

Employer Guide

How to create a youth-friendly Kickstart programme



This resource supports employers and gateway organisations in creating Kickstart Programmes.

We have consulted with young people in our network to explore what a good Kickstart Programme would look like to them. Their insights are embedded in this guidance.





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WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT FROM KICKSTART

THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR AMBASSADOR NETWORK TOLD US WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE FROM EACH KICKSTART PROGRAMME:

- Opportunities to be inclusive - disability confident and diversity aware
- Opportunities to be supportive - to include mentoring, buddying, recognising an individual's needs
- Opportunities that develop skills - building on key employability skills, but also skills to perform certain roles and functions
- Opportunities that are flexible - consider personal circumstances such as caring responsibilities, travel limitations
- Opportunities that will help future career aspirations - where experiences can be linked and transferable skills utilised

To get more insight around the needs and challenges facing young people and what they have told us good looks like to them:



[You can read the Youth Voice Census](#)



[You can visit our Work Experience Pages](#)



ABOUT KICKSTART

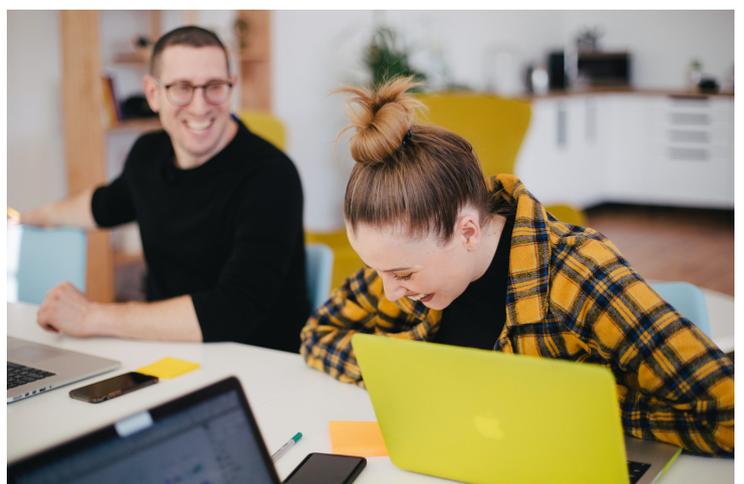
Kickstart is a government funded scheme that provides financial support for organisations who wish to offer paid work experience opportunities to young people. It is a programme that has been developed in the wake of Covid-19 and the impending youth unemployment increase caused by the pandemic.

Kickstart is one element of the *#PlanForJobs* which was announced by the Treasurer in the summer of 2020.

Whilst Kickstart provides both employers and young people an excellent opportunity it is important to ensure that a quality experience is at the core of every placement. The purpose of the programme is to help young unemployed people build their knowledge and experience of the world of work and hopefully lead them on into successful careers.

Some of the young people who will benefit from the programme will have been unemployed and outside of education or training for several months, they may be young people that experience multiple barriers and have already been scarred by the impact of long periods of unemployment. Businesses who are passionate about creating good quality opportunities for young people will benefit from developing a quality programme that builds on existing good youth employment practice.

[Youth Employment UK](#) is home to the [Youth Friendly Employer](#) Badge which is underpinned by the Principles of Good Youth Employment. As an organisation we are able to provide free support and guidance to employers to help them develop their youth employment strategy.





WORKING WITH KICKSTART GATEWAY ORGANISATIONS & PARTNERS

As part of the Kickstart Programme you could either be working directly with DWP and your local JobCentre or a Kickstart Gateway Organisation who will support your activities. In either case you should take responsibility for the quality of the programme and that the Kickstart Candidates have the best possible experience to help them to progress in life.

You can also choose to bring in specialist partners who can offer support around programme design, mentoring and the final completion sessions. This might be referred to as Wraparound Support.

There will be a lot of youth organisations and charities able to support you and you may consider working with a specialist organisation that can support young people with additional needs and challenges. Please do get in touch with [Youth Employment UK](#) who can signpost you to some of our trusted partners to support your programme.

Useful links:

- [Kickstart Gateway Organisations](#)
- [Kickstart website](#)
- [Employer Advice](#)
- [Download the Good Youth Employment Charter for a list of supporting organisations](#)





PROGRAMME DESIGN

Developing a quality work experience programme takes time, the programme quality will be all the stronger for some early planning.

