



# EBSI and Spark! SEND Project 2019-2020

## Evaluation Report

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## Project Background

This project was instigated in response to 'Employability Services in Hounslow', a student survey commissioned by Spark! in 2018, which assessed the gaps in Work Related Learning Provision (WRL) in secondary schools. Responses from 200 students across 10 schools in Hounslow highlighted a significant gap in Careers and WRL provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Furthermore, feedback from schools reported a decline in differentiated careers provision for this specific cohort group due to historical funding cuts.

Supported by the Heathrow Community Trust and managed by EBSI and Spark! with extensive input from Fiona Kellam, SEND Consultant, the project was intended as a 2 phase project to:

1. Through a questionnaire, investigate and collect data on the specific gaps in SEND careers provision in Special Schools, Mainstream Schools and Pupil Referral Units across Hounslow, Ealing and Hillingdon
2. Develop and deliver a programme of pilot Employability and Enterprise (WRL) activities for 14-18 year old students with SEND, in order to fill the gaps identified and consider future sustainability.

The original timeline for delivery of the project was August 2019 to July 2020.

## Project Delivery and Outputs

### Phase 1 – Data collection

Phase 1 of the project was conducted from the start of the 2019-2020 academic year, with partners meeting to discuss aims, approach and timescales. Partners then met with Local Education Authorities and Connexions (Careers) officers to determine their existing level of involvement in WRL activities for SEND students, share knowledge and gain support for the project. It was noted that the Local Authorities supported different WRL interventions, and for this project did not engage directly, but supported getting projects into schools through their communication channels.

From the meetings, existing constraints for schools in delivering WRL for SEND students were noted, including:

- Transport
- Staffing
- Budget – an overriding element in most schools in delivering quality WRL provision
- Curriculum time constraints
- Lack of employer contacts and engagement

Partners then approached schools directly in order to further understand the landscape in schools, identify needs and gaps and determine the level of interest in the project. As schools were already evaluating their WRL provision using the Gatsby Benchmarks Framework<sup>1</sup>, partners developed an extensive survey posing questions formulated using the Gatsby Benchmarks to obtain data about:

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<sup>1</sup> The Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance provides a framework to support schools in providing students with the best possible careers education, information, advice, and guidance.

<https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/>

- existing whole school career plans, progress monitoring a self-assessment.
- level of existing WRL activity and careers advice for SEND students
- gauge level of parental involvement
- to understand the barriers schools and students face
- level of employer engagement
- timetabling considerations

The survey which was done online via Office 365 forms link was sent out to all special schools, mainstream and PRUs (Pupil Referral Units) across the three boroughs. Some delays in response were reported but partners worked hard to follow-up engagement with schools. A total of 13 replies out of a possible 30 schools were received.

### School survey responses

A summary of the key feedback from the survey is provided below:

- 12/13 schools had a whole school Career Plan and a responsible staff member for monitoring progression in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks. From 11 responses, 9 had completed the Compass self-assessment tool.
- 12 out of 13 schools said they had a programme of work related/work experience activities. Schools noted a range of activities including work experience/shadowing, mock interviews, taster college and employer visits, sections within PSHE curriculum and employability skills workshops. Although most schools appeared to offer some activity, there was a lack of consistency across schools with some schools providing more than others with one school who did not have a plan in place.
- The school survey showed that schools had a range of mechanisms in place for parental input regarding career development choices, however some schools undertook more engagement than others. Some schools reported that some parents/carers were not engaged or did not understand the specific employment pathways available, and/or had low aspirations or unrealistic employment aspirations for their children.
- Schools reported that the main difficulties they faced included:
  - external factors such as lack of employment, training and college places (8/13)
  - lack of time (7/13) – this included staff time to support and significant issues in finding significant time during the weekly curriculum.
  - learning abilities (3/13)
  - lack of student confidence to travel independently.
  - engaging employers
- Barriers faced by young people with SEND around employability cited by teachers included:
  - A lack of understanding of progression routes and suitable vacancies.
  - A lack of “clearly available programmes to support young people into employment – not just training through work experience, but a programme with a very real job at the end of it”.
  - A culture of university – one barrier is educating parents to think differently.
  - “For many people with disabilities, change is extremely challenging, and they struggle to transfer new skills to a different situation. They find it hard to compete in the labour market and would benefit from a coherent programme to support them through training and into employment with the training company”.

