



# Leicestershire Cares Education Projects

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Annual report 2019-20



# Introduction

At Leicestershire Cares, our education team has been working hard to continue supporting students to develop their maths, reading and employability skills during this unprecedented time. In total, we supported an amazing 8,350 students this year, despite schools closing in March.

Our business members have gone above and beyond to deliver online, video and remote support to young people learning from home, and we have delivered some truly inspiring events and activities during the lockdown.

The successes and feedback from schools in this report is testament to the commitment and hard work of our business members, as well as our education team in supporting them to make such an important difference to students.

We're looking forward to building on the learning we've gained from the last few months to tackle the challenges facing us in the coming academic year, as we continue to help schools support students while social distancing and other restrictions remain in place.

In the meantime, we want to say a huge thank you to our business volunteers who have been crucial in enabling us to achieve the successes included in this report. We would also like to thank the Edith Murphy Foundation for their continued support for our education work.

Helen Treadwell

Education project Development Officer

Leicestershire Cares



## An award-winning team

Our education team had a brilliant start to the academic year, officially becoming an award-winning team!

In September 2019, we were delighted to win the East Midlands Chamber Leicestershire Education and Business Partnership Award 2019, sponsored by Blueprint Interiors.

The award recognises providers that engage effectively with business, supporting schools to develop strong partnerships with local businesses and helping pupils to develop crucial employability skills valued by employers.



But the awards didn't stop there! In June, our Education project Development Officer, Helen Treadwell, won Volunteer Manager of the Year at the East Midlands Charity Awards 2020.

Leicestershire Cares was also highly commended for East Midlands Charity of the Year.

The online awards ceremony was a new experience for us!



# Interview Technique

Our Interview Technique project aims to bridge the gap between education and the world of work for Year 10 and 11 students. These events give students the fantastic opportunity to have a realistic job interview with a volunteer from one of Leicestershire Cares' business members. After their interview, each student receives valuable feedback from their interviewer as to what they did well and how they could improve.



In 2019-20, we delivered 12 Interview Technique events in 11 schools before the national lockdown. At these events, 208 volunteers interviewed and fed back to 2,331 students in total.

## Student feedback

Students' response to being interviewed by one of our employee volunteers was overwhelming. 94% enjoyed the interview experience with 96% finding it useful. 92% of students said they now have more confidence going into their next interview.

*“He was understanding, positive, and seemed interested in my interests, which made the interview more comfortable.”*

## School feedback

Every school we worked with in 2019-20 said that:

- the event was excellent (83%) or good (17%)
- the organisation, management, and support from Leicestershire Cares was excellent
- the experience increased their pupils' confidence regarding their interview technique

*“The pupils really benefit from the experience and for many the event acts as a catalyst to improve their focus and determination as well as reinforcing the notion that they are growing up.”*

**King Edward VII Sports and Science college**

## Volunteer feedback

100% of our volunteers:

- said they enjoyed taking part in the Interview Technique project
- rated the event they took part in as excellent (76.5%) or good (23.5%)
- said the organisation and delivery of project through Leicestershire Cares was excellent

Volunteers also improved skills of their own, including **coaching and mentoring, communication, motivating others and providing constructive feedback.**

Volunteers regularly emphasised how impressed they were with the young people, how they enjoyed listening to their aspirations and how they enjoyed helping students to identify skills that they already had.

*“Excellent effort on behalf of both the teachers and Leicestershire Cares to give young people experience in preparation for leaving school.”*

## Case study: Crown Hills College

Our first Interview Technique event took place at Crown Hills Community College, where 24 business volunteers interviewed 252 Year 11 students. During the morning, two students who were interested in a career in law were interviewed by solicitors from Knights plc.

Both the students and volunteers found that having similar career interests enhanced their interview experience. The students found it very beneficial to be interviewed by a volunteer in the career they would like to pursue, as they could ask specific questions about their experiences and how to enter the law sector.

The volunteers from Knights plc agreed that they were able to provide more detailed feedback and information to the students and enjoyed speaking to students who wanted to pursue a career in the same field as themselves.



*“It helps to give the student a better idea of what it is like in practice... It also enables the student to ask more refined questions and for the conversation to progress more fluidly as they are keen to find out more when it is a career that they are interested in.”*

**Volunteer, Knights Plc**

# Employability

Our Employability project delivers a range of activities which aim to take students through the full process of thinking about their future careers, searching and applying for jobs, interviewing and being in the workplace.

We had a busy start to the year delivering careers talks and other workshops in our partner schools across Leicester and Leicestershire.



