

Dream Placement 2027 – Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is Dream Placement?

Dream Placement is a fully managed programme that connects young people aged 16–18 in Cumbria with local organisations. It provides a structured programme of opportunities for students to develop essential employability skills, build confidence and be placement ready. 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. The programme is designed to support young people at a pivotal stage in their life, helping to raise awareness and aspirations.

The programme also provides an opportunity for young people to network and share their views and opinions with companies.

Q. When does the programme take place?

The programme runs from September to March each year and consists of the following activities:

- Promotional activities and workshops
- Networking and development events offered to all who apply
- Shortlisting, interview and selection activities
- Brokerage of additional opportunities for non-shortlisted applicants
- Placement support for applicants, including resources and placement ready events in different areas
- Placement week for selected applicants

Q. Who can apply?

Any young person aged 16-18 on the day of the Selection Event (8th December 2026) living or studying in Cumbria can apply.

Q. What is expected of an applicant?

Applicants are expected to:

- Complete the online application form by the closing date (26th October 2026)
- Attend the Network for Success and online development events in November (optional but recommended)
- Communicate and act in response to emails and messages – it is essential that those who apply respond when required and follow instructions to ensure they don't miss deadlines or key information.
- If shortlisted, attend the Selection Event in December.
- If placed, attend the Planning Events and Placement Week in February half term (alternatives can be discussed).

Q. Which companies are involved in the programme?

In previous years, at least 30 companies have offered placements as part of the programme. There are also additional companies involved who provide support sessions and events. Last year's host companies can be found on the CforLP website [here](#).

Throughout the application period, CforLP promotes which companies are involved so that young people can see who is offering placements. Companies are able to sign up to offer placements up until the end of October 2026. We would encourage everyone to apply regardless of which companies are involved, so that they can benefit from the skills/development opportunities the programme offers.

Q. How does the shortlisting work?

Applications are assessed by external judges after the application period ends. Shortlisting is based on criteria linked to attitude, motivation and potential, not just academic achievement. Following shortlisting by the judges, the host companies highlight who they would potentially like to interview, and then a matching process takes place between applicant interests and company opportunities to determine who is invited to the Selection Event for interviews.

Applicants find out if they have been shortlisted in mid-November.

Q. What happens for applicants who are not shortlisted?

Regardless of whether they are shortlisted or not, all applicants are offered opportunities for support and personal development including, networking and mentoring.

Q. What happens for applicants who are shortlisted?

Those who are shortlisted will be invited to attend the Selection Event on 8th December 2026. The Selection Event involves problem solving exercises and networking with host company representatives, followed by interviews with at least two companies.

The companies make their final selections for placements at the end of the Selection Event. On the day, attendees are asked for their company preferences following their interviews so if more than one company wants to offer the attendee a placement, their preference is taken into account.

Q. How is Dream Placement different from traditional work experience?

Dream Placement is structured like a job application process, over a six-month period. Applicants are supported with development activities throughout the programme and for many, the process leads to a week-long work experience placement.

Q. Is the programme inclusive?

Yes. The programme is open to all young people aged 16–18 living or studying in Cumbria, regardless of background, education, or academic ability. It focuses on potential rather than attainment and provides support throughout the application process. Placements are brokered directly with employers through the programme, ensuring opportunities are not dependent on personal connections and are distributed fairly.

To ensure that geographical location in the county is not a barrier to participation, we are currently looking at venue and transport options for the events associated with the programme this year. We are continuing to promote the programme to businesses throughout Cumbria, inviting new businesses to host placements and sponsor smaller organisations to get involved.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact:

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