



Supporting young people across Cumbria in their leadership development

Unique leadership and placement programme
for young people in Cumbria



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What is Dream Placement?

- Dream Placement is a leadership and development programme for all 16-18 year olds across Cumbria
- It gives real world experience of leadership and the workplace, connecting young people with businesses
- It operates between September and March, and is free of charge to all young people
- Successful candidates progress to their Dream Placements with local host organisations, delivered in the week of February half-term
- Everyone applying receives development guidance, advice and opportunities as they connect with employers



ASPIRATIONS

“Dream Placement was a brilliant opportunity to be able to gain valuable work experience with companies matching your interests. I loved my week and feel it has better prepared me to both make decisions about my future and reach the goals I do decide on, through developing my skills and knowledge.”



Jack | Cockermouth School | Placement with Nuclear Waste Services

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- It is vital for Cumbria because we need to retain and support our young people into local employment
- Many of the brightest students leave the county for university, never to return. Many other students are challenged by educational attainment or personal circumstances
- Young people frequently don't realise the wealth of opportunities that exist on their doorstep with little awareness or understanding of local businesses and career options



“Dream Placement is your opportunity to educate young people about all the sectors and roles within your business. No matter how big or small!”

Jen Hewitt | Business Operations Lead | Paragon Vets

What is the impact?



“I was extremely apprehensive around my placement week at first. However, the further I got into it the more I connected with the people and I felt much more comfortable. I think that the site visits were an incredible thing to be a part of, as that real-world experience is absolutely valuable.”

**Daniel | Caldew School
Placement with Stobbs Limited**

“I believe that Dream Placement is really good at providing the right opportunities to make sure young people can start networking at a younger age, in order to plan for our future.”

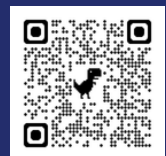
**Sian | Whitehaven Academy
Placement with Josh MacAllister OBE MP**



“The placement was exciting and opened me up to many opportunities and allowed me to meet new people – employers and young people.”

**Evie | West Lakes Academy
Placement with Mott MacDonald**

Scan to view the latest case studies:



Benefits to your organisation

- Dream Placement connects your business to a wider range of young Cumbrians who enthusiastically apply to learn about local opportunities and develop their skills.
- You will meet students who may have never thought to contact you or who may have lacked the confidence to do so. Through this supported programme companies of all shapes and sizes can have equal access to Cumbria's future talent.
- Involvement helps to develop your own staff members.
- You have the opportunity to task young people with business problems or projects during their placement week to gain fresh perspectives and develop new ideas.
- Dream Placement helps your organisation to build networks with other host company partners and raise the profile of your business.

“Dream Placement is a brilliant opportunity to meet fantastic students and partners and network with one another. Students and other partners can offer fresh insights and perspectives. The placement and events are a learning opportunity not just for the students, but for us partners. It is a lovely programme to be part of.”



Sarah Hilton | Information Security Officer | Cumberland Council



“It is a fantastic opportunity to meet some incredibly motivated and positive young people, giving them a chance to experience the world of work and also to gain a different perspective for your organisation.”

Tara Edwards | Chief Officer | Citizens Advice Allerdale

Benefits to young people

- Increased confidence by taking part in Dream Placement.
- Improved understanding of their own values and strengths and how these can be applied.
- Inspiration to set goals for the future and increased motivation to achieve them.
- Greater awareness of different careers and how their own skills and strengths fit with these.
- Opportunities to listen to the views of others.
- Motivation to take action to help others succeed.
- Development of a wide range of skills including; communication, adaptability, teamwork, listening, presenting, observing, independent working, professionalism, discipline and organisation.



Our commitment to you

We make it easy for you to take part and connect with young people, providing support at every stage of the Dream Placement journey, from joining the programme and interacting with young people to creating a Dream Placement that benefits your business and our young candidates.