Pre-lockdown, career talks were given by 29 of our business volunteers who engaged with an astonishing 5,770 students from Year 7 to Year 11 during 27 different events in 10 schools.

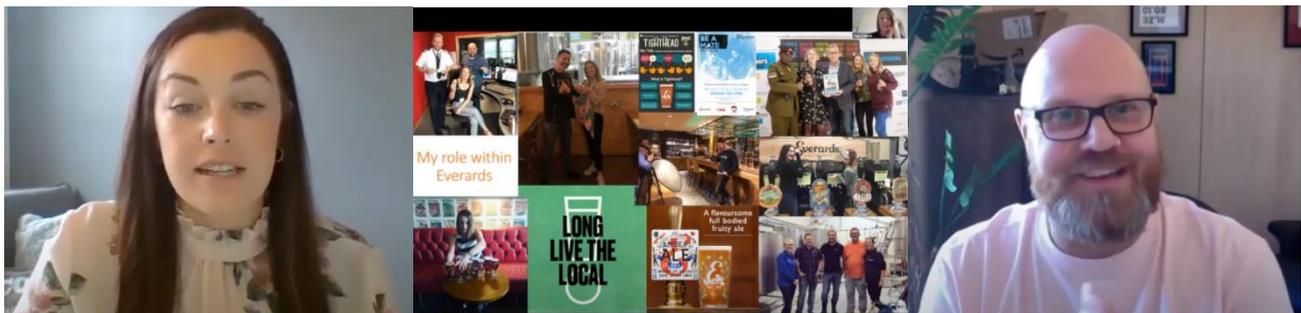
*“The calibre of the guest speakers and volunteers we have had for other events have been brilliant.”*

**Brookvale Groby Learning Campus**

Since the national lockdown, we took our business speakers online to provide vital information on careers for secondary school students.

We hosted five webinars from May to July, engaging 47 students in our live audience and over 320 views of the event recordings that we shared with schools. These recordings also make a fabulous resource for the schools.

Our brilliant speakers talked about their careers, routes into their industries and gave useful tips and feedback on gaining employment, especially through the Q&A sessions with the live audience.



## Careers competition

To keep students learning about careers during lockdown, we ran a competition for both primary and secondary school students.

The competitions were judged and sponsored by three of our business members: Thermo Fisher Scientific, Walkers Deli & Sausage, and Walker & Son. The winner of each competition received a £50 Amazon voucher, and two runners up for each competition received a £25 voucher.

Primary school students had to find a creative way to say thank you to a someone in a job role that makes a difference to them, their family, the country or the world. Secondary school students had to research a job role they were not familiar with (supplied by our business members) and come up with a creative way of promoting it to a friend.

We were overwhelmed with the number and quality of entries we received for both competitions. It was a tough decision for our judges to pick winners and runners up, but in the end we had one winner, two runners up and two highly commended entries for the primary competition, and two winners, two runners up and two highly commended entries for the secondary competition.

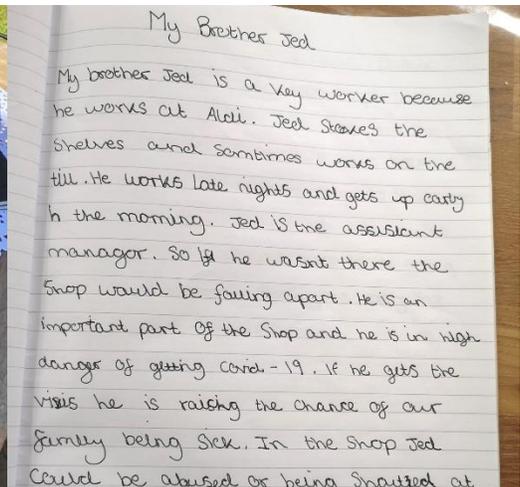


### An Introduction To The Role

A Communications and Engagement Partner has an active role in leading and managing all aspects of communications, marketing and business development.

They are like the connection between the public and the company.

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## Go For Reading

Our volunteer reading mentor programme aims to encourage a love of reading and improve reading skills amongst reluctant readers in Years 7 and 8. Business volunteers attend a school once a week (term time) to read with two students for 30 minutes each.

This year, 35 businesses volunteered in 10 schools, supporting 112 students and delivering a total of 195 one-hour sessions before the national lockdown in March.

### Key successes

Two new schools joined the project this year, and we trained new volunteers from Thermo Fisher Scientific, Joules, Samworth Brothers and Knights plc.

