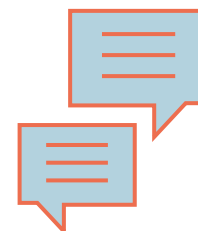


Gathering Feedback and Learnings from Activities

This document will take you through how to gather effective and meaningful feedback to inform your future activity and allow you to reflect on the learnings from any activity undertaken. It is important that you are able to carry out feedback as this will help you to see the benefits to your business as well as the impact on your employees and the young people they have supported and allow you to be better informed for the future.



Feedback

You should be seeking feedback from:

- **Your employees:** from an employer's perspective, one of the biggest benefits of supporting SEND students, is the personal developmental opportunity it offers your employees. Great practice is where you see these volunteering experiences as part of your employee development, and this is recognised within their performance discussions and objective setting. You can capture feedback via:
 - A group discussion involving everyone who volunteered. These can often stimulate more feedback as individuals share their experiences which each other.
 - Holding one to one meetings with employees. This is a good idea if the individual was taking part to develop a particular skill or competence and could be incorporated as part of their normal performance discussion.
 - Using a survey, which is particularly useful if you want to keep feedback anonymous.
 - Using feedback forms for employees to complete.
- **Your leaders and managers:** of those who contributed to this activity. Positive changes in employees and teams can be noticed by leaders and managers. Supporting students with SEND can be a hugely rewarding experience and if your leaders and managers see this, they are more likely to continue providing their support and approval, which may lead to a more sustainable commitment, for example, setting up a supported internship programme.
- **Teaching staff at the school/college:** it's hugely important that their students have access to employers as part of their career activities. You will want to know that your support has made a positive difference and delivered what they were expecting. There may have been particular skills they were looking for their students to develop, so it's helpful to know if what you delivered, met these needs. Their feedback will be really important if you are planning on continuing to support their students in the future.

Feedback (continued)

You should be seeking feedback from:

- **The students:** the school/college will capture this feedback and share with you what they are permitted to. For some students, this will be their first encounter with an employer so don't underestimate the positive impact a successful activity can have on them. As well as capturing the student's feedback on what they learnt, the school/college will also ask them to share how the experience made them feel. It can be very powerful and motivating to hear how your support made a young person with SEND, feel optimistic about their future and hopeful that they will go onto achieve meaningful employment. A great characteristic for many students with SEND is their honesty, so be prepared to receive their honest feedback – it'll be a great learning experience for you.
- **The students' parents/carers:** likewise, for the students, the school/college will obtain this feedback and share with you what they can. Equally as powerful as the students' feedback themselves, is that from their parents and carers. Especially if you are supporting students over a longer period of time, parents/carers are often amazed at the positive changes in their behaviour, confidence and social skills.



Structuring Feedback

To help in structuring feedback, here are some key areas you can focus on:

- **The level of engagement, communication and support** you had with the school/college prior to the event as well as throughout the activity. It's key you get this feedback from your lead employee, or whoever was the main link to the school/college. For example, was the school/college forthcoming with information or did you find you had to ask lots of questions to obtain the information you needed. Likewise, you need to ask the school/college for this feedback too.
- **The level of planning and preparation** for the activity and whether this was sufficient. For example, were there some last-minute requests for materials or technical issues that could have been avoided.
- **The clarity of roles and the level of involvement** employees had. For example, did all employees feel that they contributed and made a difference, or did they feel that they didn't have a specific role and would like more responsibility next time.
- **What went well.** Capture what went well from all key stakeholders so that next time you can ensure you do these again. For example, the internal communications that was shared with employees generated lots of interest and offers of support, so the same approach can be taken next time.
- **Areas for improvement.** Again, from all key stakeholders, capture areas that you could improve on next time. For example, if you hosted a virtual 'A day in the life of...' session, could you have shared guidance on video conference etiquette to avoid unnecessary noises and distractions.
- **Location and logistics.** Where the activity took place can have a big impact on its success, as well as ensuring that everyone and everything got to where it should have been. For example, if you were sharing materials with the school/college prior to the activity, did they get to the right person in plenty of time.
- **Measures and learning outcomes.** If you identified some key measures in the planning stage, you can use the feedback process to check whether these were met. For example, if there were measures for some employees to develop a particular skillset, you can incorporate this within your feedback method to check whether it was met or not. Similarly, the school/college will have identified learning outcomes for their students and will check whether these have been met. Ask the school/college to share this with you, as this will be great insight into the success of the activity and highlight any opportunities you may wish to support in the future.



Reflect on Your Learning

Once you've captured and reviewed the feedback, reflect on what you've learnt. It is extremely likely that you will have learnt things that will benefit your organisation, your working environment, your employees, your working practices and how you do business.

Unfortunately, many employed people with learning disabilities are not comfortable in sharing their condition(s), as they fear it will have a negative impact on how they are treated. So the learning and insight you gain from supporting SEND students can really make a positive difference to how you ensure your existing and future employees feel included, meaning you are more likely to benefit from an inclusive, diverse and multi-talented workforce.

