



Inspiring the Future:

the quick and free way to find employee volunteers to give career insight talks to young people in your school or college

What is *Inspiring the Future*?

Inspiring the Future is a new England-wide free service which will see people from all sectors and professions volunteering to go into state secondary schools and colleges to talk about their jobs, careers, and the education routes they took.

Who volunteers?

Everyone from apprentices to CEOs volunteer for *Inspiring the Future* and thousands of people have already done so across the country. Volunteers include people doing a huge range of jobs for employers small and large. Employers such as the BBC, the NHS, the civil service, British Gas and Virgin Trains are actively encouraging their staff to sign up. Volunteers include both younger new recruits and experienced employees, each able to give their own, useful perspectives to pupils.

How it works

Volunteers sign up securely online. They give their job title, occupational sector, details of where they work and are prompted to provide two or three paragraphs about what they do, the route they took into their job and whether they feel especially knowledgeable about apprenticeships, setting up their own business/social enterprise or use of modern foreign languages in the workplace. They select local authority areas where they are willing to visit schools.

When teaching staff log on to the system, they get the list of all those people registered in their area and it's a simple process to send an email through the system to get in touch. Criminal Records Bureau checks are not needed for 'career insight' talks, so it is a quick and simple process.

Visit <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/employers.aspx> to watch a two minute video on how the registration process works.

From July 2012

Over time the intention is to expand *Inspiring the Future* to cover a wider range activities, identifying employers and employee volunteers willing to support state schools and colleges in other areas, for example, through workplace visits.



How schools and colleges are using employee volunteers identified through *Inspiring the Future*?

There are many case studies and related learning resources connected to the use of employee volunteers in career talks at: www.inspiringthefuture.org. Here are some of the most common ways that schools use volunteers to help support the learning and progression of children and young people.

Careers Fairs

Inspiring the Future (ITF) is designed to make it easy for state schools to run their own career's fairs. This usually takes the form of a careers marketplace where between 20 and 60 adults sit in a school hall (with names and job titles) perhaps in colour coded zones and the students simply walk round to talk to them about the job they do, the education and training routes they took and ask for advice on working in that sector or job. The school or college find the volunteers for the careers fair by picking from the list on *Inspiring the Future* and can send either a group email from the ITF system about their event to all or invite volunteers individually. This simple format works for all ages from 11 – 18. Careers Fairs are seen as especially helpful to young people approaching key decision points about options and transitions (Year 9, 11 and 12/13). While older pupils tend to use career fairs to explore and investigate their own interests, younger pupils are often benefit from being encouraged to speak to a wide variety of people through games and projects.

Inspiring the Future employee volunteers can use their creativity and bring things to demonstrate the work they do and even let the pupils have a go at the activity. Volunteers can use games, quizzes, puzzles and run competitions to highlight their job, profession or sector. For example, an advertising agency might offer a competition to design a logo or write a slogan and have a non-monetary prize such as a day work shadowing someone in their office.

Career Networking

A variation on the Careers Fair is a networking event which borrows its format from speed-dating. Here, employee volunteers sit at tables around a hall and young people in groups of 1 or 2 spend 5-7 minutes with each volunteer, at the end of which time is called and they move on. An advantage of Career Networking is that it requires young people to speak to adults, developing their confidence and verbal communication. It can work especially well for Year 9s and Year 11s who are considering their next steps and may need encouraging to ensure they get as much as possible about the opportunities presented.

Options evenings

Some schools invite employee volunteers to come along to options evenings to speak to pupils and parents about the value of different qualifications alone and/or in combinations.

'Career insight' talks

Career insight talks normally last 20 to 40 minutes followed by an informal Q & A session with often older pupils (at F E College or sixth form) or in Year 11. Two or three speakers could talk on a theme like apprenticeships or careers related to a subject of study. Such talks are often held at lunchtime and jobs/employers may have been researched in advance.