- Almost all the schools (12/13) said they would value more input from employers with only 1 stating they felt they had sufficient support. Example suggestions and comments for further input included:
  - mock interviews and speakers for assemblies
  - “as long as the services are free of charge”
  - “I would be interested in employers who might employ some of our young people with SEND as this is a significant area of concern...”
  - Need for support for students with high needs and “...behavioural concerns who need to understand the skills and attitude they need to be work ready”.

## Phase 2 – Programme Development & Delivery

Following the survey, interested schools, business and community partners were invited to attend a focus group in December 2019 held at British Airways Headquarters, to identify gaps in provision and identify suitable activities to take forward.

The focus group was attended well by schools, employers and community partners. Items discussed included:

- A presentation by EBSI/SPARK investigating the questionnaire responses in relation to how the schools delivered their WRL curriculum. Innovative ideas, problem areas and progression routes were highlighted. Through group discussions, successes and barriers were discussed and innovations identified.
- Meadow High School presented their comprehensive approach to their WRL pathways, the successes and the funding gaps for improvement.
- British Airways gave a presentation on Speedbird Z and attendees questioned how the approach created opportunities for students with SEND.
- Employer interest and additional opportunities for inclusion in the programme were raised for further consideration.

As a result of survey responses, feedback from the focus group and various discussions at meetings, a range of WRL activities were timetabled. The programme was designed to enable students to develop their understanding of the world of work and develop key employability skills through a blend of school workshops, on-site access to employers, and face to face interaction with business volunteers. The agreed programme included the following activities:

- Enterprise day
- Bespoke Tour at Uxbridge College
- Interview and CV skills session
- Industry day at Heathrow Terminal 5
- BA Innovation Challenge
- Outdoor skills/learning event

Despite a good start with delivery of 2 events in February and early March, the project was unfortunately put on hold due to Covid 19 restrictions and school closures introduced from 21<sup>st</sup> March. From an initial plan of 9 sessions (inclusive of 2 classroom preparation sessions), only 2 of the original timetabled sessions with students were completed reaching a total of 35 students from 2 schools.

EBSI and Spark! used the summer term to consider the future feasibility of the pilot with all stakeholders and an extension for the project was agreed with Heathrow Community Trust. After discussion with schools and employers about what could be realistically achieved under the restrictions, most of the employer site events were cancelled and some employer support was lost due to the impact of furlough measures and redundancies. Only 4 schools

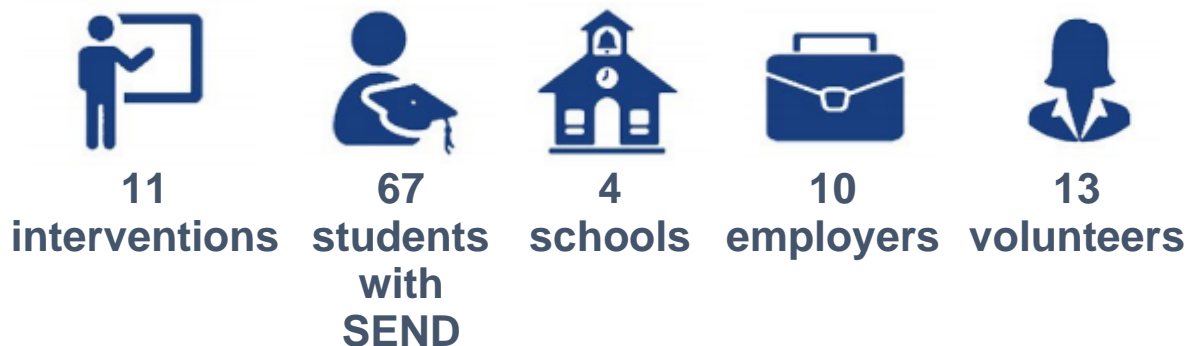
were able to commit to the continuing the pilot project and sessions were revised to remote delivery, focusing on CV preparation and mock interviews.

A further 9 sessions were delivered across 4 schools, with 32 students participating in total.