Things to think about in the programme design:

WHAT THE BUSINESS NEED IS-

It is useful to understand why the business is offering the placements, is it a way to attract and develop future talent, because there is a job that needs doing or because there is a wider CSR objective?

The intention behind Kickstart is not to fulfil what would normally be a real job within a business but to offer new work experience opportunities to young people. The Kickstart Candidates are there to learn about the world of work and grow their skills and confidence, great if they can experience the real responsibilities of a job but it is important to remember that they are not there to replace workforce staff.

Used in the right way kickstart could help to develop future talent pipelines, it is a great opportunity to introduce young people to the various roles within a business and the different types of operations. From here young people will hopefully find out what sort of career they would like to move into and that process may result in your organisation finding some incredible talent to nurture into permanent roles.

Running Kickstart as a CSR programme is a valuable activity, ensuring that the outcome is for young people to feel more confident and secure about their futures is great ambition. Not to say you won't also find some great future talent for your business or industry too.

THE PLACEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES-

Young people want to feel valued when they engage in work placements and work activities. At this stage in their careers they are likely to have had limited experience of the different sectors and roles that exist within a business.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

Where it is possible to do so, having young people rotate or spend time across different business functions will be highly valuable. But it is also important that they do have a clear role to play and can see that they are making some progress against a to do list.

You might consider bringing in young people to undertake a specific job function but provide some time each day to learn about the rest of the organisation and to shadow colleagues in other areas of the business. Explore the possibility of the Kickstart Candidate being involved in some sort of project activity whilst they are on their programme with you.

As you think about the role and responsibilities consider the types of young people that may benefit from your placement, is this an inclusive opportunity and will you be able to offer it to someone with limited education or experience, someone who may have additional needs or barriers?

We encourage [Youth Friendly Employers](#) to think about the inclusivity of their opportunities as part of the [Creating Opportunity & Recognising Talent Principle](#)

THE HOURS OF WORK, PAY, SUBSISTENCE AND TRAVEL SUPPORT

Kickstart provides funding for the placement candidate to work 25 hours per week at the minimum wage rate.

You can develop a programme that meets the 25 hours per week or decide to offer the Kickstart Candidate full time hours. You can also make the decision to increase the pay rate and support the Kickstart Candidate with any other costs - subsistence or travel.

For some young people a barrier to work can be the pay rate and the costs associated with the opportunity. If you are earning £113.75 per and there are travel costs, lunch costs and a possible need to buy additional clothing it can all add up. For young people from disadvantaged backgrounds this may be the difference between being able to accept a great opportunity or not.

We encourage the [Youth Friendly Employers](#) in our network to explore the potential barriers that there may be to their opportunities for some young people, and see how they can remove these barriers as part of our [Fair Employment Principle](#).



POSSIBLE STAFF SUPPORT REQUIRED -

A Kickstart Programme will need a number of internal colleagues involved in the process to ensure its success. Whilst one or two people may have multiple roles from the list below it is useful to spend time thinking about who will have responsibility for these functions and what they need from the business or externally to make their role a success.

Role	Function/Responsibilities	Considerations
Work placement Lead	The internal sponsor of the programme, responsible for the programme design, liaising with gateway organisation or DWP direct, responsible for funding and partners being brought in to support candidates, outcomes and responsibility for problems, safeguarding	Does the lead understand all aspects of the role, the network of support and have support from the business, does the lead understand safeguarding and the responsibilities to the young person? If hiring young people who may have additional needs does the lead have the skills/knowledge to support
Line Manager/Supervisor of candidate	Direct supervisor of the candidate, will lead daily check-in's and be clear on the programme aims and outcomes. Authority to coordinate other colleagues across the business to support the Kickstart Programme.	Does this person have experience in working with young people, possible need for line manager training?
Mentor or Buddy	Someone in addition to the supervisor who the candidate can relate to, have catch-ups with, share any concerns.	Ideally this person should be relatable to the candidate. Have some support to understand the role of a mentor/buddy.
Additional Support	Colleagues from other business functions who may provide shadowing opportunities, or just spend some time with the candidate to share their business function and role. Any D&I, disability champions in the business who may support candidate and design of the Programme.	

