SOCIAL MOBILITY BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

A Briefing on Connecting Young Talent to Local Employers to Produce Place-Based Economic Growth

September 2026

Executive Summary

The United Kingdom faces a persistent productivity crisis that threatens long-term economic growth. A central component of this challenge is the enduring gap between the skills young people acquire in education and those demanded by employers. The impact of this gap is a key reason why c.1m 16–24 year-olds are not in education, employment or training (**NEET**) and those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds are 130% more likely to be NEET than average (House of Commons Library publication 27 August 2026: SN06705.pdf).

In person workplace experience is widely recognised as a critical bridge between education and employment, yet provision remains deeply unequal with opportunities clustered in a small number of major conurbations and accessible largely to those with parents/guardians who have contacts within local employers of scale. This is compounded if they live in rural or coastal communities where there are less large employers who have the operational resource to provide work experience and journey times on public transport make accessing opportunities, if they do exist, challenging.

Whilst remote work experience has its place, issues of access to devices (for those from low-income backgrounds) and connectivity (in rural and coastal areas) persist and most online based schemes do not connect local employers directly to the participants (see Appendix A below for consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of different work experience models) given they are usually provided by large corporates or professional services firms headquartered in London.

This briefing sets out the scale and nature of the problem, surveys the landscape of organisations working to connect young people to workplaces, and proposes a proven, scalable and cost-effective solution: the **Career Pathways Partnership (CPP)**, delivered in conjunction with the Careers and Enterprise Company (**CEC**) using the model developed by the registered charity, the Social Mobility Business Partnership (**SMBP**).

The CPP model directly addresses the Government's commitment to two weeks of work experience for every young person by providing the operational infrastructure, employer network and safeguarding framework that schools currently lack. By embedding delivery locally and connecting students to employers in their own communities, it offers a place-based approach to growth that develops talent where the UK's economic revival is most needed.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you.

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The Problem — Workplace Experience and Young People

1.1 The Productivity Challenge

The UK continues to face a persistent productivity issue which remains the single greatest long-term obstacle to sustained economic growth. According to the Office for National Statistics, UK labour productivity (output per hour worked) in Q3 2025 was estimated to be around 20% below the USA, continuing a sluggish trend that has persisted since the 2008 financial crisis. We cannot sustain national prosperity while operating so far below international capacity; structural investment in human capital is imperative to close this gap.

20% of the UK workforce could be significantly under-skilled for their jobs by 2030, according to research from the Industrial Skills Strategy Council. This would have wide-ranging implications, from compromising work quality and output to hindering innovation and economic growth (Grant Thornton, The Skills Gap and Its Impact on Productivity, 2024).

1.2 The Skills Gap and the Confidence Gap

A primary component of low productivity is the enduring skills gap, compounded by a critical confidence gap in young people entering the workforce. Businesses consistently report that a lack of work-ready skills and essential digital literacy undermines their output and ability to innovate. One recent cross-sector analysis estimated that closing the work-essential digital skills gap alone could unlock an increase in UK Gross Value Added (GVA) of up to £23.1 billion annually through enhanced productivity (FutureDotNow, May 2025).

Research by Youth Futures Foundation found that 44% of young people say a lack of skills or training is the biggest barrier to entering the workforce. A third of young people (31%) say they have a mental health condition, and of those, nearly nine in ten (85%) believe that their condition affects their ability to either find work or to function in a professional environment (Youth Employment 2024 Outlook Report).

The Youth Voice Census 2025, conducted by Youth Employment UK, found that young people stated their biggest barriers to employment are a lack of work experience, anxiety and a lack of local jobs. Three in five young people (62%) believe it has become more difficult to find a job than ten years ago.

1.3 Geographic Inequality and the Place-Based Challenge

These national economic challenges are acutely felt across the UK's geography, contributing to a widening gulf in social mobility outcomes. A young person's potential remains disproportionately determined by their postcode, with structural deprivation limiting access to opportunity. The latest English Indices of Deprivation (IMD 2025) confirm that 82% of neighbourhoods in the most deprived decile according to the IMD25 were also the most deprived according to the IMD19.