Further areas to evaluate and reflect on:

- **How you communicate.** You may have adapted how you communicated throughout this experience to ensure you met the needs of the students and the school/college. Whether this was the clarity of the language you used or the means of communication, the chances are, some of these adaptations will be beneficial to your own organisation.
- **For virtual activities,** you may have identified areas of improvement regarding the technology used, or the school/college may have advised on a type of assistive technology that best suits their students. Many operating systems have in-built assistive technology that you may not be aware of and which could benefit some of your employees.
- **Accessibility of your office/site and working environment.** You may have needed to make some adjustments if the activity you supported was held at one of your premises. This could have been ensuring there was a quiet area for students or being in an area of the office where the lighting could be adjusted. Again, these are adjustments that could benefit some of your employees.
- **Breakdown of activities and tasks.** Throughout the experience, you may have seen teaching staff break-down some of the activities or tasks into smaller steps, to aid student's understanding so that they can carry it out themselves. This may have involved the use of visuals and symbols. Experiencing this, may encourage you to look at your own processes and procedures and consider if there are ways in which these can be improved.
- **Further school/college opportunities.** There are many ways in which employers can support schools/colleges and their students. Through your engagement with teaching staff, you may have already identified a specific need, for example, in supporting STEM subjects, or it could be that the school/college would really appreciate a team of employees helping them clear an overgrown area of the school grounds. Many schools and colleges look to develop long-lasting relationships with

employers, to provide a sustainable provision of work encounters and experiences of the workplace.

- **Real life business project.** You may have a current or upcoming project or problem that you will be working on, that can provide students with the opportunity to further develop their skills. During the activity you delivered, you may have seen some great skills being demonstrated by the students that could benefit your project. For example, there may have been some students who impressed you with their creative skills and could support in creating online resources.



Opportunities to support local schools and colleges

The Careers & Enterprise Company provide two great opportunities for you and your employees to continue supporting local schools/colleges. The first is by becoming a Cornerstone Employer. These are employers who are committed to working with their networks, the wider business community and their local team to make sure that young people have access to the career opportunities they need. Find out more about becoming a Cornerstone Employer [here](#).

The second way is by encouraging employees to become Enterprise Advisers. These roles are typically aimed at leaders within business who are dedicated to making a lasting impact on the future outcomes for young people. Find out more about Enterprise Advisers [here](#).

Showcase What You've Achieved and Next Steps

Celebrate what you've achieved by sharing your experience with others. This isn't just about receiving recognition, but to inspire others to support students with SEND. Collectively, we can eventually ensure all young people have access to work encounters and experiences of the workplace. As employers, we have a part to play in ensuring that people with learning disabilities have a greater than 5.9% chance of achieving meaningful employment.

If you have a communications colleague or team, ask them to support you in sharing your story. They'll have the expertise to ensure it reaches the right audiences in the right format. Make sure that you have the necessary permissions from the school/college to share the story and it's very likely that they'll be happy to supply you with some quotes from the students, parents/carers and themselves.

Internally: share with your colleagues and senior leaders. This can encourage them to do something similar and mean as an organisation, you can support more SEND students and perhaps develop this into programmes such as a supported internship or developing a business enterprise with the school/college.

Externally: share with your supply chain, industry sector and local community. Utilise your existing networks to share your story. You may find some organisations have already done something similar and this is a great way to learn from one another. Networks can be really powerful in bringing about change.

Business Awards: You may consider entering an award that's focused on organisations supporting their local community and education. The Careers & Enterprise Company holds annual awards, with categories for both small and medium, and large employers, that are delivering their own tailored programme to schools or colleges. Whether you consider awards on a national or local basis, they are a great publicity opportunity for your organisation and demonstrates your commitment to supporting your local community and improving social mobility.



Accreditation: you may look to gain an accreditation that recognises your support of young people with SEND. This can provide you access to further guidance and information on how to develop your education/career programmes that support young people, as well as linking you to a network of like-minded employers and support organisations. Here are some suggestions.

Employers committed to becoming disability confident and wanting to make the most of the diverse talents disabled people can bring to their organisation, can consider signing up to the UK Government's [Disability Confidence Scheme](#). There are three levels within the scheme, starting with Level 1: Disability Confident Committed; Level 2: Disability Confident Employer; Level 3: Disability Confident Leader. The Scheme even has its own [You Tube channel](#), with lots of videos from employers and disabled people themselves.

Here's a [case study](#) of an employer whose experience has led them to becoming a Disability Confident Employer.

[Youth Employment UK](#) is an independent, not for profit social enterprise founded in 2012 to tackle youth unemployment and we know that young people with SEND have a significantly lower chance of achieving paid employment than their peers. As experts on youth employment and unemployment, they are ideally placed to understand the complex landscape facing young people, employers and policy makers. They work with both young people and employers, so bridge the disconnect that still exists between them. Their network includes government, employers, educators and third sector organisations enabling them to join the dots in the youth employment space. The Youth Friendly Employer Mark shows that you are an employer that is invested in supporting and recruiting young people.

