

Dream Placement – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Dream placement was established over a decade ago to support young people at a pivotal stage in their life, helping to raise awareness, aspirations and support work readiness.

1. What is Dream Placement?

Dream Placement is a fully managed programme that connects young people aged 16–18 in Cumbria with local organisations. Students work through an application, selection and training process, which may ultimately, if selected, lead to a week's work experience with a host company– the Dream Placement.

The programme is a partnership between CforLP, educators, businesses and other delivery partners. Working together, we aim to ensure barriers to opportunities are removed, as we help improve social mobility for young people. Dream Placement helps local employers to connect to their future talent pipeline, in a meaningful and accessible way. The students become aware of the breadth of opportunities available in Cumbria and can see leadership in action, becoming better informed to make decisions and see the opportunities for employment that do exist for them in Cumbria.

This structured programme of opportunities helps them to develop essential employability skills. It provides an inclusive, yet competitive, process that enables young people to experience workplace behaviours, whilst building their confidence and resilience through a supported programme of activity.

2. When do Dream Placement activities take place?

The programme runs from September – March each year, with a placement week in February, and consists of the following activities, some of which include host company support:

- Promotional activities and workshops to support student engagement
- Application support and process
- Networking and development events offered to all who apply
- Shortlisting, interview and selection activities
- Brokerage of additional opportunities for all applicants
- Placement support for companies and students, including resources and placement ready events in different areas.
- Placement week for selected students
- Brokerage of additional opportunities for non-selected students
- Impact and evaluation of the full programme

3. How is Dream Placement different from traditional work experience

Dream Placement is highly structured and supported. Students arrive well-prepared and motivated due to pre-programme development activities. The programme also ensures a strong match between student interests and company opportunities and provides broader networking and collaboration benefits.

Furthermore, Dream Placement is an opportunity for young people to network and share their views and opinions with companies and fosters opportunities for networking between sectors and organisations to share good practice, knowledge and experience.

It is so much more than just a placement week!

4. How are students selected?

Students apply through a structured application process. Shortlisting is completed by external judges, and final selection takes place during a facilitated selection event where companies meet candidates and chose their Dream Placement students.

5. What about the students who are not shortlisted or selected for placements?

Through programme funding, CforLP can offer all students additional support and broker further opportunities, including access to other programmes such as Cumbria Future Generation.

6. What support do students receive?

- Pre-placement development workshops
- Opportunities to meet employers in advance
- Skills training and goal-setting activities
- Support with transport (where needed) and getting placement ready
- Ongoing support, networking and opportunities throughout the programme from business mentors and CforLP
- Future connections and support from the CforLP community

7. Is the programme inclusive?

Yes. The programme is open to all young people aged 16–18 regardless of background, school/college, or academic ability. It focuses on potential rather than attainment and provides support throughout the application process. Opportunities are not dependent on personal connections as applications are anonymised before the shortlisting and selection process.

8. How is the programme funded?

The programme operates on a crowd-funded model, and companies are asked to make a financial contribution to support the management and delivery of the full programme of activity outlined above. This is dependent on the size of the company.

CforLP also seeks grant funding and corporate sponsorship to support the programme and enable underrepresented sectors and smaller businesses and charities to participate.

9. Are there different ways for businesses to get involved?

Yes, organisations and businesses can:

- Become a Host Company partner, hosting students for a Dream Placement and contributing financially to support the management of the programme that benefits all involved.

- Act as a lead sponsor, contributing financially to support the management of the programme and enabling another organisation to host a placement.

Any organisation can participate, including large employers, SMEs, public sector organisations, charities, and voluntary groups.

Host businesses are fully supported through the programme, with help to plan the placements, mentoring and interview skills training, and with regular partner meetings to share best practice and provide valuable networking opportunities with other host partners.

10. What are the benefits to taking part for my business?

- Gain fresh perspectives and ideas from young people
- Showcase their organisation and career opportunities
- Build leadership and mentoring skills within their workforce
- Enhance company visibility and PR opportunities
- Network with other organisations
- Help attract and retain future local talent, whilst supporting social impact

11. Why support the Dream Placement Programme?

By participating, your organisation will help shape the future workforce in Cumbria, support young people in developing essential employability skills and play an active role in a well-established, impactful community programme.

12. How do we support Dream Placement or find out more?

To get involved or discuss contribution options, contact:

- Email: nicola.woolley@cforlp.org.uk
- Registration form: [Dream Placement 2027 Company Registration Link](#)




A Collaboration between Cumbrian Businesses, Educators and Young People
































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