In deprived regions — often characterised by a high proportion of SMEs rather than companies with large head offices — traditional models of work experience consistently fail. Schools lack the internal capacity to broker large numbers of quality placements, and local businesses struggle to absorb the demand, resulting in lower levels of provision. Consequently, high-quality employer engagement remains rare, with data indicating that a significant proportion of young people leave secondary school without the critical workplace exposure that correlates with higher future earnings and lower NEET rates, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty. The response to inequality of opportunity must be place-based and not solely a 'Dick Whittington' model of moving to a major city to achieve career ambitions. Talent must be developed where it lives, and connected to employers in the communities where growth is needed.

1.4 The Scale of the Challenge

As of June 2026, 981,000 16–24-year-olds were NEET, representing 13% of people in this age group. This has been rising since mid-2021 and exceeded 1m in January–March 2026 - at its highest level since the end of 2013 (House of Commons Library publication 27 August 2026: SN06705.pdf). The UK has seen a slower improvement in cutting NEET rates compared to other OECD countries. On average, OECD countries have reduced their NEET rates by 25% since 2002, compared to just 19% for the UK (Youth Futures Foundation, Youth Employment 2024 Outlook Report). Youth Futures Foundation estimates that matching the lowest NEET rate in the OECD could add £69 billion to the UK economy. Critically, The Key Group's 2024 report found that just 2% of pupils completed two weeks' work experience — despite the Government's commitment to a two-week guarantee for every young person. There is limited existing public funded infrastructure on which the 2 week commitment can rely, underscoring the need for government, business, education and the charity sector to work together to deliver it.

The Landscape — Key Organisations Connecting Talent to Workplaces

A number of organisations across the public, private and third sectors are working to address the workplace experience and wider NEET challenge. This section provides an overview of the key players in this space, their approaches.

2.1 The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)

The CEC is the Government's designated body for connecting education and employers. It operates a national network of Enterprise Coordinators and Careers Hubs, supports schools in meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks, and has published a 'Modern Work Experience' framework including the Equalex themes. The CEC has received DfE funding of £2 million to provide 25,000 students with new approaches to work experience placements, though a large proportion of this pilot will be delivered online or to whole year groups. J.P. Morgan has also committed £3.3 million to the CEC to provide 3,700 students with 2 weeks of work experience across three years, using a mixture of online, in-school and in-workplace opportunities. These models, while valuable, equate to between £80 and £89 per day per student (including post programme impact reporting) for a virtual or in-person encounter.

2.2 Career Ready

Career Ready is a social mobility charity that connects young people aged 15–18 to workplace opportunities through a structured programme of mentoring, a paid four-week summer internship, masterclasses and workplace visits. Opportunities are provided in Coventry, Derby, Birmingham, Manchester, Leicester, London Middlesborough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. There is also a programme in Scotland.

2.3 Movement to Work

Movement to Work is a registered charity and coalition of employers committed to tackling youth unemployment. Its flagship YouthPath initiative operates regionally in the West Midlands, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester. Movement to Work focuses primarily on older young people (16–30) and operates as a brokerage and convening network rather than delivering structured in-school programmes for Key Stages 3–4.

2.4 Youth Futures Foundation

Youth Futures Foundation is the UK's What Works Centre for youth employment, established with an endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund. It generates and funds evidence on what works to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds. While it plays a critical role in evidence generation, data analysis and convening the Youth Employment Group, it does not directly deliver work experience programmes.

2.5 The Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust is a leading social mobility foundation that runs programmes including university access schemes, summer schools and employer partnerships. It partners with organisations including SMBP to identify and support students from low-income backgrounds. Its focus is principally on university access and policy advocacy rather than structured work experience delivery at scale.

2.6 IntoUniversity

IntoUniversity operates learning centres in areas of deprivation, providing academic support, mentoring and aspirational programmes to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. It partners with universities and employers to widen access and raise aspirations. Its model is centre-based and education-focused rather than centred on structured employer-led work experience; however, it has been partnering with SMBP for a decade providing its members with the opportunity to attend SMBP work experience programmes.

2.7 Youth Employment UK

Youth Employment UK operates the annual Youth Voice Census — the largest dataset of youth voices in the UK, with over 5,000 young people sharing their experiences annually. It promotes the Good Youth Employment Standards and Benchmark for employers and connects young people with youth-friendly employers offering work experience, apprenticeships and graduate schemes. Its role is primarily as a standards body and data aggregator rather than a direct provider of structured work experience programmes.

