

Inspire to Work

spark!
KICK
STARTING
CAREERS





Who?

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 **employability and careers platform**
- supported **transitions into employment**

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

About Woodbridge Park Education Service



WPES are a multi-site Alternative Provision based in the London Borough of Hounslow, offering tailored education and support to learners who are not in a position to be in a mainstream school.

WPES sets high expectations for themselves and the learners. Their approach is founded on a deep understanding of the need to be emotionally stable and socially engaged to be able to benefit from the vast choices that life can offer.

The foundation of the school's work is in **building strong, stable relationships**, ensuring all their learners are provided with **warmth, compassion, and trust**, with clear social boundaries. WPES want for every single child a future full of choice, freedom and a good standard of living. By focusing on **developing personal resilience, self-esteem, self-regulation and strong relationships**; not only do they set their learners up for formal learning, we also set them up for a more productive, successful life.

WPES works across multiple sites; The Bridge Primary Centre, Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4, and their CATE Centre, which takes **a holistic and nurturing approach for students who, due to mental health and medical issues, are unable to access mainstream education.**



Why?

The need

Every year, by the Easter following their final year at Woodbridge Park, **30-40% of the young people have dropped out of their post-16 destination**, due to low resilience and personal challenges.

Identification of a high risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) by age 16/17, and not addressed, makes it far **more likely that these young people will not be in productive employment** or further training at age 18.

Evidence shows that these young people **benefit from relevant, meaningful relationships** that build trust and foster sustained engagement.

They also **benefit from a meaningful curriculum offer**, grounded in real world learning.

Engaging them at age 15 with a **relevant and accessible career pathway** will enable them to **connect their curriculum learning with the real world of work**, and develop a vocational area of interest.

This will make it far **more likely that the learners will remain engaged**, and will be able to **sustain their employment** by age 18 and beyond

'Inspire to Work' beneficiaries

All students on roll have been excluded from mainstream education for a variety of reasons and have severe barriers to educational engagement and transitions into sustained education, employment or training.

The young people in the main have the following profile:

- history of poor attendance at school
- low attainment
- a background of childhood adversity, trauma and toxic stress
- weak literacy, numeracy and communication skills
- vulnerability to criminal and sexual exploitation
- high risk of becoming NEET

'Inspire to Work' will be delivered with up to 10 to 15 Year 11 students, with the objective to extend delivery to all Year 11s the following year.

'Inspire to Work' objectives summary

1. Participating students will engage in a part-time, long-term, and relevant internship, to
 - Improve young people's employability skills and work readiness skills
 - raise young people's career aspirations and confidence
 - achieve an employability qualification (to be finalised)
 - successfully transition to a relevant post-16 course, apprenticeship, training or employment
 - remain engaged in an apprenticeship, training, or employment, until the age of 18
2. Local businesses will feel confident working with this demographic of young people, and see the benefits of sustained long-term relationships with Alternative Provisions and their students.
3. A new Alternative Provision careers curriculum model is developed, tested, scaled and embedded across WPES, and promoted to other Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provisions, across West London and beyond.



What?

Theory of Change - young people



Programme Activities

School-based employability workshops

Pre-internship curriculum design and support plans

Industry insight visits

One day a week work placements

Ongoing pastoral support and guidance

Programme Outputs

10 to 15 Year 11 students participate in year 2 pilot (22/23)

All Year 11 pupils participate in year 3 launch (23/24)

Short term outcomes

1. Young people have increased knowledge of:
 - Careers opportunities across a variety of sectors
 - Local labour markets and local employers
2. Young people have a greater understanding of:
 - What different job roles entail
 - The career path they are interested in pursuing
3. Young people have improved their:
 - Ability to solve problems, in a professional setting
 - Ability to communicate effectively, in a professional setting
 - Ability to work in teams, in a professional setting
4. Young people believe they can get a job in the future
5. Young people feel more able to apply for a job
6. Young people are more able to cope with setback and challenges
7. Young people feel more positive about their future
8. Young people feel more confident in their ability to work in a professional setting
9. Young people are more likely to engage in careers support

Long-term outcomes

1. Young people have established goals for the careers
2. Young people have improved skills which help them to gain employment
3. Young people have improved access to a range of education and employment pathways
4. Young people from WPES who have engaged in the work placements are all in employment, education or training at the age of 21.