We encourage and support [Youth Friendly Employers](#) to think about mentoring, setting clear expectations and ensuring that key staff are trained and supported to work with young people in this way as part of our [Developing People](#) Principle.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

OUTCOMES FOR THE PROGRAMME

Ahead of designing the programme you should also think about what the ideal outcomes would be for the Kickstart Candidate. Using these outcomes will help you think about the programme design.

We encourage [Youth Friendly Employers](#) to think about the way they can support and develop young people in their networks as part of the [Developing People](#) Principle.

Some suggested outcomes:

- A better understanding of the world of work (how the business operates, what the different functions are within the organisation, what the different roles are)
- Has experienced a job or multiple job functions and can talk about that experience and the skills required to complete it
- Has felt included and supported through the placement and grown in confidence
- Has felt that their voice has been heard and they have been able to feedback at different stages of the placement
- Has been able to think about their own future career, how they will be able to use the experience to build on their next steps
- Has had time to develop their key employability skills - communication, teamwork, problem solving etc
- Has had time to develop their Career Management Skills - CV writing, applying for jobs and interviewing
- Has got a positive reference from the experience to use in the future

Remember! [Youth Employment UK](#) can support you to develop your programme and also help to manage the Kickstart Candidate. Our [Young Professional](#) is a free online resource that the Kickstart Candidate can use to develop their employability and career management skills.

EXAMPLE PROGRAMME DESIGN

Consider using a placement workbook so that the Kickstart Candidate can have everything they need to know in one place. The workbook could also include opportunities for them to reflect back on the skills and knowledge they are learning, any feedback they receive and also be used to develop their key skills.

Remember! [Youth Employment UK](#) can support you with this type of workbook and planning

PROGRAMME DESIGN

During the 1st week you will need to run a full induction, using your own companies' induction plan, but there are other things to consider as part of your Kickstart Programme design:

INTRODUCTION TO THE BUSINESS AND THE BUILDING

- Who are you and what do you do?
- What happens in your building? Who else works there?
- Site tour - be sure to include toilets, break areas and discuss the expectations about using these facilities
- Meeting key colleagues - names can be hard to remember, this process might be useful to repeat, be sure that the Kickstart Candidate knows the names of the people that they are reporting to and who their buddy/mentor is

HEALTH AND SAFETY, KEY INFORMATION AND POLICIES

- Covid Safety
- Fire alarms and what to do in an emergency
- Go through your standard policies (IT, reporting problems, reporting absences etc)

INTRODUCTION TO THE ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Being very clear about your expectations for the role and the Kickstart Candidate is important
- Discuss the programme in more detail and the outcomes you expect from it and what the Kickstart Candidate can expect at the end of the programme

TRAINING

- Ensure that you provide training before you ask the Kickstart Candidate to complete any activity, this may include training on IT systems, using phone systems or any processes that they will be required to follow. Do not assume the Kickstart Candidate has any experience and be prepared to repeat the training. It might be useful to have them write things down or to prepare a training guide for them to work through.

We encourage and support [Youth Friendly Employers](#) to work with existing young staff to develop programmes and activity for other young people and to also get feedback from young people at regular stages as part of the [Youth Voice Principle](#).



PROGRAMME DESIGN

Example weekly schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Daily Check-In				
Kickstart Candidates should have time for a check-in with the supervisor to ensure that they are clear about the day ahead and what is expected of them, address any concerns and opportunities.				
Role Function	Role Function	Role Function	Role Function	Role Function
Meet another colleague/ department	Role Function	Meet another colleague/ department	Role Function	Meet another colleague/ department
Lunch				
Role Function	Role Function	Role Function	Role Function	Role Function
Key Skills Training: Use the Young Professional	Project Activity	Key Skills Training: Use the Young Professional	Project Activity	Key Skills Training: Use the Young Professional
Reflection and Feedback				
Kickstart Candidates should have some time at the end of the day to reflect on what they have done and give/receive any feedback				



MANAGING & SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important that young people in their early careers are supported properly. Just like any colleague can, young people will present with different needs, challenges, and behaviours. Some young people will be experiencing the world of work for the very first time.

This is why it is important to get to know each young person and their individual needs so that you can customise a programme to support them on their journey to work. It will be important to understand what support each young person needs, such as any additional needs, disabilities, mental health challenges that you can support them during the programme.