2.8 Youth Careers Collective (formerly Spark!)

Youth Careers Collective exists to enhance young people's employability skills, knowledge, experience and access. Aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks and Equalex Framework, it partners with schools and colleges to support students experiencing barriers to entering employment through meaningful employer engagements, workplace experiences and career mentoring. It delivers programmes for young people with SEND through its Project Spark! initiative. Its reach is concentrated in London and the South East.

2.9 Futures for All (Formerly Speakers for Schools)

Futures for All opens up real-world work experience for young people through a mix of in-person and remote placements, as well as shorter Insight Days. Its model is primarily a matching and facilitation platform, through its work experience finder platform; this compliments its original national Speakers for Schools in person school assembly talks programme. It has recently partnered with the CEC to deliver Goldman Sachs funded work experience pilots.

2.10 UK Youth

UK Youth is a network of youth organisations. It also has two key programmes, one being an outdoor learning facility (Avon Tyrell Outdoor Centre) and a summer jobs scheme offering paid work experience to young people (16-20 year olds) at the risk of violence; this operates across Greater Manchester, West Midlands, South Wales, Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, Sheffield, and Doncaster and London.

2.11 GoodWork

GoodWork is a youth employment and social mobility charity that delivers mentoring and employability programmes for young people (18-25 year olds) working with employers to champion social mobility. Its in person employability programme operates in London and offers an alternative online programme for those not in London.

2.12 The Social Mobility Foundation

The Social Mobility Foundation provides an aspiring professionals programme to Year 12s who live in or near to Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, and Newcastle. The

programme includes work experience with large employers, email-based mentoring and skills and careers workshops.

2.13 upReach

upReach is a social mobility charity charity that helps undergraduate university students from lower socio-economic backgrounds secure top graduate jobs. upReach focuses on supporting university students with support in boosting employability skills, application guidance and advice, and mock assessment centres and interview support. UpReach does not provide a work experience programme.

2.14 Gaps in the Current Landscape

While there is significant activity across the sector, key gaps remain:

- **Scalable, in-person delivery at Key Stages 3–4:** Most organisations focus on post-16 provision and are online first programmes.
- **Place-based delivery in deprived areas:** Few organisations have the infrastructure and local employer relationships to deliver consistently in areas of high deprivation in all parts of the country whether urban, rural or coastal.
- **Operational support for employers:** The lack of operational resource and systems support is the key reason why many employers (especially SMEs where the HR function usually consists of one person or bundled with finance responsibilities) do not currently provide work experience. Most organisations broker connections for employers with schools/students but do not provide the end-to-end facilitation that makes participation easy for employers.
- **Cost-effectiveness and ROI:** Existing models range from £80–£89 per day per student (including impact reporting costs), often for virtual or blended encounters. There is a need for models that deliver in-person encounters at a lower cost per student in order to scale.
- **Career support aftercare:** Few organisations provide ongoing career support beyond the initial programme, despite evidence that equality of progression is equally important as equal access to the world of work.

A Potential Solution — Evolution of the Social Mobility Business Partnership WISE Model

3.1 Overview of SMBP

The Social Mobility Business Partnership is a volunteer-led charity, founded in 2014 and registered as a charity in 2017, which inspires and supports students from low-income backgrounds to realise their career goals. It brings together more than 180 high-profile companies, organisations and sports teams to lift the aspirations of young people from over 120 villages, towns and cities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; the SMBP helps students pursue a career path with a local employer through in-person work experience and lifetime career coaching.

Participating employers include Accenture, Adidas, Amazon, Arsenal FC, Aviva, Barclays, BT, EY, Formula One, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader, HSBC, ITV, Linklaters, Manchester United, Microsoft, Ministry of Justice, the NHS, Paramount, Princess Yachts, Rolls Royce, Slaughter and May, Vanquis Bank, The Coca-Cola Company, University of Exeter, Vodafone and Warner Music Group. Among SMBP's patrons are Martin Lewis CBE, founder of Money Saving Expert, crossbench peer Baroness Prashar Runnymede CBE and member of the inaugural Parker Review, Helen Mahy CBE.