CV and Interview techniques: workshops

Inspiring the Future employee volunteers can help schools and colleges to host CV workshops and job interview practice sessions where employers of all sectors can offer their professional experience to pupils and help them develop their skills. Some schools run career exploration and CV development sessions within PSHE lessons.

What's my line?

Many primary schools seek employee volunteers to come in to speak to pupils about the jobs they do to support aspiration raising. A popular activity in primary schools is the *What's my line?* game where pupils try to guess what volunteers do for a living.

'Enterprise insight' talks

People running their own businesses or working with entrepreneurs can talk to young people in state secondary schools about the practicalities of creating a start-up business or social enterprise.

Curriculum enrichment

Many teaching staff are looking for employee volunteers to come into the classroom to talk to young people about the application of theory and practice in the workplace. The *Inspiring the Future* network contains a wide range of professionals with good insight into careers of direct relevance to classroom study. A marketing specialist, for example, might talk to classes studying business or English language.

Making the most of employee volunteers

In signing up to *Inspiring the Future*, employee volunteers are saying that they are happy to be approached to speak to young people in state schools and colleges about the job they do and the route they took into it. They may not be able to respond positively to every request, but in signing up have indicated that they are very happy to be asked. To maximise the chances of them responding favourably and coming back again...

1. Be clear about what you would like them to do and when and where it will take place. If you don't know all the details yet, be honest and open to asking their advice.
2. Give them enough notice of your event: 3-6 weeks ideally and look after them when they are with you.
3. Offer advice on talking to teenagers, as they may not be familiar with the age group. Indicate the extent of the pupils knowledge in the area under discussion.
4. Give clear directions to your location and offers to help with parking are always

Why it matters: a lot of little goes a long way. In 2011, YouGov surveyed a representative sample of 986 young Britons aged 19 to 24 and asked them about their experiences of employer contacts whilst in school. The surveyed showed that the 435 (check) young people who had access to careers talks from employers whilst in education (between the ages of 14 and 19) valued them highly, especially where they heard from employers on three occasions or more.

	Percentages agreeing that the career talks were useful to them in...		
Frequency of careers talks	Deciding on a career	Getting a job after leaving education	Getting into higher education
1-2 times	56% (with 9% saying very useful)	38% (with 7% saying very useful)	36% (with 8% saying very useful)
3+ times	88% (with 28% saying very useful)	70% (with 24% saying very useful)	58% (with 21% saying very useful)

Why it matters: it's who you meet. The same survey tested for statistically significant correlations between the total number of employer contacts experienced at school (including careers talks) and outcomes as young adults. The survey found that those young adults who were in full-time work and who had experienced four or more contacts whilst at school earned, on average, £3,600 more than peers with similar qualifications and ages who had experienced no such contacts. Asked if they were NEET or in Education, Employment or Training between 19 and 24, the survey found that after statistical controls had been put in place, significant links between status and number of contacts experienced.

Taskforce/YouGov survey			Some schools and colleges arrange for their students (aged between 14 and 19) to take part in activities which involve employers or local business people providing things like work experience, mentoring, enterprise competitions, careers advice, CV or interview practice. On how many different occasions do you remember such employer involvement in your education?				
Sample Size: 986							
Fieldwork: February 2011 (Great Britain)			0	1	2	3	4 or more
Which of the following BEST applies to you?	NEETs	%	26.1%	23.4%	16.6%	15.6%	4.3%
	Non-NEET	%	73.9%	76.6%	83.4%	84.4%	95.7%
Weighted Number			272	350	145	64	69

Explaining the results

Analysis suggests that, in general, young people have poor understandings of the character of labour market and the breadth of career opportunities that exist. Young people listen to employers they come into contact with especially closely and speaking to them helps significantly to broaden their aspiration and build insights into the combination of skills, qualification and experience relevant to specific occupational areas. Employer contacts help them to see the value of learning and make informed decisions about their options and other choices. It also gives them first-hand experience of interacting with adults, building communication and employability skills.

Read more: Mann, A (2012), *It's who you meet: why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults*. London: Education and Employers Taskforce.