Line Managers/Supervisors will also need to understand what support is required at an individual level.

Remember! [Youth Employment UK](#) has Line Manager & Youth Friendly Recruiter Training that can help support colleagues working with young people. Make sure colleagues are also signed up to our [Youth Friendly Employer](#) Newsletter where we share insight, best practice guides and other support information.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER AND PLACES FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

- Safeguarding - we recommend [NSPCC Safeguard Training](#).
- [Mental Health First Aid Training](#)
- [Disability Confident Support](#)
- [Check out our Inclusion & Diversity resources including our webinars](#)





RECRUITMENT, JOB DESCRIPTIONS, OPPORTUNITY PROMOTION & SELECTION

RECRUITMENT

Thinking about how you will attract young people to your opportunities is an important part of the process. Whilst some of this will be managed by your local JobCentre and Work Coaches it will be useful to consider how you can make sure colleagues and young people know what your offer is.

We hear from young people that they ideally want to take part in placements that link to their career aspirations and will help to develop the core skills they need to progress. So setting out clearly who you are and what the opportunity is will smooth the way for the recruitment process to be as successful as possible.

You can watch our webinar on how to support young people in the recruitment process [here](#).

JOB DESCRIPTION

A Job Description is a good place to start to set out the opportunity to young people and help them to understand what will be expected of them and what they will be doing. For many young people some of the terminology you might use in the job description will be alien to them so keeping a job description jargon free is important.

Consider what young people might also need to know about the opportunities with your organisation and provide as much clear and concise information as you can:

- Who you are and what you do
- What the job is and what the candidate will be typically doing
- What they will gain from the experience (training, mentoring, transferable skills, support with next steps, a reference etc)
- What support is available and your commitment to inclusion and diversity
- Hours and Place of Work
- Additional information including pay & benefits
- That you are a [Youth Friendly Employer](#)

OPPORTUNITY PROMOTION

Your business might not necessarily appeal to young people or at least they may have the wrong perception about what it is and who works with you, or it simply just might not be a brand or business they know anything about.

We work with lots of employers who have this challenge, because of course there are hundreds of thousands of businesses in the UK, different sectors and some uniquely brilliant things that perhaps you could only know if you worked there.

This is why we have created the opportunity for organisations to have Employer Profiles on our site. These digital profiles become a bright, interactive place for us to help employers stand out and help young people get inspired by the opportunities that exist to them.

Visit our [Careers Hub](#) which is accessed by more than 100,000 young people a month and explore some of the brands there like [Coca-Cola](#), [Department of Health & Social Care](#), [McDonalds](#) and [St. James' Place](#) who work in partnership with us to inspire the next generation.

The screenshot displays the Youth Friendly Employer website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL - EARLY CAREERS', 'SEC APPRENTICESHIPS', 'SEC JOBS', and 'FOLLOW US ON'. The main content area features several employer profiles and career opportunities:

- Apprenticeships - September 2020:** Includes 'EVENTS & ENGAGEMENT APPRENTICESHIP' (Apply by 16th September 2020) and 'BUSINESS ADMIN APPRENTICESHIP (SOCIAL CARE)' (Apply by 6th September 2020).
- Fire Up Your Career With Surrey County Council:** Promotes 'Discover careers with Coca-Cola European Partners (CCEP)' and 'Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) Careers'. It includes a 'FIRE UP YOUR CAREER!' banner and sections for 'Why choose a career with us?' and 'Join us and get...'. The DHSC section asks 'What could you do at the DHSC?' and 'UK health needs you - whatever your interests and background are.'
- Explore our world of apprenticeships...:** Features 'Business Apprenticeships' and 'Field Sales App'.
- 3 ways to find a job with us at the DHSC:** Includes 'DHSC Health Policy Fast Track Scheme', 'Apply for Civil Service Jobs', and 'Apply for NHS Jobs'.

On the right side, there are vertical navigation menus for 'CAREER GUIDES', 'APPRENTICESHIPS', 'SELF-EMPLOYMENT', and 'GETTING A JOB'. A 'Youth Friendly Employer' logo is visible on the right side of the page.

SELECTION

This may be driven by the JobCentre and Work Coach you are working with, however, if you have an opportunity to interview a number of candidates or select candidates from a pool it is important to consider how you might do this.

