Spotlight On… Virtual Work Inspiration Suffolk

In order to meet the needs of young people during the covid pandemic and changing world of work, Virtual Work Inspiration Suffolk was created. The programme is an exciting opportunity for employers, employees, apprentices, and the self-employed to provide young people in Suffolk with an insight into their organisation, its operations, and their sector.

The Virtual Work Inspiration Suffolk (VWIS) Discover Your Future (DYF) programme was delivered by a team comprising of:

* Suffolk County Council,
* the New Anglia Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) and
* the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco), a Uni Connect partnership.

The three partners brought together expertise in careers, aspirations, employer engagement and progression.

The pilot programme between April – July 2021, aimed to enable students to have meaningful and informative virtual experiences to help raise aspirations, equip them with 21st century skills and broaden their understanding of the local jobs market and pathways.

It also offered employers, employees and the self-employed a flexible approach to engaging in careers education, with a limited time commitment.

Many virtual work experience or inspiration opportunities are not embedded in the curriculum, so do not necessarily reach those who need the opportunities most; the VWIS DYF programme sought to ensure access for all students in the classroom. It was, however, not intended to replace work experience.

The programme was developed based on the Career Development Institute (CDI) Framework and aimed to contribute to Gatsby Benchmarks 1-5 and 7.

Across ten sessions, the programme focused around five themes:

* + Exploration (Industry Sectors)
	+ Skills
	+ Enterprise and Entrepreneurship
	+ Pathways
	+ Resilience

# West Suffolk Council

West Suffolk Council were very keen to support with the programme as one of the three participating schools Sybil Andrews Academy is located in the District. They provided employees to support with the ‘Skills’ Theme:

* Students understand the concept of skills and the different types.
* Students can recognise their own skills and how to develop them.
* Students can identify those skills can be transferable across a variety of sectors and job roles.

Suport from West Suffolk Council included Ian Gallin Chief Executive, and Jennifer Eves HR Legal and Democratic Director.

In addition to the ‘Skills’ theme West Suffolk Council employees supported with Mock Interviews at the end of the programme too and are committed to champion and assist any future careers-based activity within schools in their District.

If you would like further information about this programme or are a Council who is keen to get involved in this programme or in other areas across the region please contact emma.grant@eelga.gov.uk

**Key information about the partners:**

Suffolk County Council Skills Team support a wide range of organisations as part of their aim to provide work inspiration to young people across the county.

* The New Anglia Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) are part of a national initiative that aims to raise the quality of careers provision in secondary schools and colleges, form lasting connections with employers and education and inspire young people to make informed decisions about future career choices. The New Anglia Enterprise Adviser Network is [managed nationally by the Careers and Enterprise Company, tailored locally in partnership with New Anglia LEP](%E2%80%A2%09https%3A/newanglia.co.uk/the-new-anglia-enterprise-adviser-network/).
* The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) aims to help young people from East Anglia with little or no experience of university to explore the world of higher education. We work with students in years 9-13 who live in areas identified by the Government with low rates of progression to higher education. At the centre of our approach is our [Take Your Place](https://www.takeyourplace.ac.uk/progressive-framework) programme of activities. Take Your Place is delivered to students by our Higher Education Champions who are based in schools and colleges across the region.