Long-term goal

Young people from within Alternate Provisions have an increased likelihood of transitions into sustained employment, education or training.

Programme Enablers

Placements are of high quality, providing young people with access to multiple business functions

Young people are well-prepared for the world of work

Young people have access to ongoing support for non-work related issues

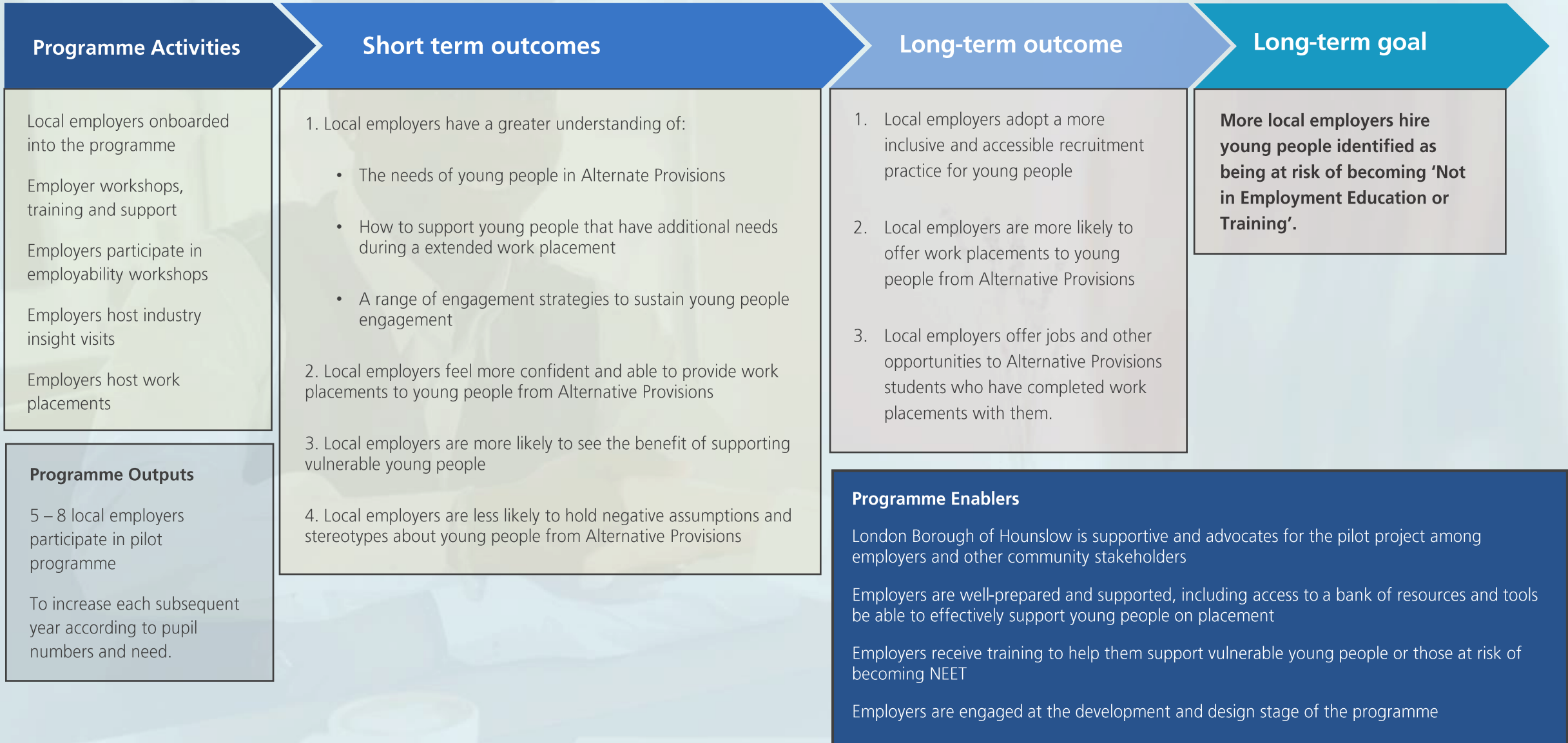
Parents/guardians are engaged and supportive of the programme