An additional 4 students from Catch 22 also took part with the intention to participate in additional outdoor learning sessions with Grass Roots Forest School, however it was concluded that this was no longer feasible due to the nature of the students and the lack of support from the schools due to staff shortage mainly due to sickness/Covid and not having a WRL timetable which allowed for supervision.

However, as EAP (Ealing Alternative Provision) had been able to take part in the CV preparation and mock interviews they were also able to work with the Grass Roots Forest School for the remainder of the days.

Overall, project outputs and reach included:



The schools involved in the project were:

- The Rise School
- Guru Nanak Sikh Academy
- Meadow High School – (mock interviews postponed due to last minute IT issues)
- Ealing Alternative Provision (Pupil Referral Unit)
- Featherstone (a bespoke visit with Garu Nanuk to Uxbridge College only)
- John Chilton (no sessions delivered as students were due to attend industry visit at Heathrow however the WRL co-ordinator was able to observe a workshop at a mainstream school for the Heathrow Innovators Challenge to suggest ways of introducing the Challenge to Special Schools)

Businesses involved in the project were:

- EBSI
- Spark!
- British Airways
- BSI Group
- GSK
- Strong Recruitment
- Scott White and Hookins
- Pfizer
- Hawk Training
- Marriott Group
- Mace

- Grass Roots Forest School

## Impact Evaluation

### Evaluation Methodology

In order to report on the effectiveness of the WRL (Work Related Learning) activities on young people with SEND, post-event surveys collecting qualitative and quantitative data were requested from all participants including students, teachers and employer volunteers. Some of this data from students and teachers was collated via survey monkey, whilst employers feedback forms were sent out to them individually.

Student evaluation surveys focused on: level of enjoyment and favourite aspects; post-event understanding and confidence on employability skills; confidence sharing acquired skill with employer; difficulties faced during the workshop; student learning about setting up a business; and any other comments.

Teacher evaluation surveys focused on: whether the event met needs of students; time allocation for activities; student learning outcomes; strengths of event and recommendations for improvements.

Employer volunteer evaluation surveys focused on: pre-event information and support; content suitability; student interest and participation levels; improvements and likelihood of supporting future events.

Survey response rates:

- Students:
  - (Enterprise Challenge Event) – 18 responses from a possible 22 beneficiaries from 1 school
  - (CV and Interview workshops) 8 responses from across 3 schools from a possible 67 beneficiaries across 4 schools - Meadow School event due to be rescheduled again.
- Teachers:
  - (Enterprise Challenge Event) – 12 responses from 1 school
  - (CV and Interview workshops) - 5 responses from 3 out of 4 participating schools - no response from Meadow School
- Employer volunteers: 8 responses representing 8 employers from a possible 13 volunteers from 10 employers.

## Student feedback

### (Enterprise Event)

- Student satisfaction and enjoyment was high with 92% of students rating the event 'Excellent' (17%), 'Good' (53%) and OK (22%).
- Students reported a range of skills developed, with 'following instructions' and 'being creative' identified as most significant.

#### What skills have you learnt today?

1. Problem solving	44%
2. being creative	92%
3. working under pressure	76%
4. making decisions	76%
5. working as a team	88%
6. communication skills - speaking and listening	88%
7. maths / finance	82%
8. following instructions	93%

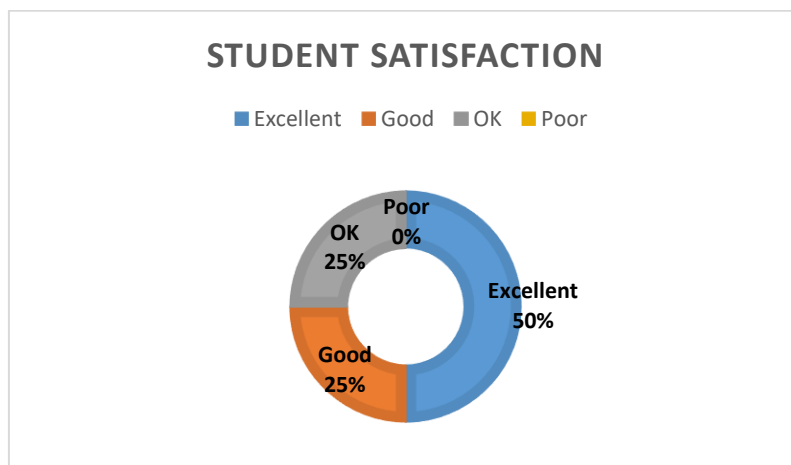
- Student understanding of setting up a business was evident, with students making the following remarks:



- "[I learnt] about marketing
- How to make a shoe X 2
- You need a lot of teamwork x 3
- I have learnt how to manage our business
- There is a lot of things to handle
- To make notes when you work together as a team
- It is hard!"

