



Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

Work Experience Readiness Programme

Consultancy Brief

January 2025

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1. PURPOSE

Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) delivers Dorset Careers Hub with funds awarded by the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC).

The purpose of this function is to connect education and employers to improve careers provision across the county. Funded by [Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\)](#) and [The Careers and Enterprise Company \(CEC\)](#) in partnership with BCP Council and Dorset Council, our role is to help young people in Dorset progress into promising careers and fulfil their potential.

Dorset LEP are seeking proposals from qualified and experienced organisations to deliver a Work Experience Readiness programme in Dorset. The objective is to research, structure, implement and evidence a work experience delivery model that reflects the principles of the Equalex framework and provides for a progressive, outcome based approach which can be delivered with scale and equity and reaches students who are at risk of missing out.

The programme will engage with a minimum of 20 schools and 20 businesses and organisations such as SMEs, co-working spaces and BIDs across Dorset to identify how to reduce the barriers faced by young people (in Key Stage 3) living in rural areas, those with additional needs and those disadvantaged and / or at risk of Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to accessing meaningful and quality work experience. In developing and delivering different types of experience, the delivery partner will evidence programmes that can be scaled up to represent 'best practice' for future work experience delivery.

2. CONTEXT

Work experience for young people is a key priority ensuring work ready skills are developed in readiness for employment. These skills form an important component of Dorset's business economy, ensuring there is a work-ready cohort of young people to supporting local and national growing and innovative business needs.

With a vibrant ecosystem of SMEs and larger employers, Dorset has the potential to support young people into skilled careers choices by providing an experience of the workplace.

By actively engaging with businesses and employers, Dorset's young people will gain knowledge of the variety of skilled jobs available locally, develop personal plans for work, skills training or further/higher education learning. As our future workforce, these young people will have the potential to significantly contribute to the region's economic growth and foster the value of a skilled workforce that extends beyond its borders.

Benefits of effective delivery of this programme include:

Benefits to Students

- Career Insight: Gain valuable insight experience into a range of work places and roles across sectors, helping them understand career paths and make informed subject choices.
- Skills Development: Gain practical skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving and link everyday learning to the skills and knowledge employers are looking for.
- Inspiration and Networking: Connect with mentors and professionals who can inspire future educational and career plans.

Benefits to Schools

- Curriculum Enhancement: Enriches the curriculum by providing students with tangible career-related experiences.
- Engagement and Retention: Increases student engagement and motivation by connecting school learning with real-world applications, matching experiences to school and learner needs, and connecting work experience to wider curriculum goals including personal development.
- Community Relationships: Fosters long-term connections with local businesses, creating a mutually supportive community network.
- Be supported to develop effective and sustainable good practice to deliver against Gatsby Benchmarks and OFSTED requirements relating to careers education.

Benefits to Employers

- Flexibility: The chance to offer work experience suitable to their size, industry and capacity.
- Early Talent Engagement: Opportunity to engage with and inspire future potential employees and develop long term relationships with schools and talent pipelines.
- Community Engagement: Positions the company as a community contributor, enhancing corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- Industry Awareness: Contributes to raising awareness of the sector, sparking potential interest in lesser-known career paths.

Benefits to Dorset

- Economic Development: Builds a pipeline of skilled, locally educated young people prepared to contribute to Dorset's economy.
- Community Cohesion: Strengthens ties between businesses, schools, and local government, fostering a sense of shared community responsibility.
- Regional Reputation: Positions Dorset as a proactive, youth-focused community that prioritises education and economic growth.

This approach is new, progressive and outcome based, that sits alongside other proven activity, designed to support multiple, high quality, progressive and layered experiences for every young person between Year 7 and leaving education.

Key features are:

- Quality: A multi-experience model that uses learning objectives to join activity together during a young person's time at school.
- Equity: A minimum of 10 days (two weeks' worth) of work experience - tailored days, blocked periods etc. - tracked at the learner and school level.

- Flexibility: Structured to support all types of school and business, including smaller employers.

These principles should underpin this programme, whilst there is an understanding that it will not be possible to adopt the full framework, given the time boundaries.

The delivery partner must be able to demonstrate:

- Extensive experience in the field of education and a wide understanding of work experience provision.
- An understanding of the local area's social, business and economic landscape and future plans.
- How they will amplify delivery for students to provide equitable access to work experience.

3. COMMISSION

The delivery partner will be responsible for:

Researching, designing, implementing and providing evidence-based reporting for a work experience programme hosted by businesses across Dorset.

The programme must deliver different styles of experiences of work experience that can be scaled up to represent 'best practice' for future work experience delivery.

The programme should include, as a minimum, the following:

- A period of engagement with schools, businesses and organisations to understand current provision, barriers to delivery, what works and what doesn't.
- Rapid building of strong, effective and sustainable relationships with stakeholders.
- Collaborate with ASK, where relevant, to align objectives/inputs
- Provide one-on-one advisory support to SMEs interested in delivering workplace experiences.
- Secure collaboration of employers to facilitate shared experiences of workplaces to provide wider experiences for young people.
- Co-design of work experiences with employers and schools which includes creative, flexible, ambitious and accessible methods of delivery which increase awareness of different workplaces, jobs and pathways; fosters confidence in key skills; widens and raises aspirations and inspires young people.
- Collaborate with relevant business support providers to help endorse and support the programme.
- Work with schools to align visits and projects within the school timetable.
- Ensure each visit has school-provided or vetted adult supervision.
- Arrange and fund transportation based on students' interests and location.
- Collaborate with businesses to ensure health and safety requirements are met.