Young people engage at the development and design stage of the programme

Young people are matched with appropriate employers

AP staff are well prepared and knowledgeable about young people and employer needs

Theory of Change - employers





How?

Programme structure

Activity	Time	Support and training
1. In-school workshop (before)	Approximately 2 hours	A short briefing call prior to workshop with all employers and school staff.
Spark! will facilitate the workshop, to explore career options, develop employability skills, and network with the host employers. Baseline surveys will also be completed.		
2. Workplace visits and tours	Approximately 3 hours	Scheduling and planning visit. School staff supervise visit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spark! will work with the employers to structure the visit, and to co-host on the day. • The young people will be welcomed by the employer host, given a tour of the workplace, and introduced to key personnel who can tell them a bit about their work. • Employer’s colleagues will join the group in a meeting room, to explore in more depth about their roles, challenges and pathways into employment. • Young people will be given a short business challenge or activity to complete, providing a taste of typical projects, and to develop employability skills. 		
3. Internship placements	1 day a week for up to 30 weeks. Placement will initially just be morning, with the aim to become a full day after 3 or 4 weeks. OCN accredited Level 1 Employability qualification	Guidance and ongoing support from Spark! Pastoral support for young person, and regular visits from school staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers will be matched with a young person as best as possible based on interest and career aspirations. All employers will be risk assessed, and health & safety compliant. • Spark! will be support employers with guidance and resources throughout, and help to create the placement structure. • Employers and school to arrange a time to meet at the workplace, to let young person know specifics of the job role and expectations, including location, day of work and hours. • Employers will support and supervise the young person on the days they are working. With the addition of a named ‘Buddy’ for them to ask for help or support. • Ideally all young people will be on placement on the same day each week. • School staff will visit a number of times over the placement to motivate young people, check on how they are performing, and to support with any challenges. 		
4. In-school workshop (after)	Approximately 2 hours	A short briefing call prior to workshop with all employers and school staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spark! will facilitate the workshop, to reflect on learnings, further develop employability skills, and set career goals. Endpoint surveys will also be completed. • The workshop will be followed by a celebration and graduation event, attended by the young people, families, employers and school staff. • Young people will be offered a further one-to-one with a Spark! Employability Champion, to help them identify options for post-school transitions, including FE and apprenticeship pathways. Further employer engagement opportunities can also be coordinated to support with CVs, interview skills, and job applications. 		

Key objectives of each stage

1: School based-workshop and one-to-ones (before)

Facilitated by Spark! staff, with employer volunteers supporting

- Build relationships between students and employers
- Create clarification on student employment aspirations
- Understand and begin to develop employability skills (SkillsBuilder)
- Explore strengths and development areas
- Set expectations for all participants
- Explore and address challenges and concerns

2: Industry insight visits

Facilitated by host employers, with Spark! and WPES staff supporting

- Clarity on role and responsibilities
- Build confidence in a professional work environment
- Utilise and test employability skills

3: Internship placements

- Develop vital and transferable employability skills
- Broaden horizons of potential employment and career opportunities
- Build social capital
- Become more able to cope with setback and challenges
- To feel more positive about their future
- To feel more confident in their ability to work in a professional setting
- Secure a relevant employability qualification

4: School based-workshop (after)

Facilitated by Spark! staff, with employer volunteers supporting

- Young people believe they can get a job in the future
- Young people feel more able to apply for a job
- Further develop employability skills
- Set clear career goals and post-education pathways

Employer partners (2021/22 – 2022/23)





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