### (CV workshops)

- All students enjoyed the CV and Interview workshops with all students rating the workshops 'Excellent', 'Good' or 'OK'.



- Positive student satisfaction was also reflected in student comments with students being grateful for the opportunity and thanking volunteers for their time.

- The majority of students found the CV workshop information easy to understand, however there were a small number (2 out of 8) who found some aspects difficult, however specifics were not given.
- 3 out of 5 students said they understand what a CV structure is as a result of their participation, however 2 out of 5 students were still unsure, yet all said they would feel more confident sharing their CV with an employer as a result of their participation.
- Students also reflected they felt more confident about meeting new people from business.
- Favourite workshop elements cited by students included: being asked questions and being introduced to new people.
- Student confidence in creating their own CV was achieved with 100% saying they were more confident after the workshop.
- 100% of students indicated workshops gave them a better understanding of the interview process, and students reported they felt more confident about their next interview.

## Teacher feedback

### (Enterprise Event)

- The majority of teachers (88%) felt the event met the needs of the students participating and activities were explained clearly in a way that both teachers and students could understand (83%).
- 92% felt the time allocated for activities was appropriate.
- 92% said they enjoyed the event.
- Improvements suggested included:
  - using timers
  - a bit more time to further consider individual's SEN Needs
- When asked about the main strengths of the event, responses included:
  - Working as a team
  - allocated time
  - getting all pupils involved
  - boosting confidence
  - co-ordination
  - [encouraging students] to be brave.
  - gave courage and strength to those that don't shine normally
  - enough time for each session and various sessions well explained.
  - [students learning] resilience and respect
  - getting pupils to participate
  - team building
- Working as a team was the key student learning outcome identified by teachers. Other learning outcomes included:
  - An increased understanding of what is involved in running a business
  - Problem solving
  - Communication skills
  - Accepting others' ideas
  - Brought children out of their shell (confidence boosting)
  - Time management

### (CV workshops)

- 100% of teachers felt:
  - the programme met the needs of the students participating



- time allocated for the sessions was appropriate
- Longer term, these should be blended with face to face activities to enable young people to directly
- When asked to describe the learning outcomes from the activities, responses included:

- Building confidence and self-esteem
- Social skills
- Good opportunity to learn from mistakes in a formal learning environment
- Acquisition of key vocabulary used in CVs and mock interviews
- Increased confidence with the procedure of CV writing and mock interviews.

- Commenting on the main strengths of the CV and Interview sessions, 3 out of 5 teachers referenced the direct access given to employers and the individual feedback given to students. One teacher commented on the accessibility of the project, with every student being able to access the content. Other responses mentioned the teaching of key work related vocabulary and the opportunity for students to practise and develop their communication skills.
- Teachers provided suggestions for future improvements, including:
  - Increasing access to more students
  - Video clips of 'what not to do' in an interview to aid understanding
  - Increase preparation time
  - Providing an online form/link for creation of student CVs
- Reflections on the main difficulties of the programme included reference to the Covid 19 restrictions resulting in aspects of the course not being delivered and technical and access issues using the Google Meets virtual platform.
- 100% of schools unanimously agreed they would like to continue with the programme and commented:



*"Thank you for your support!"  
"Brilliant opportunity for our pupils."  
"...Great feedback, think students really benefitted from this experience!"*

## Volunteer Feedback

- 8 out of 13 volunteers completed post-event surveys for the CV and Interview workshops. The response rate can be viewed as good sample for analysis given this was over 50% of volunteers.
- Volunteers rated the information received prior to sessions as 'Excellent' (4/8), 'Good' (1/8), 'OK' (1/8) and no response (2/8). 2 volunteers commented that prior receipt of student CVs would have been helpful.
- 5 volunteers said the support from the school prior and during the activity was 'Excellent' or 'Good'. 3 out of 8 did not provide a response. One volunteer commented they would have liked more interaction from teachers at the beginning and end of the sessions. Another said they would have liked more information about the school prior to the event.
- In terms of student participation and interest during activities from a volunteer perspective, despite two volunteers reporting some mixed responses from students, the overall view was very positive.