- We organise various events both online and face to face to help you connect with the large number of Dream Placement applicants.
- We take care of all safeguarding and consent requirements for all events.
- We offer training and support with safeguarding and risk assessments for your placement week.
- We offer training on engaging with young people and mentoring.
- We can help to plan your week if you need us to, and useful guidance and resources are available to all host companies.
- We can connect you with your local schools by joining us on a promotional visit. Increasing visibility from the first stages of the programme.
- On-going support is provided through our monthly online partner meetings. Enabling you to network and share best practice.
- We promote your involvement through on-going PR and marketing.

As a valued Dream Placement partner, we can advertise apprenticeships and vacancies and broker other work experience opportunities to the Dream Placement Alumni and through Cumbria Future Generations.



Financial Contribution

- Dream Placement is always FREE for young people taking part, and we rely on support from businesses to fund and sponsor this programme
- The contribution varies depending on the size of organisation. Large businesses help us to subsidise smaller businesses. Where possible, we ensure that charities and third sector organisations which want to offer a Dream Placement, can come on board free of charge
- Your contribution also helps to fund Cumbria Future Generation, a programme for all 16-30 year olds living in Cumbria. This programme is designed to continue the development of young people and give them access to opportunities, resources, vacancies, apprenticeships, networking events and more.

“Our Dream Placement experience – I would tell other companies about the opportunities it offers young people and how to get company names out there, giving students the chance to sign up to apprenticeships in the future.”



**Lucy Higgins | Project Management Apprentice and Social Value Lead
Bechtel**

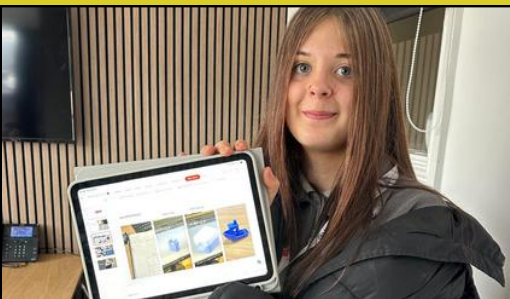


“If you are on the fence about signing up for Dream Placement, just go for it!”

**Jane Woodock | Professional Practice Lead
Cumberland Council – Adult Social Care**

Key dates and steps

April to October 2026	Company recruitment
start of September 2026	Opening date for student applications
October 2026	Network for Success Events
end of October 2026	Closing date for student applications
weekly in November 2026	Online Development Events
early December 2026	Selection Event
late January 2027	Placement planning
February half-term 2027	Dream Placement Week



STEP 1 | APPLICATIONS & SCHOOL VISITS

Young people aged 16-18 submit applications to the Centre for Leadership Performance. CforLP reviews the applications and makes a short-list of students who will be invited to attend a selection event.

STEP 2 | DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

All applicants will be automatically invited to register for a series of evening online events, in which they can meet and greet the host companies, learn more about Dream Placement and the partners involved and develop key skills to help them on the next steps of the programme.

STEP 4 | PLACEMENT READY EVENT

The students get together with their host companies for a morning of activities organised and facilitated by CforLP, such as goal setting and skills audits, to get everyone prepared for the placement week.

STEP 3 | SELECTION EVENT

Successfully shortlisted students are invited to attend an event involving activities, networking and interviews organised and facilitated by CforLP. Host companies attend to interview 6 pre-selected candidates with the aim of selecting their final Dream Placement Candidates.

STEP 5 | ONGOING TRAINING & SUPPORT TO EMPLOYERS

CforLP will provide all Host Companies with an ideas and expectations guidance document, media pack and access to Working with Young people training as our commitment to supporting your placement week. A CforLP team member is always available to provide information and advice as required and guide companies through the programme.

STEP 6 | DREAM PLACEMENT WEEK

The Dream Placement takes place – the exact programme of the week varies depending on the type of host company and the interest of the student but all will experience leadership in action and learn what Cumbria's employers have to offer for capable and ambitious young people.

