowledge development, and experience, **so that they are better prepared for and able to effectively transition into the workplace,** finding and keeping a job.

We provide:

- **high quality work experience placements and internships**
- **inspiring careers mentoring relationships**
- **a diverse range of employability skills development opportunities**
- **an online careers platform**

We believe it's possible for every young person to be ready and equipped to enter the world of work, and with youth unemployment rapidly rising, there's never been a more important time for our services.

A high quality, youth-centred placement



- 1. Clarity of business need**
- 2. Youth friendly recruitment**
- 3. Meaningful roles and responsibilities**
- 4. Flexible terms of employment**
- 5. Organisation wide support**
- 6. Integral training, development and career progression**

What young people say they want from Kickstart

- **A supportive environment**
Mentoring, buddying, recognising individuals needs
- **Opportunity to develop skills**
Building employability skills, role specific skills and functions
- **Flexibility**
Consideration of personal circumstances, e.g. caring responsibilities, travel limitations, etc
- **Help with career aspirations**
Linking experiences with transferable skills and career progression

Programme design

1. Clarity of business need

While it's vital to stay youth-centred, it's important to be clear on benefits to the business as well.

Ask yourself:

- Why is the business offering the placement? What are our motivations?
- Are these Kickstart positions new, i.e. not to replace existing workforce?
- Do these jobs have genuine responsibilities that will aid our business, going beyond menial office and administrative tasks?
- Is this an opportunity to develop talent pipelines, and could there be potential permanent roles after the placements end?

Programme design

2. Youth friendly recruitment

- Make the job advert **appealing and accessible for young people**
- **Link the role to developing career** aspirations and core transferable work skills
- Keep it simple, only include pertinent information and avoid jargon. Be **clear & concise**:
 - a. Who you are and what you do?
 - b. What is the job and what will a typical day look like?
 - c. What professional experience will they gain?
 - d. What transferable skills will they develop?
 - e. What support you will be providing for them on placement?
 - f. Your commitment to inclusion and diversity
 - g. Terms of employment, e.g. hours, pay, benefits
- **Clear on recruitment process.** CV's and cover letters are more accessible than forms
- Consider how you can **make the interview process more informal** & cover any costs
- Provide **constructive feedback** when rejecting applicants, and signpost to support

Programme design

3. Meaningful roles and responsibilities

- Be sure there is a **clear role and clarity on their objectives**. Responsibilities that will help to fulfil business priorities, while also allowing the young person to develop.
- A regular updated and **clear to-do-list** will help keep them on task and feeling good about their progress.
- While they will have a specific role to undertake, **provide time with colleagues to understand other areas of the business**, and to develop professional relationships.
- Don't forget that while they have a job to do, the placement is a chance for them to build their employability skills, so opportunities to **practice their communication skills, team working, and problem-solving** is essential.
- Be aware that the young person may be nervous and experiencing anxiety, this might be their first time in a job, or their first time in a long while, so **be patient and provide tasks, guidance and support as appropriate**.

Programme design

4. Flexible terms of employment

- Kickstart provides funding for 25 hours per week at the minimum wage.
 - For **18 to 20 year olds** this is £6.45 per hour, which will equal **£161 per week**
 - For **21 to 24 year olds** this is £8.20 per hour, which will equal **£205 per week**
- There may be financial barriers for some young people to work, including travel costs, lunch costs and purchasing appropriate clothes. Consider whether your business can top up their hours and/or their salary to the **Living Wage**.
 - UK wide: £9.30 per hour
 - **London: £10.75 per hour**
- They may face **additional barriers** that has led to their unemployment, for example; caring responsibilities, travel limitations, hidden disabilities, mental health issues, etc.
 - Be mindful of these and build in **flexibility to accommodate barriers**, for example; flexible hours, home working, adapting the role to meet needs
 - Ensure you and your colleagues **do not show any judgement** towards the young person for their employment history and personal challenges they have faced.

Programme design

5. Organisation wide support

Ensuring staff investment in the Kickstart scheme across your organisation:

You will need:

- **A work placement lead**

Responsible for the programme design, liaising with gateway organisation, support candidates outcomes and responsibility for problems and safeguarding.

- **A line manager/supervisor** (ideally with experience of supporting young people)

Daily check-in's and be clear on the programme aims and outcomes. Coordinating other colleagues across the business to support.

- **A mentor or buddy**

Someone in addition to the supervisor who the Kickstart employee can relate to, have catch-ups with, share and discuss any concerns.

- **Additional support from other colleagues**

Colleagues from other business functions who may provide shadowing and development opportunities.

Programme design

6. Training, development and progression support

- Young people will present different needs, challenges and behaviours. For some it may be their first experience of employment, so **do not assume their level of knowledge of the working world**.
- Get to know each young person and their individual needs to **customise support** on their journey towards sustained employment.
- **Provide thorough technical training and support** as part of their on-boarding process, including IT and phone systems, policies and procedures. Be willing to repeat this if needed.
- Be **clear on professional expectations**, including time keeping, dress code, appropriate language, etc.
- Build in time to **develop their employability skills**, particularly communications, team work and problem solving.
- Build in time to **develop their work readiness**, particularly CV writing, interview skills, job searching and applying for jobs.
- Provide **opportunities and space for reflective practice and goal setting**, possibly with their 'buddy'
- Be willing to **support their pastoral needs**, including balancing home and work life, challenges with colleague relationships, maintaining motivation, etc
- Towards the end of their placement provide **support and time for job hunting** and attending interviews

Example weekly structure

Every employer will have different priorities and schedules their Kickstart employee/s, however it is important that their week is divided between work related activity and development

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
10.00	Morning check-in Kickstart employees check-in with their supervisor to be clear about the day's tasks and expectations				
10.30	Daily job tasks		Daily job tasks		Daily job tasks
11.30	Meet/shadow a colleague	Daily job tasks	Meet/shadow a colleague	Daily job tasks	Meet/shadow a colleague
12.15	Lunch				
1.15	Daily job tasks	Daily job tasks	Daily job tasks	Daily job tasks	Daily job tasks
2.30	Training & development	Project based activity	Training & development	Project based activity	Training & development
3.30	Reflection and feedback Time at the end of the day to reflect on what they have achieved, what they have learnt, and what they can improve				
4.00	End of day				

And finally

Ensure you and your colleagues are aware that while the young person on placement will be a member of your staff, with job responsibilities to fulfil, **this is primarily an employment transition programme.**

Developing the young person's employability skills has its own merit, but **if they end up back in long-term unemployment, the initiative will essentially have been unsuccessful.**

So all partners, including, the employer, the gateway organisation, and the employability support provider, must be **working towards the goal of the young people finding and keeping a job.**

spark!

**KICK
STARTING
CAREERS**