Process

Will you expect a CV job application

Considerations

Some young people will have limited experience of writing & preparing an application or limited experience to share on the application.

Youth Friendly Employers

Youth Friendly Employers are encouraged to question why they use these methods and what they expect and are looking for. They are also encouraged to support the young applicants through the process, providing clear guides and expectations.

Interviews

Again young people will have limited experience, consider the anxiety and nerves that there may be and that this might be a first time experience for the young candidates.

Youth Friendly Employers are encouraged to think about the process, can it be a more informal meet and greet? How can the process become a learning opportunity? Make sure you have thought about the costs to attend an interview and access needs for young people who have disabilities or require additional support.

Selection

Rejection can be a hard pill for any of us to swallow, not least young people who have limited experience and may have struggled through the process. Consider how you approach this.

Youth Friendly Employers are encouraged to give detailed feedback after interviews, and also offer guidance or signposting so that there is a more positive outcome for the young candidate.

Feedback

The recruitment, application and interview process is quite an alien thing to young people. We know that not all young people have equal access to good quality careers support and unless they receive good feedback can end up in a loop of bad practice and rejections.

[We encourage Youth Friendly Employers to provide as much quality feedback and support at every stage as is possible. It can also be useful to have resources to signpost to young people.](#)

Remember the support Youth Employment UK offers free to 14-24 year olds includes [careers information, skill development and job hunting](#) so signpost to our services. Our [Looking for Work](#) is a fantastic downloadable interactive resource!

DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the process the Kickstart Candidates should be developing their knowledge of the world of work, their skills, experience and confidence. Remember the outcomes you set out in your programme design and the true purpose of Kickstart.

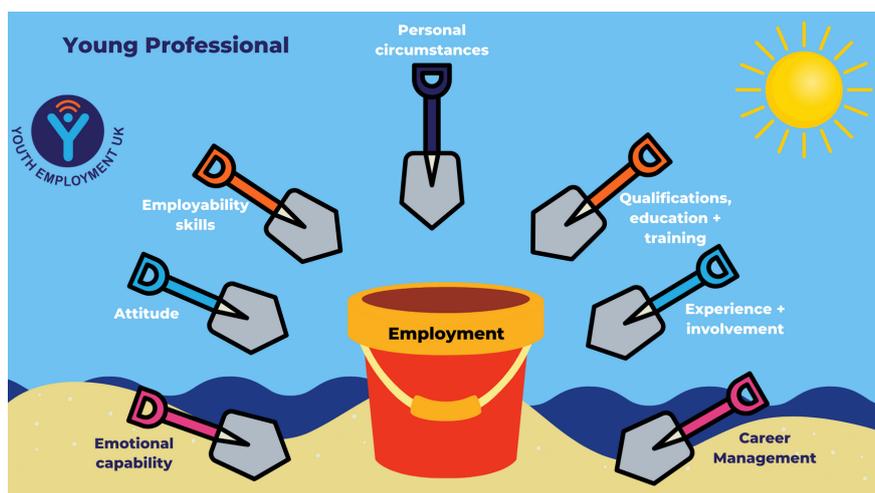
[Youth Employment UK](#) have developed the free [Young Professional Programme](#) as a resource for young people to help them on their journey to work. This can be used as part of your programme design free of charge and will provide you the reassurance that Kickstart Candidates are being supported during their time with you but also beyond it.

The Young Professional is based on the Journey to Employment Framework which identifies that young people need to grow 7 personal development areas in order to support their journey to work.

THESE 7 AREAS (OR BUCKETS AS WE THINK OF THEM) ARE:

- Personal Circumstances
- Attitudes
- Behaviours
- Employability Skills
- Qualifications
- Experience
- Career Management Skills

When the young person registers with the Young Professional they will complete a self assessment which will tell them where they are on their journey to work (how full their buckets are). From here they are given recommendations of resources, activities, videos, blogs and courses to complete in order to support their own personal development.



Young people can use the Young Professional resource to record activities and experiences as they progress and are able to share the results of their self assessment and activity logs with trusted adults. This becomes a great resource for supporting employers, work coaches, mentors or career advisers to see where else they can support the young person and evidence what progress has been made.

In addition as part of our KickStart resource we have also developed an interactive booklet that young people can be given to accompany their Kickstart Programme.