3.2 The SMBP WISE Model: A Proven Approach

SMBP operates a highly effective Work Insight & Skills Experience (**WISE**) programme for approximately 1,000 Key Stage 5 students per year. WISE is based on a 'facilitator rather than delivery agent' approach, which makes it highly scalable and cost-effective. Participating businesses need only provide lunch and create a day's worth of meaningful content delivered at their offices, easily achieved using SMBP's Skills Builder Partnership Level 4 rated competency framework -Skills Builder UK. The SMBP team manage:

- Recruiting (through an online/app enabled application process) and onboarding approximately 1,000 students per annum in partnership with charities (e.g. The Sutton Trust and IntoUniversity), local CEC staff, Local Authorities and Schools/Colleges;
- Booking and paying for all student travel from home to the four businesses and professional sports club in each WISE week across 20 different parts of the UK;

- Providing the technology platform to enable delivery planning and document distribution, reducing the need for email and enabling easy central progress tracking;
- Training local businesspeople and professional sports clubs to deliver bespoke resilience training authored by an Olympic-level performance coach and validated by a child psychologist/secondary school head teacher;
- Providing virtual safeguarding and career mentoring training/resources for all volunteers onboarded as career mentors; and
- Providing lifelong career support through the SMBP alumni service (c.3,000 registered) which includes a mentoring platform, access to employability skills webinars and job notifications from the 180+ businesses already onboarded.

WISE provides an easy 'hop-on' point for organisations of all sizes to deliver in-person work experience by providing the operational resource and systems support required, the lack of which is the key reason why so many employers do not currently provide work experience.

3.3 SMBP WISE Return on Investment

Desktop research conducted by SMBP demonstrates a favourable ROI when compared with other existing work experience models which have disclosed costings:

Model	Funding / Structure	Cost per Day per Student
DfE/CEC Pilot	£2m for 25,000 students; large proportion delivered online or to whole year groups.	£80 (virtual or in-person) including impact reporting
J.P. Morgan/CEC	£3.3m for 3,700 students; 2 weeks across 3 years (Yr 8–10); mix of online, in-school and workplace.	£89 (virtual or in-person) Including impact reporting
SMBP WISE	Operating budget of less than £500k for in-person encounters and lifelong alumni aftercare model	£54 (excl. travel) / £65 (incl. travel) including impact reporting

3.4 The Proposal: The Career Pathways Partnership

In conjunction with the CEC, SMBP proposes creating a new programme, the Career Pathways Partnership (**CPP**) that will enable schools in, or close to, areas of deprivation to deliver on the guarantee of two weeks' work experience for every young person, as set out in the DfE statutory guidance published in May 2025 – See Appendix B for a summary of how the model proposed meets the guidance.

The CPP would address one of the main barriers to implementing the DfE guidance: schools in or close to deprived areas are those least likely to be providing effective work experience opportunities. This is largely due to parents/carers not having the influence or networks to identify a range of opportunities. This will only be compounded as all schools seek deeper relationships with local businesses.

CPP WISE1 — Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)

CPP WISE1 maps across the CEC Equalex 'Introduce & Inspire' and 'Investigate & Explore' themes. Students will have the opportunity to:

- Understand what is expected in different business settings in terms of skills required and workplace behaviours;
- Develop career-building skills (teamwork, problem-solving, communication, leadership) through 'walk in the shoes' half-day business simulation exercises conducted by local businesses in their school;
- Gain experience of different workplaces through visits to local businesses; and
- Be introduced to local employees in multiple industries and different roles through workplace-based speed networking sessions.

Day 1 would consist of an in-school 'Get Ready' workshop on workplace expectations and skills, delivered using SMBP's Skills Builder endorsed competency framework. Days 2–5 will consist of 8 half-day sessions delivered by local employers, including in-school business simulation exercises, workplace visits and a 'Career Pathway' workshop providing insight into local career pathways and the job application process. Days can be delivered consecutively in a week, over a 9-week period, or across three years.

CPP WISE2 — Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11)

CPP WISE2 focuses on the CEC 'Apply & Demonstrate' theme and mirrors the proven SMBP WISE delivery model:

- **Day 1:** Students attend a local professional sports club for a resilience workshop, introducing techniques from professional sports to manage pressure and deal with setbacks.
- **Days 2–5:** Students spend each day with a different employer, participating in business simulation-based content aligned with SMBP's Level 4 impact-rated competency framework.

Students are supported throughout the week via the CPP app (using the existing platform used by SMBP WISE participants), which includes agendas and a STAR model skills log. Days can be delivered consecutively in a week or over a 5-week period.