- Develop a targeted outreach campaign, emphasising the long-term community and economic impact of the programme, potential talent pipeline and confidence this programme can build.
- Monitoring and evaluating the programme's impact and effectiveness.
- A focus on understanding the economies of scale, the reduction of duplication in offer and processes, and resources required to build a sustainable long term programme.

Interested parties are invited to submit proposals outlining their approach, methodology, relevant experience, and team capabilities. Proposals should also include a detailed budget and timeline for the delivery of the programme.

4. KEY STAGES & DELIVERABLES

The contract is to run from 5 February to 31st August 2025 with delivery expected to commence within one month of the contract start date.

The programme is expected to deliver:

- Engagement with a minimum of 20 schools across Dorset
- Engagement with a minimum of 20 businesses and organisations across Dorset
- Progress reports to Dorset Careers Hub (template to be provided)
- Evidence based report recommending a delivery model that can be successfully delivered at scale and highlighting core elements for success through differentiated delivery models (e.g. in house, partnership, commissioned, hybrid). This will be in the form of a blueprint of the model of brokerage of work experience developed to ensure no student misses out. A template will be provided for reporting. Detail to include:
 - The core conditions for successful implementation and how they may have been adapted to meet local need
 - Senior engagement strategies (e.g., LEAs, CA, AEBP members, traded services etc.
 - Stakeholder engagement/procurement, governance, partnership arrangements
 - Staff time allocations per element of delivery (brokerage, commissioning, admin, employer-facing, school-facing, process development)
 - Staff roles/skills and expertise required
 - External expertise (e.g., marketing)
 - Digital support (i.e., platforms, website, matching systems, etc) developed in partnership to provide the common indicators of success and the additional elements adapted to suit local regions
 - How cost and administrative efficiencies have been made within the model
- Produce employer and ITP/FE guidance, including how to provide meaningful and differentiated work experience for disadvantaged or disengaged students who are currently missing out on work experience

5. BUDGET

The budget allocated is up to a maximum of £80,000, exclusive of any VAT charges that the supplier might occur. Budget is dependent on the number of experiences of the workplace are delivered. It is possible that more than one provider may be commissioned.

Tenders should include detail for each member of the proposed team, the hourly rate at which they will be charged (exclusive of VAT). Tenders should also show the proposed hourly rates once the total value of work charged exceeds £25,000. Tenders should be valid for six months.

6. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT & MONITORING

The work will be overseen by Dorset Careers Hub.

The supplier must nominate a dedicated point of contact to act as Contract Manager to oversee the work and liaise with and report into the nominee at Dorset Careers Hub. This may include some face-to-face meetings (either virtual or online), and updates in writing, including advising of any service delivery issues.

Dorset LEP requires a high level of accuracy in this piece of work, particularly in relation to the data and management information provided. The Contract Manager is responsible for ensuring the quality of the work and the accuracy of the information provided.

The supplier must be able to demonstrate that they have proven experience of working with businesses, schools and young people. In doing so, they must show examples of good customer engagement and feedback.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Dorset LEP may exclude the Supplier if there is a conflict of interest which cannot be effectively remedied. The concept of a conflict of interest includes any situation where relevant staff members have, directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure.

Where there is any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise then it is the responsibility of the Supplier to inform Dorset LEP, detailing the conflict in the Supplier response to this tender.

8. TIMESCALES

Activity	Date
Invitation to Tender	17/1/25
Deadline for submissions	31/1/25

Assessment of responses received	3/2/25
Interviews	4/2/25 (if required)
Inception meeting	5/2/25
Contract start date	5/2/25

The LEP reserves the right to cancel the tender process. No work is guaranteed to be awarded under the tender process and Dorset LEP is not responsible for any costs incurred as part of the bidding process.

The deadline for any Tender Clarifications is 30/1/25.

9. ASSESSMENT

Tenders will be assessed using the following criteria and weightings and the weighted scores within each sub-criteria will be added together to arrive at the total score for this piece of work.

Question	Weighting
Understanding of requirement	20%
Experience of similar work and credibility with stakeholders	20%
Proposed approach to this work	20%
Proposed team	20%
Pricing	20%

Tenders will be scored according to the below scheduled; scoring and comments are confidential and will not be shared with any applicants.

Score	Comment
4 - Excellent	Proposal meets, and in some places exceeds, the required standard
3 - Good	Proposal meets required standard
2 - Acceptable	Proposal meets the required standard in most respects, but is lacking or inconsistent in others
1 - Poor	Proposal falls short of expected standard
0 - Unacceptable	Significantly fails to meet required standard or does not provide the relevant answer

Clarifications may be sought in writing from the suppliers and scores adjusted accordingly. Full or partial proposals that in the opinion of the Dorset LEP are unrealistically low or not reasonable sustainable (in terms of Quality or Price) may be rejected.

Dorset LEP reserves the right not to make any appointment.

10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

In order to be considered for selection, proposals to this tender must be received by 31/1/25 midnight. Any individual or organisation responding to this tender must submit its response via email to the following:

Rebecca Davies
Head of Enterprise, Skills and Industry
rdavies@bournemouth.ac.uk

Please note that submissions not received via the means identified in this document may not be accepted or considered. Any tender submitted and/or received after the time specified may not be considered and the Bidder will be advised of this.

11. GUIDANCE

Take the time to read and understand this document. In particular, develop a strong understanding of the Commission section.

In structuring your proposal, consider how it will be evaluated.

Bidders are advised to allow adequate time for uploading documents and to dispatch the electronic response well in advance of the closing time to avoid any last-minute problems. Failure to submit the tender submission as required may result in the relevant Bidder being excluded from any further participation in this procurement.

If you require clarification or have any questions, please direct these to:
dorsetlep@bournemouth.ac.uk