COMPLETION

A fundamental part of the Kickstart Programme is the end, ensuring that the Kickstart Candidate has the opportunity to reflect back on the experience with you and can move on to their next steps with confidence.

Of course you may over the course of the Programme decide that you want to offer a more permanent opportunity with your organisation. This would be a great outcome, but it would still be good practice to complete the Kickstart Programme properly.

The JobCentre and Work Coach that are supporting the Kickstart Candidate may want to be a part of the process and if the young person is not being offered further opportunities with you we would encourage them to be involved in these completion discussions.

You might want to consider a number of completion activities:

END OF PLACEMENT DEBRIEF

Provide detailed feedback to the Kickstart Candidate on how they have performed during their time with you, what has gone well and what development you have seen in them. Explore things that could have gone better and what areas they could think about working on. Ensure the Kickstart Candidate is also given the opportunity to feedback to you, understanding how young people experience your organisation, what has worked and not worked for them can add really valuable insight for your ongoing youth employment work.

CAREERS/NEXT STEP DISCUSSION

The placement candidate should now have a better understanding of the world of work and the types of career they would love or not! You may be able to provide some great advice and support to help them think through other options and next steps.

The Youth Employment UK [website](#) is packed with free and impartial careers information, including what training and education opportunities are available should the Kickstart Candidate want to retrain. There are also helpful articles around choosing a career if you have no idea and much more. Young people can also look through our database of [Youth Friendly Employers](#) and see if there are other opportunities available that might interest them.

The [National Careers Service](#) provides free and impartial advice and guidance to individuals and you could support the placement to make use of the service if they need further personalised and/or specialist guidance.

Ensure that their Work Coach is ready to support the Kickstart Candidate with a next step plan.

CV, JOB APPLICATION & INTERVIEW SUPPORT

It is important that young people know how to look for and apply for jobs. Our [Looking for Work book](#) and [website](#) are packed with information to help young people think through these complex areas.

If you as an employer can share your advice, review the Kickstart Candidates CV, particularly in light of the new experience, skills and behaviours they have acquired that will be a really valuable outcome for the young person.

You might have some personal experience or networks that can be useful to the young person so spending some time 1-2-1 with the Kickstart Candidate will boost their confidence and knowledge.

Some employers will look to run practice interview sessions with the Kickstart Candidates, these are great ways to practice what they have learnt. But please remember to provide some training ahead of the practice interview so that the Kickstart Candidates can perform as well as possible in the mock session.

Remember! if you are thinking about keeping in touch with the Kickstart Candidate via LinkedIn or other tools you need to ensure that this is done in a safe and responsible manner. Check your own HR, Safeguarding and Data Protection Policies and make sure that you remove any of the candidates data inline with GDPR regulations.

PREPARATION OF A WRITTEN REFERENCE

Taking some time to write up a reference for the Kickstart Candidate will be really helpful, a good written reference or testimonial will boost the Kickstart Candidates self esteem and allow them to approach different opportunities with additional assets.

If you used the [Youth Employment UK](#) - Kickstart Workbook there is an opportunity at the back of the workbook for you to add in a reference and the book has been designed so that the Kickstart Candidate can take it with them to future interviews.



FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH US

→ SIGN UP TO THE [YOUTH FRIENDLY EMPLOYER BADGE](#) AND BEGIN EMBEDDING AND BEING RECOGNISED FOR YOUR GOOD YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE

→ VISIT OUR [EXTENSIVE LIBRARY OF FREE RESOURCES](#) AND INFORMATION, INCLUDING WEBINARS AND DOWNLOADABLE GUIDES

→ [FIND OUT](#) HOW WE CAN SUPPORT THE JOURNEY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON KICKSTART PLACEMENTS WITH YOU

→ TALK TO US ABOUT AN [EMPLOYER PROFILE](#) WHERE WE CAN BRING YOUR BRAND AND OPPORTUNITIES TO LIFE AND PROVIDE MORE CUSTOMISED SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE TO YOUR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT WORK

→ [ASK ABOUT](#) OUR TRAINING FOR LINE MANAGERS AND YOUTH FRIENDLY RECRUITMENT CERTIFICATES

youthemployment.org.uk

info@youthemployment.org.uk

01536 333390