CPP Alumni — Post-16

On completion of the WISE2 programme, students access the Alumni area of the CPP app, replicating SMBP's existing alumni model including a Career Group Mentoring Portal, notification of entry-level opportunities from CPP Employers, and additional resources such as workplace skills webinars.

3.5 Targeting and Pilot Areas

Pilot programmes could be launched, for example, in existing and planned SMBP student recruitment areas in: i) South West coastal communities: Plymouth, Truro, and Penzance; ii) the North East (Newcastle/Sunderland/County Durham) and iii) North West (Liverpool/Blackpool/Greater Manchester). Programmes will be targeted at schools in or close to postcodes demonstrating evidenced inequality of opportunity (using Polar4, IMD and FSM data) or those who have historically struggled to provide a range of work experience opportunities to students. Recruitment of companies will prioritise the Government's 8 priority sectors for economic growth. Unused apprenticeship levy donated by local organisations will be the primary source of funding for the pilot areas. This could be supplemented by Government trailed devolved Mayoral budgets for 16-19 education (Mayors to control 16-19 funding in education overhaul) and confirmed Business Rate Retention schemes (Explanatory note on Mayoral Strategic Authority funding 2026 to 2027: final - GOV.UK).

3.6 Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Accessibility

SMBP has extensive experience ensuring compliance with safeguarding policy and practice and would propose the following safeguards for CPP

- WISE1 Supervision: School staff member to chaperone/supervise students on workplace visits.
- WISE2 Supervision: Enhanced DBS checked volunteers from each business to chaperone students on transport.
- All employees involved in school-based activity or workplace delivery will complete a safeguarding e-learning module using existing SMBP materials.
- Parental/Guardian consent required for all off-site visits.
- Workplace risk assessments completed in advance using existing SMBP standard form.
- Activities will be inclusive for all students, including those with SEND, working with DfE and DWP partner bodies. SMBP has previously worked with Mayoral authorities on this aspect of delivery – Greater Manchester and West Midlands.

Conclusion

The challenge of connecting young talent to workplaces is not merely an educational issue; it is a fundamental economic growth imperative. The UK's persistent productivity gap, rising NEET rates and entrenched geographic inequality demand a response that is place-based, employer-led, in-person, scalable and cost-effective. While a number of organisations are doing valuable work in this space, significant gaps remain — particularly in the delivery of structured, in-person work experience at Key Stages 3–4 in areas of deprivation, where the need is greatest and current provision is weakest.

The CPP model will deliver the following strategic benefits in the fight to reduce those young people who are NEET:

- **Directly addresses DfE statutory guidance:** Helps schools which historically struggle to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks to deliver the new two-week work experience guarantee.
- **Enhances place-based economic growth:** Provides equitable access to high-quality, in-person work experience for economically disadvantaged students and exposure to local

career opportunities, developing talent where it is needed and connecting it to employers in local communities.

- **Fosters aspiration and career confidence:** Encourages early-career exploration and confidence through 'walk in their shoes' experiences, building the cultural capital that disadvantaged students specifically lack.
- **Strengthens employer-school partnerships:** Builds robust local and national links between education and business of all sizes through operationally supported local employer interventions.
- **Established safeguarding structures:** Extensive experience of ensuring compliance with safeguarding policy and practice.
- **Scalable, efficient and cost-effective:** Leverages SMBP's existing infrastructure and employer network for rapid expansion, with an ROI that compares favourably with existing schemes.

The SMBP's Career Pathways Partnership offers a proven, scalable and cost-effective solution to deliver high-quality, in-person work experience that aligns precisely with the DfE's strategic objectives for careers education and social mobility.

By leveraging existing infrastructure and a 'facilitator' approach, SMBP can rapidly expand access to meaningful employer encounters, equipping young people across the country who need it most with the skills and insights required for future success — and in doing so, help build the productive, place-based economy that the Government's growth mission demands.

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Appendix A: Work Experience Models Compared

The ambition to guarantee two weeks of meaningful work experience for every young person requires a reliable and scalable delivery model. While digital, remote, and flexible approaches offer necessary scalability, the efficacy of the options must be measured against the primary goal of closing the skills gap and improving productivity. The SMBP CPP model is firmly based on the delivery principles of in-person, local work experience.

