

ENTERPRISE ADVISER NETWORK CASE STUDY

Birchwood's Apprenticeship Event leads to student job offers

Enterprise Advisers from construction firm Clarion Futures worked with Birchwood High School, Bishop's Stortford, to develop a first-of-its-kind 'Live Apprenticeship Event' as part of the national Careers & Enterprise Company programme, delivered locally by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The event, which took place in February 2019, was a chance for employers with live job/apprenticeship vacancies to meet and interact with students from a range of local schools including Birchwood High School, Leventhorpe, Herts and Essex Schools and Bishop's Stortford High School.

Birchwood High School's Careers Lead Judith Crimes worked closely with Enterprise Coordinator Steve Trotter and Enterprise Advisers Ros Padgett and Sean McGinn from Clarion Futures, to develop the event following the school's Compass Review. The review identified gaps in the school's existing careers provision, highlighting a need to increase awareness of alternative routes to further education outside of college and sixth form, and provide students with the chance to hear directly from employers.

Enterprise Adviser Ros initiated the concept of a 'Live Apprenticeship Event', during which employers could informally interview potential candidates with a view to filling live vacancies. Ros and Sean used their business connections to bring local, national and international employers including The Civil Service, The Dentist, Clarion Housing Group, Engie, Bell Group, Uniserve and Weston Homes, together with students from across the four schools.

The event comprised an assembly for Year 10 students and one-to-one sessions for employers to meet Year 11/13 students and their parents, resulting in several students securing formal job interviews. One student was since offered a degree apprenticeship at Uniserve and a second was offered a position as a dental nurse apprentice at The Dentist.



Judith Crimes, Careers Leader at Birchwood High School said, "I was thrilled that this event organised by Ros and Sean gave students the chance to have really meaningful conversations with employers with real vacancies, opening their eyes to the amazing opportunities on offer."

Ros Padgett, Employment Support Officer - East Region at Clarion Futures said, "The students and parents who came definitely got a lot out of it and now have a lot more career pathways to consider."

Sean McGinn, Employment and Training Manager at Clarion Futures said, "The employers who attended have had the chance to meet local talent and help challenge the bad press apprenticeships sometimes get. It also looks like some apprenticeship and degree apprenticeship offers have come through as a result of the event, which makes it all worthwhile."

Elizabeth, a Year 11 student from Birchwood High School commented, "I was unsure about the event before I went, but once I got there, it really opened my eyes to all the opportunities available to me."

The event has supported the school with several areas of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Most tangibly, students from three different year groups have gained meaningful encounters with an employer/employee (Benchmark 5).

Additionally, they have learnt about apprenticeship opportunities and met with independent training providers (Benchmark 7), whilst also gaining some insight into the local labour market (Benchmark 2).

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