*"I was charmed by him – [he] was so well prepared, lost his nerves quickly and had listened to pre-help".*



*"[Student participation and interest] was very good – my experience was that the individuals wanted to participate and the time went very quickly".*

*"Student interest was excellent.  
I felt like they really wanted to be there...  
They seemed genuinely interested to participate".*

- Volunteers were positive about the content of the sessions and interview questions provided for the students. Improvements suggested included providing students with some prior guidance about interviews being a two-way process to encourage questions from students and supporting students to do some research on the employer to enable them to ask questions.
- 100% of volunteers said they would support a similar event in the future.

## Analysis

- Firstly, it must be noted that this project was not delivered as originally intended due to the Covid 19 pandemic. School closures and strict social distancing measures resulted in a change of interventions both in terms of number and range of interventions, number of student beneficiaries and a move to remote delivery and CV and Interview sessions only. This inevitably had an impact on the number of student evaluations completed with issues such as student and staff isolation absences and a lack of access to students outside strict classroom measures, in order to allow a greater number of completed surveys.
- Overall looking across the feedback, it was felt the project was organised and delivered well and the majority of students were engaged and interested during sessions.
- The Enterprise event delivered pre lockdown was positively received by students and teachers and was successful in delivering in developing students' understanding of business and developing employability skills.
- Despite the limited number of student responses received for the CV and Interview workshops, the 8 responses that were received did demonstrate the events had a positive impact on increasing students' understanding and confidence in regard to CVs and the interview process.
- Overall, the responses from students were positive, however not all students gave top scores in response to questions asked about the workshops' impact. Although a spread of results is not unusual, especially when working with students with varying needs, it does however indicate that some students would have benefitted from additional preparation and/or further differentiation of the workshop to support a full understanding and higher survey responses. This was also reflected in employer volunteer feedback.
- In the absence of a larger sample of student responses, a reliance on teacher feedback needs to be considered. Overall, from the responses given across events, teachers were extremely positive with a high majority of teachers commenting that the project met the work related learning needs and delivered to meet students' specific learning needs. Teachers specifically detailed how the activities delivered against the aims of the project, developing students' confidence and self-esteem, social skills, knowledge of CVs and interview vocabulary and procedures, understanding the elements of running a business and developing key employability skills (e.g. team work, problem solving and time management).
- The beneficiary reach was somewhat limited, partly due to project changes due to the impact of Covid 19 and the need for a more personalised one-to-one approach. One school commented that they would have liked to increase access for more students and schools surveyed said they would be happy to conduct the programme again in the future, indicating an ongoing need.
- As a direct result of engaging with the programme, it could be argued that through their involvement, volunteers will speak positively about their experiences which in turn, will encourage their colleagues and employers to be more open to the idea of supporting employability related projects for young people with SEND; breaking down misconceptions and prejudices, and be more open to recruiting and training people with disabilities in the longer term.

## Improvements

The following recommendations for improvements to the project are made based on the feedback provided in post-event evaluations and therefore should be considered alongside any internal review from delivery partners:

