

Introduction

2022 – 2023 has proven a busy and productive year for Leicestershire Cares in terms of education work with our work continuing to support students in both mainstream and SEND settings. This academic year we have supported 11,000 students and continue to utilise our strong connections with the business sector with over 400 volunteer placements in schools. We hope you enjoy reading this report which delves further into the different types of work we are carrying out in education settings across Leicester and Leicestershire.

Success stories

Leicestershire Cares increases its focus on supporting students with special educational needs (SEND).

We Discover

We are currently in the final months of our collaboration with the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise partnership (LLEP) on the 'We Discover' project with the aim to improve transition outcomes for young people in nine special schools across the city and county. This involves delivering a programme of bespoke employability activities with students who are transitioning into either post 16 education, training or into the workplace.

To date the project has worked with 9 designated SEND Schools, supporting 151 students who have a defined learning disability such as Autism, ADHD with associated behavioural and learning difficulties.

With the support of 46 volunteers from our business members we have delivered a range of bespoke workshops including careers talks, employability skills development, workplace behaviours, World of Work tours, interview preparation and mock interviews.

We have received positive feedback from both the schools and students including the following quote from Sense College:

"The feedback from the students was that they really enjoyed the experience of the mock interview. I thought that the volunteers were great with the students and the feedback was great".

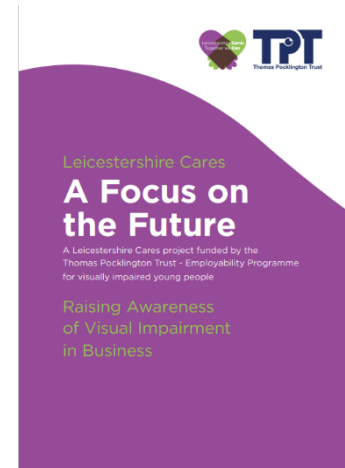
Recent World of Work Tours including sites such as Thermo Fisher Scientific, Asda and Hinckley & Rugby building society have helped our students to gain insight into different work environments in addition to observing different job roles in a real life setting – below are some of our recent photographs taken of the event



A Focus on the future pilot project

In partnership with The Thomas Pocklington Trust and close collaboration with the Vision Support Team at Leicester City Council we piloted an employability programme for 13 VI (visually impaired) young people from five city schools in Leicester.

Fiona Spence – Arnold, Education Project Development Officer, launched the employability pack for businesses at our Spring Champions lunch, raising awareness and providing information on supporting employees with visual impairment.



Although the pilot ended in July 2022 we have continued to work with our partners in both business and education to promote the resource pack and highlight the need for collaborative support with both tailored, high quality employability interventions and receptive, adaptable recruitment processes from employers.

A press release and initial contact with various VI charities have been released and we have already received interest from University of Cardiff school of social sciences, who want to assist us with a Welsh translation.

A link to the full report can be found in the graphic

A Focus on the Future has featured in Careermap which is an inclusion focussed publication in partnership with the Careers Enterprise Company.

The link to the publication can be accessed through the graphic.



Leicestershire Cares continues its focus on supporting students in mainstream schools with our Interview Technique events and other employability projects.



This academic year we held 33 Interview Technique events at **22** schools with **325** business volunteers interviewing **3755** students in total. Our members business such as Nelson's, Samworth Brothers and University of Leicester were involved and feedback was very positive from students, school staff and volunteers alike.

100% of school coordinators described the organisation and management by Leicestershire Cares as good to excellent.

"We appreciate your time and efforts with our students, this is an invaluable experience they will have. Shaping their future interviews and recognising they are not as daunting as they sound. Thank you for putting them at ease when they have had anxieties and also helping them showcase their strengths (which is hard for a lot of our students to do)!"

90% of students reported that they had found the session to be useful or very useful and of that **47%** of respondents finding it very useful

84% students reported that it had a positive effect on their confidence going to their next interview.

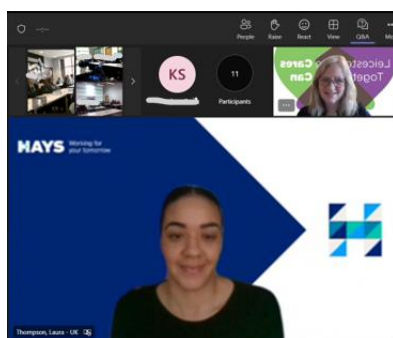
"They are very kind, it's a way to speak about yourself, and make the most of it even if it's not the real thing"

Business volunteers reported that it has improved their skills such as giving Constructive feedback, coaching mentoring, communication and motivating others with 100% of respondents rating the sessions as excellent.

"This was a very well organised event, the staff at the school and from Leicestershire cares were very friendly and welcoming and I thoroughly enjoyed taking part. I will gladly support future events both with Madani school and Leicestershire Cares"

Employability activities

In the academic year 2022- 23 we recruited **40** volunteers to deliver **31** employability events to **19** schools including activities such as Speedy Speakers, Guess my Job and CV Skills workshops. These have been both remote and face to face sessions. In total **7120** students have been supported with their employability skills.



Go For Reading and Number Partners

We aren't presently training or running any new provisions for Number Partners or Go For Reading owing to internal staffing constraints however we are still delivering Number Partners with our established volunteers and this academic year delivered 60 sessions with 12 students, delivered by 6 volunteers in 2 schools.

Good news



BUSINESS AWARDS 2022

Further to our previous report we were shortlisted for the East Midlands Chamber Business Awards, the Leicestershire Business Awards, held in partnership with headline sponsor Mazars, recognised East Midlands Chamber members across 13 categories. Finalists, chosen by a judging panel of the Chamber's senior leadership and board of directors, as well as sponsors, discovered their fate during a gala dinner attended by hundreds of people at Leicester City Football Club King Power Stadium. Our team had a great night out and waited eagerly in anticipation as we had been nominated for two awards. We were delighted to discover that we had won both the Education and Business Partnership and Community Impact awards in recognition of the amazing and impactful work we are doing with young people in both the community and education sector.



Looking ahead

For the academic year 2023-24 we will continue to work with secondary schools including those who provide SEND education and continue to engage our member businesses to effectively support students with a wide range of employability interventions to help bridge the gap between school and the workplace. We will continue to help our mainstream schools to work towards achieving their careers objectives and the Gatsby Benchmarks by providing opportunities for students in year groups 7-13 to have meaningful encounters with our business volunteers.

The education team are planning to effectively cross work with our CEYP (care experienced young people) team to engage care experienced school leavers before their summer break and ensure appropriate support to achieve education, employment and training outcomes which builds on the education work we have already carried out in their school.

We will continue to promote our Focus on the Future Resource pack reaching out to key VI charities, statutory bodies local and national press; we are also hoping to engage with a number of VI celebrities and politicians to help the reach of the resource.

We are excited to once again hold our own annual awards evening in September this year, where we will celebrate and thank our volunteers for their outstanding contribution to Leicestershire Cares projects. The education team will be presenting four awards including a new award to recognise the company that has given 'Outstanding contribution to working with students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).'



We hope you can attend our awards event on Tuesday 19th September at Winstanley House, Leicester and help us celebrate.

As always, we would like to say a huge thank you to Edith Murphy for their support for our education work, without which thousands of students would not benefit from the advice and expertise of our business members.

#TogetherWeCan