STEP 8 | MAINTAINING CONTACT CUMBRIA FUTURE GENERATION

A development network and online platform full of careers information and opportunities locally for young people.

STEP 7 | PLACEMENT FOLLOW UP

After the placement week the students and companies get the chance to feedback on their Dream Placement week and CforLP create a project showcase film to share everyone's experiences.

What businesses say



“Dream Placement differs from Forth’s own work-experience programmes mainly in its structure, preparation and student readiness. The programme provides a much more organised and well-defined framework, with development events and a Selection Event that ensure students arrive highly motivated and well prepared. The matching process also creates a stronger alignment between student interests and what we can offer. In contrast, our internal work-experience tends to be more informal and varies depending on the individual student. Dream Placement also offers wider visibility, PR benefits and opportunities to connect with other employers, which our own programmes don’t naturally provide.”

Ken Johnston | Business Liaison Manager | Forth Engineering

“Dream Placement is a wonderful opportunity to provide valuable work experience in a very competitive field and we were delighted to be involved.”



Kate Sowerby | HR Officer | Burnetts Solicitors LLP



“Dream Placement has given us an opportunity to represent the arts and music sector in Cumbria, to young creative people. All stages of the process are explained well and the team is very responsive if you have any questions.”

**Amelia Wilson | Admin and Marketing Assistant
Soundwave Cumbria**



What pupils say

“I think Dream Placement is a great opportunity and everyone should take it. I love how it helps anyone, from any background, to be able to get the opportunity to work in a place for a week, which they feel passionate about. It does open up doors for everyone who participates.”

Wanessa | Ullswater Community College
Placement with Burnetts Solicitors LLP



“The placement was excellent it gave me the opportunity to speak to different people with such a wide range of personalities, interests and views, to get an idea of the environments in the hospital from different perspectives. Also, I really appreciated how much the NHS representative listened to my interests during my interview and then personalised the departments to my ideas on what I might want to do in the future, so that I could gain experience and ask questions that can inform my career path.”

Edith | Cockermouth School
Placement with North Cumbria Integrated Care, NHS Foundation Trust

“I learned a lot on my placement, which has let me realise what I want to do with my future.”

Ace | St Benedict's Catholic High School
Placement with William Hare

“This was a really valuable experience, during which I gained a lot of knowledge, both about the work I was doing and about the workplace in general. I really enjoyed both the selection event and the placement itself and I think they will be valuable assets in my future.”

Rebecca | Cockermouth School
Placement with Actemium

“Art Gene were a lovely company and it's definitely set me up with more idea of what I'd look for in a future career.”

Kara | Queen Elizabeth Grammer School
Placement with Art Gene

“I have been able to do a variety of tasks throughout the week, which has been really helpful in experiencing the work that the Trust does. I have loved spending time and getting to know staff, so as to help me in thinking about my next steps after A-levels. I have really enjoyed the fact that I have pushed myself out of my comfort zone and experienced a range of new things, from interviews to hedge laying, and it has all helped me to get one step closer to my future path.”

Isabella | Ullswater Community College
Placement with West Cumbria Rivers Trust

“I feel more confident going into interviews and I am more confident that I will do well throughout my applications.”

Ava | Workington Academy
Placement at Mott MacDonald

“The people on the placement were welcoming and it helped my confidence.”

Charlotte | Cockermouth School
Placement with Paragon Vets

Did you know...

By working closely with young people throughout their leadership journey, we have developed an understanding of their development needs as they transition into employment or higher education. Our Early Careers programmes are designed with Cumbria's young people and businesses to ensure the services we deliver are tailored to real-life requirements.

Cumbria Future Generation

CFG supports 16-30 year olds as they transition into employment or higher education, offering tailored support, opportunities, and resources to help them take their next steps with confidence.

CFG STEERING GROUP

A diverse group of young people and youth representatives who meet to shape and signpost activities and opportunities for 16-30 year olds in Cumbria.

LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

Leadership Insights are short online events with local leaders from different backgrounds sharing their inspirational stories of leadership.

YOUR VOICE

Your Voice events provide young people with a platform to find out about local topics that matter to them.

LEARN 2 LEAD

Learn 2 Lead delegates join a diverse cohort of young people on this unique 6-month leadership development programme.

WORKSHOPS

A series of bespoke sessions designed to develop confidence, communication, teamwork, leadership, resilience and other employability skills.

MENTORING

Mentoring can help those in their Early Career to develop their confidence and learn new skills.

NETWORKING

Networking can be daunting, so we have developed a unique buddying service to build confidence and equip young people with the skills and tools to network.

SHADOWING

Shadowing provides employees with the opportunity to work alongside, and gain experience and insights from another individual.

How can you or your organisation get involved?

- Discuss your leadership needs in your organisation with us to see how we can support your Early Career employees
- Fund our work and Cumbria Future Generation as part of your Social Impact activities to ensure wider access to our programmes
- Send us your opportunities to showcase through our Cumbria Future Generation FREE opportunity platform for young people to help raise the profile of your business, reach more young people and support your long-term recruitment needs
- Volunteer your time to mentor a young person in their Early Career
- Volunteer your time and expertise to speak at an event
- Volunteer to support the Cumbria Future Generation Steering Group and encourage your young professionals to join
- Signpost your Early Career employees to Cumbria Future Generation to find additional development opportunities outside of work such as networking and training
- Sign up to our newsletter to find out the latest news and opportunities for your team

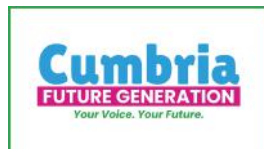
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Thank you for the ongoing support from
our Dream Placement partners and
supporters.

Supported by



A collaboration between Cumbrian businesses,

2026 host company partners:



Burnetts
Law. People. Business.



gleeds



FORTH®



educators and young people





Since 2013 we have engaged with **2,152** young people across Cumbria to offer leadership development opportunities and enabled **645** Dream Placements.

Lifelong leadership learning in Cumbria

Since 2011, the Centre for Leadership Performance has worked with educators, employers and young people to build an inclusive lifelong leadership journey from primary school to boardroom. We have built positive and enduring relationships that connect these stakeholders and promote collaborative action to develop Cumbria's leaders for today and tomorrow.

PRIMARY

Working with over 150 Cumbrian primary schools we provide leadership opportunities and connect them with businesses in meaningful ways, bringing learning to life through real-world examples as we nurture aspirations, confidence and self-belief. Our Bright Stars flagship programme continues to excite and engage young people and is held twice a year (starting April and October). Primary schools are partnered with local companies and organisations to create social enterprise businesses that 'make a profit and make a difference' to impact an issue that the children choose.

SECONDARY

Development programmes delivered in schools and youth group settings enable young people to have their voices heard on key issues and work on real projects that enhance their leadership and key employability skills, ignite aspirations and build confidence and self-belief. Businesses and young people work together on key issues and business challenges, raising awareness of local careers and jobs through programmes including Leading Change and Dream Placement.

EARLY CAREERS

Supporting 16-30 year olds in their transition from education to employment by providing leadership development via real-life learning experiences. We facilitate Cumbria Future Generation, which enables young people to connect with one another and relevant opportunities, including our development programmes, Learn2Lead, Your Voice and Skills Academies, which are co-designed with young people to ensure they are tailored to the unique needs of this dynamic age group.

WORK PLACE

We work with a range of businesses across different sectors within Cumbria providing opportunities for managers and leaders to share learning and best practice. They build vital support networks through programmes including our flagship Leader 2 Leader, short courses, action learning sets and shadowing. Clients from primary to board room are encouraged to join our leadership community and build future talent while maximising the strengths of their existing workforce.

To find out about all CforLP programmes contact:

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