Online vs. Offline (In-Person) Delivery

The CEC's 'Modern Work Experience' framework correctly acknowledges the role of hybrid and virtual experiences. However, the evidence suggests that for the most vulnerable students, the in-person, physical encounter remains irreplaceable for cultural exposure and confidence building.

Feature	Online/Virtual Delivery	Offline/In-Person Delivery (SMBP Model)
Pros	Scale and Access: Easily scalable nationwide, lower logistical cost, removes geographical/transport barriers.	Authenticity: Provides genuine exposure to the feel and culture of a professional workplace.
Cons	Digital Divide: Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often face barriers related to poor Wi-Fi access or lack of a quiet workspace at home.	Logistics: More complexity, given travel cost and time as well as safeguarding processes.
Social Mobility Impact	Risk of Reinforcing Inequality: Research on remote work shows it primarily benefits higher-skilled workers and may deepen regional divides (University of Southampton, 2025).	Confidence & Cultural Capital: Direct, in-person exposure builds the confidence and cultural capital that disadvantaged students specifically lack.

Locally vs. Nationally Delivered

The most effective delivery requires centralised quality assurance coupled with deeply integrated local execution

Feature	Franchised Local Delivery (SMBP Model)	Centralised National Delivery
Model Structure	Central Quality, Local Execution. SMBP provides the central framework, curriculum, corporate network access and quality control. Local partners execute delivery within their own community.	Central Control, Remote Execution. A single national body designs, manages and executes the programme, typically via a digital platform.
Pros	Local, Physical Immersion: Ensures students travel to and experience the physical workplace and local business community, crucial for confidence building.	Rapid Scale & Standardisation: Achieves instant national reach and ensures 100% curriculum consistency.
Cons	Requires Local Partnerships: Depends on securing and training reliable local delivery partners (something SMBP has done successfully for over a decade).	Risk of Digital Exclusion: Fails to address the digital divide for the most disadvantaged students, who are the primary target.
Equity Impact	Targeted Investment: Ensures resources directly enable in-person, high-quality experiences for disadvantaged students in their local area.	Dilution of Impact: Risks delivering a generic experience that may not provide the cultural capital and network building unique to physical immersion.

Conclusion: The Indispensability of In-Person Local Work Experience

While we fully support the flexibility promoted by the CEC's Modern Work Experience, the core ambition of the Work Experience Guarantee — specifically to close the opportunity gap — cannot be achieved solely through virtual or remote activities. The latest updated Gatsby Benchmarks (2025) now specifically emphasise using technology alongside, but not instead of, in-person activity. The crucial confidence and cultural capital gained by a student from a disadvantaged background walking into a professional office, navigating transport and engaging face-to-face with employees is the transformative element that digital delivery cannot replicate.

Appendix B: Excerpts from the DfE Statutory Guidance (May 2025)

"From September 2025, DfE expects all institutions to use the updated Gatsby Benchmarks. The benchmarks are non-statutory, but support schools and colleges in meeting their legal and contractual careers requirements and acting as an improvement tool to ensure every learner benefits from the very best careers guidance."

***"Gatsby Benchmark 5:** Every learner should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment, and the skills that are valued in the workplace. In particular, learners should have opportunities to learn about jobs and careers in the Government's 8 priority sectors for economic growth: advanced manufacturing, clean energy industries, creative industries, defence, digital and technologies, financial services, life sciences, and professional and business services."*

***"Gatsby Benchmark 6:** Every learner should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. For schools: by the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful experiences of workplaces; by the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further meaningful experience."*

***"Implementing 2 weeks' worth of work experience:** The DfE's vision is that two weeks' worth of work experience should be broken down into one week's worth of work experience activities in Years 7 to 9 and one week's worth of work experience placement(s) in Years 10 to 11. Experiences should be aspirational and inspirational, giving young people the opportunity to access a wide range of career opportunities, aligned to their interests and talents, local skills needs and national growth sectors. They should be co-designed and delivered in partnership with schools and involve two-way employer-pupil interaction."*

"DfE expects that work experience placements in Years 10 to 11 will be in-person, but acknowledges that in exceptional circumstances meaningful hybrid or virtual approaches may be impactful in removing barriers to access. In those circumstances, DfE would expect best endeavours to use remote engagement alongside, but not instead of, in-person activity."

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