There were some great highlights during the year, including a Go For Reading celebration event at Fullhurst Community College in January. In February, Jacqueline Burbank from Checkprint, who has been a Go for Reading volunteer at Hinckley Academy for four years, shared her experiences of the project. Jac said:

*“To watch their achievements over a period of time was wonderful. I feel a real satisfaction that I am able to support in this way and I hope to continue to do so.”*



## Student progress

Just over half of the students involved this year were boys (55%); 45% were girls. Nearly three-quarters (71%) had Special Educational Needs, and over a third (36%) were from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. More than one in three (36%) also spoke English as an Additional Language (EAL).

The feedback received showed that schools felt Go for Reading had supported 81% of students' progress in reading. Unfortunately, school closures meant that the remaining 19% of pupils did not receive the full benefit of the project.

## Volunteer feedback

100% of our Go For Reading volunteers:

- rated the project as excellent or good
- said they would recommend volunteering on the project to another person
- had gained skills from Go for Reading, most commonly listening skills, coaching and mentoring skills, motivating others, teamwork and communication skills.

*"I was amazed and delighted to see the progress that had been made from just reading with students for 30mins a week. Not only do students improve their reading skills but the 1-2-1 time spent with those students helped them in other areas such as confidence, behaviour, communication skills etc."*

**Go For Reading volunteer, Office Depot**

## School feedback

Schools who had Go For Reading volunteers in the first two terms of the year were overwhelmingly positive about the difference the project made to students. Lutterworth High School, who joined the project in September 2019, said:



*"The time the students spent with their volunteers has been invaluable in increasing their confidence in both reading and in communicating independently with an adult... [the volunteers] worked wonderfully with the students as they were enthusiastic and professional and worked to build a good relationship."*

# Number Partners

Our numeracy programme aims to increase primary school pupils' confidence and fluency in maths, using mental arithmetic in a supportive environment where they are not afraid to make mistakes. Number Partners involves business volunteers going into a local school for 30 minutes per week (usually lunchtimes) to play numeracy games with pupils in small groups.

In 2019-20, 69 volunteers attended 19 schools and supported 168 students. Volunteers delivered a total of 462 30-minute sessions before the national lockdown.

## Key successes

*“The Year 4 teachers have praised Number Partners in terms of pupil progress and confidence in maths and hope that volunteers will be able to support children in their classes again soon.”*

**Queensmead Academy**

We were delighted to re-introduce Queensmead Academy to the project this year, where a newly trained and strong team of Knights plc volunteers began attending weekly.

Following the school closures, we met up remotely with Number Partner volunteers to think of creative ways in which we could maintain business-school links during the Covid outbreak. As a result, volunteers from AllTruck and HRBS produced some great maths challenge videos that schools shared with their pupils who were learning at home.

At our Champions Lunch in October 2019, Mark Lord received a golden heart award for his commitment to Number Partners and for coordinating the team of Ford & Slater volunteers that attend Caldecote Community Primary School.



*“The volunteers always build a fantastic rapport with the children and this year the children were so eager to attend, we had a waiting list! Parents also commented on how much their children enjoyed attending Number partners.”*

**School coordinator**

## Student progress

This year, 40% of the pupils involved in Number Partners were boys and 60% were girls. A fifth (21%) had Special Educational Needs and a quarter (24%) were from a BAME background; the remaining 76% of the pupils were White British.

In their feedback, schools reported that:

- 98% of pupils had made at least good progress in maths due to direct support from a Number Partner volunteer.
- 100% of pupils increased their self-esteem and self-confidence as a direct result of the sessions
- 13% of pupil made excellent progress during the year, with 100% making at least good progress

These outcomes are impressive given that volunteers only supported students for two terms and demonstrates the commitment and effectiveness of our volunteers in supporting students to progress.



*“My daughter absolutely loves Number Partners. I can see her confidence has grown working with numbers. A big thank you all involved.”*

**Parent, St Francis School**

## Volunteer feedback

100% of Number Partner volunteers said that:

- the project and its activities were good or excellent
- they had gained skills such as motivating others, coaching and mentoring, listening and other communication skills through Number Partners
- they would be likely to recommend Number Partners to a colleague



*“There was relentless enthusiasm from this year's group - they were always delighted to see us and keen to get on with their games. In fact, they were often there before we arrived and already playing!”*

**Number Partner volunteer**

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For more information about our education projects and how to get involved, contact:

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Leicestershire Cares is an award winning, creative, results orientated charity. We broker partnerships and create opportunities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that enable the business sector to understand community needs, contribute to the growth of inclusive, safe communities and to support and inspire children and young people in their transition to the workplace.

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