- Although some comparisons were possible across participant groups, there was a lack of aligned questions across workshop surveys. By asking identical questions in relation to student impact from all participants for example, this may have provided a more aligned data responses for comparison.
- Survey response from schools was limited to 13 schools out of 30, more data could have been collated, had there been a stronger response from the schools.
- Although surveys did ask questions to assess the impact on understanding and confidence in relation to specific work related learning outcomes (e.g. increased understanding of CV structure), separate questions tracking pre and post session understanding and confidence in relation to work related learning outcomes may have offered additional data on the impact of the project, specifically on level of progress.
- Student qualitative feedback was limited, not only due to a lack of responses but perhaps also due to difficulties students may have faced interpreting and responding to questions, as well as time allocated by school for reflection of the event. Further adaptations to surveys could be made to ask more specific closed questions and providing students with a range of responses for them to choose from.
- Consider incorporating additional reflection time at end of each session for students to complete surveys to provide a larger sample for analysis.
- Technical delivery issues for the CV and Interview workshops did have some effect on the quality of delivery. This could be mitigated by ensuring all teaching staff and volunteers receive training on technology prior to delivery. Session content could also be adjusted to allow time to ensure for any technical difficulties to be resolved.
- In terms of content and delivery of sessions, the following improvements were suggested by participants for consideration:
  - Additional preparation time prior to delivery to consider some individual's specific learning needs
  - Use of timers, clocks, visuals and checklists
  - Increase preparation time for students
  - Share student CVs prior to sessions
  - Provide students with more information on the 2-way interview process and some example questions to support their confidence.
  - Video case studies of good and bad interviews

## Conclusions

EBSI and Spark! worked admirably to engage schools, employers and community stakeholders throughout the duration of the project. During phase 1 of the project, through an in-depth questionnaire to schools, they were able to ascertain gaps in WRL provision and identify student needs. Furthermore, the focus group conducted at British Airways with teachers, employers and community partners not only helped to further ascertain school and SEND students' needs but became a crucial catalyst in securing collective commitment for the project and developing shared ideas to take forward. As a result, partners developed a clear delivery plan to meet the identified needs of young people with SEND.

Unfortunately, the original plan was not delivered due to the Covid 19 pandemic, resulting in cancellation of events and withdrawal of some schools and employers from the project. Given the very difficult climate and restrictions however, all partners should be commended for their commitment to adapting and completing the project. Many other organisations delivering careers related provision in schools have only started to adapt their projects to remote delivery, often with internal expertise around online learning and/or with additional funding. Many have had to stop some projects altogether. Adapting and delivering the revised programme in such a short timescale with the challenges and uncertainty of Covid restrictions, especially for young people with specific learning needs, is a noteworthy achievement!

The evaluation data that was received was largely positive and it is evident that the project as delivered still met the needs of young people with SEND. The activities delivered were successful in achieving the aims of the project in developing SEND students' awareness and understanding of business and employers, whilst developing key employability skills and boosting confidence.

Even with tight social distancing restrictions, students benefitted from remote access to employers, their support and experience via the CV and Interview sessions. Given the positive feedback from the Enterprise Event run pre-Covid, the positive impact on the students would have no doubt been realised further with the delivery of the face to face interventions and employer visits as set out in the original delivery plan.

Only 1 in 6 people with a learning disability is currently in paid work, even though 65% express the desire to get a job (MENCAP 2016). People with a learning difficulty are excluded from the workforce more than any other group of disabled people and even though they have the same right to work as everyone else, they find it much harder to get a job.

Before Covid-19 SEND students in mainstream and special schools experienced patchy WRL activity, mainly due to a lack of funding and internal capacity in schools. With the rise in youth unemployment due to the pandemic, there is further evidence to support the continuation of WRL provision in schools, especially for those with SEND, to help them access employers and acquire the skills and confidence required for transition into adulthood and ultimately achieve their ambitions for employment.

Despite the project's limitations due to the effects of Covid 19, this pilot project demonstrates the value and ongoing need to support the continuation of bespoke employability projects for young people with SEND. The aim of the project was to reach 6 student per borough minimum, however both partners exceeded those numbers.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations provide some suggestions for continuation, growth and sustainability based on the data and feedback gathered during the project:

