

## Work Discovery Sunderland

### Summary

Sunderland City Council is committing to engaging with 75 businesses to participate in Work Discovery Sunderland and offer to all Sunderland secondary schools the opportunity to participate in the programme to give local students an insight to the world of work in the City.

Work Discovery includes a range of activity such as career fairs, challenges, and workshops and helps forge new relationships and cement existing relationships between schools and businesses in the city.

To support this agenda, the Government should require all schools and academies to have at least one business representative on the governing body to support the agenda, and to support all schools and academies to enable all teaching staff to be given the opportunity of a professional development placement in industry and commerce to enhance their awareness of local economic opportunities.

### Commitment:

We will commit to engage with 75 businesses to participate in Work Discovery Sunderland and offer to all Sunderland secondary schools the opportunity to participate in the programme to give local students an insight to the world of work in the City.

### Approach:

We will achieve this by continuing to support the business community, through the Business Schools Task Group (a sub-group of the City's Economic Leadership Board) to deliver a successful year-round programme of work discovery activity.

### Government support:

Local partners are committed to building on existing and developing new school-business relationships to ensure all young people are exposed to business and enterprise opportunities. To achieve this, we ask that Government:

1. Require all schools and academies to have at least one business representative on the governing board and that they are tasked with actively supporting this agenda
2. All schools and academies should be supported to enable all teaching staff to be given the opportunity of a professional development placement in industry and commerce (a minimum of one-day placement per academic year) to raise their awareness of the local economic opportunities and enable learning from the business placement to enhance the teaching and learning experience. For example, the Government could direct all schools and academies to use at least one of annual allocated INSET days for this activity.

## **Aims:**

We will deliver a local campaign to bring together local leaders, citizens and businesses to develop local solutions to directly address the challenges the local community currently face.

In practice, this means working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to develop solutions based on local intelligence and recognised need, where the private sector, supported by the local authority, facilitates the necessary relationships and influence to stimulate enterprise and growth, and skills development and skills investment.

Sunderland City Council has a long and successful tradition of working with the local business community to support business investment and job creation. In recent years, this working relationship has expanded to be more than just direct intervention, but working with the business community, listening to their needs and wants, and working together on designing and implementing solutions.

**Work Discovery Week – Sunderland** was launched in 2013 as a unique initiative from the city's Economic Leadership Board's Business-Schools Task Group, organised to forge new relationships and cement existing relationships between schools and businesses in the city. The success of the week was such that it was repeated in 2014, with even more businesses taking part and a more far reaching programme of activities.

The mix of careers fairs, challenges, workshops and visits was hailed as such a trailblazing initiative that it was then held up nationally as an example of best practice. Now firmly fixed on the calendar, the third Work Discovery Week will be taking place from June 29 to July 3 2015. A number of significant businesses from around the region are sponsoring the event, which is also being supported by core partners Sunderland City Council, Sunderland AFC and North East Chamber of Commerce.

More than 1000 school pupils are involved each year, taking part in activities ranging from careers fairs to business challenges, visits to companies, workshops and hands-on activities. Many of the region's biggest employers - including SAFC, Nissan, Gentoo, Sunderland University, Sunderland College and Arriva- support the event. .

The success of Work Discovery Week was built on by the extension of the programme throughout the year, thanks to the introduction of a range of sector specific one day events (including Health & Care, Hospitality, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Software and Utility sectors) and a number of inspirational guest speaker days where young people hear about the career paths of business people from a whole host of backgrounds and giving pupils from across Sunderland the opportunity for unique insights into a wide variety of industries.

**Gary Hutchinson, commercial director of Sunderland AFC and co-chair of the task group, said:**

"Work Discovery Week-Sunderland was such a huge success last year and forged relationships which have continued on since then. The support from businesses across the region has been superb and we've achieved everything we set out to do and more. It's very gratifying that this has worked so well that it is being held up in other areas as an example of how schools and businesses can work together."

**Cllr Harry Trueman, Deputy Leader Sunderland City Council, said:**

"Work Discovery Week has been held up as a blueprint for a successful partnership between schools and business and after the huge success of last year it's extremely rewarding to know that not only is it back but that even more companies are involved this time round. This initiative continues to go from strength to strength and is giving young people in Sunderland a real opportunity to build relationships and find out more about the world of work."