- Disseminate findings and recommendations with employer and community stakeholders involved in the project and ascertain interest in continuing immediate support for SEND students.
- The CV and Interview workshops conducted are good examples of how employability sessions can be delivered virtually for young people with SEND. Despite some of the technical issues faced, it is evident the young people clearly benefitted and continuation is recommended where possible, especially as these have been established with positive results. As noted under session improvements, school staff would benefit from tech training to ensure smooth delivery.
- In the school survey, a suggestion of speakers for assemblies was made. This is something that could be explored further for remote delivery, especially when remote working is likely to remain high, even after the current social distancing restrictions are lifted. With more potential business volunteers working remotely, there will be an increased interest and shift to virtual volunteering opportunities.
- Roll out the SEND Enterprise event to more schools (when able) given the positive results achieved through the pilot. The event could also be adapted for different age groups to allow for a whole school approach which may be attractive to schools. It could also be delivered as an event across schools and employers, bringing students with similar needs together. This would reduce costs and times for both schools and employers and could potentially become an annual flagship event to build and maintain networks.
- Despite their level of interest, a barrier identified throughout the project was a lack of time to deliver WRL programmes. Outside agencies can provide assistance and expertise to reduce needed teacher time, however this requires additional funding.
- As schools are already using the Gatsby Framework to plan their provision, any future activities should be mapped against the benchmarks when promoting to schools. This may help to engage new schools (beyond the 10 who registered interest in the project) as they can see how the work supports them achieving the benchmarks.
- More WRL opportunities for SEND students with employers was highlighted as an area of need. Although into-work opportunities was cited as a significant gap, it is unrealistic to expect this to happen quickly. A first step at increasing support for SEND students would be to identify employers currently engaged in supporting schools and/or WRL provision in schools such as and seek their support for delivering differentiated and specific interventions. Sharing the successes of the CV and Interview sessions and Enterprise may help to increase interest.
- One of the barriers to employer support could be a lack of confidence in supporting the needs of students with SEND. Training and guidance could be offered by partners to build employer understanding and expertise in working with young people with SEND.
- To increase employer support for schools and future initiatives, larger employers with internal employer diversity and disability networks could be approached. Discussions with HR contacts would also be beneficial to not only understand the diversity needs of employers and understand the difficulties employers face in support employment support for young people with SEND, but to identify and start demystifying some of the misconceptions employers may have around young people with SEND.
- The school survey showed that schools had a good range of mechanisms in place for parental input regarding career development choices, however reported some

parents/carers were not engaged or did not understand the specific employment pathways available and/or had low aspirations or unrealistic employment aspirations for their children. The project also intended to engage parents/carers, however due to the Covid pandemic this was not possible. Going forward, parents could be engaged by:

- carrying out a survey and a focus group to:
  - understand their views regarding their involvement in careers planning for their child(ren)
  - gain insight into their employment expectations for their children (and if/how they differ to their child's aspirations and school views)
  - gauge their level of awareness regarding the employment and training opportunities and pathways available to their child(ren)
  - gain ideas on what they feel is needed from schools and employers in supporting young people with SEND into employment
- raising awareness of any WRL activities delivered through school communication channels
- working with local agencies, employers, colleges and training providers to provide information on the post-16 opportunities available locally to increase awareness and develop realistic expectations (this would also be beneficial for students and was noted as a need in the phase 1 survey).
- Enlisting the support of other alternative education providers, such as The Grass Roots Forest School, was a strength of the project and future collaboration is encouraged.
- Share findings with other WRL providers such as other Education Business Partnerships, seeking feedback on their experiences of SEND WRL provision to determine similarities and register interest in future collaboration and joint funding opportunities.
- Overall from the research undertaken by EBSI and Spark, despite efforts by schools, there remains a lack of consistency and opportunities for young people with SEND in the 3 boroughs, a lack of networks, capacity, expertise and funding. In order to make significant impact on the employability of young people with SEND, a longer term strategic and joined up approach is recommended. One suggestion would be to establish a cross borough, cross sector 14-19 SEND Employment Action Group. This could be managed by EBSI/Spark and act as a forum to advise and support LEAs, schools, colleges and local employers and develop a strategy and framework for the delivery of SEND WRL and employment related opportunities at a local level. The approach would build upon the findings from the pilot project to potentially develop a larger framework of activities partners pledge to engage with and support both in-kind and financially. One specific goal would be to develop a programme of supported training and into-employment opportunities for young people with SEND, which was raised as a significant need but was not a focus of this project.

## Appendix - Note about Report Author

Rebecca Wood is a Freelance Charity and CSR Consultant with over 13 years' direct charity experience supported by 4 years' experience in central and local government strategy and communications. Specialisms include: charity business development and strategy; fundraising; corporate partnerships; and programme and project development, management

and evaluation. Specific interests include supporting charities working with young people, especially those promoting and supporting the needs of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.