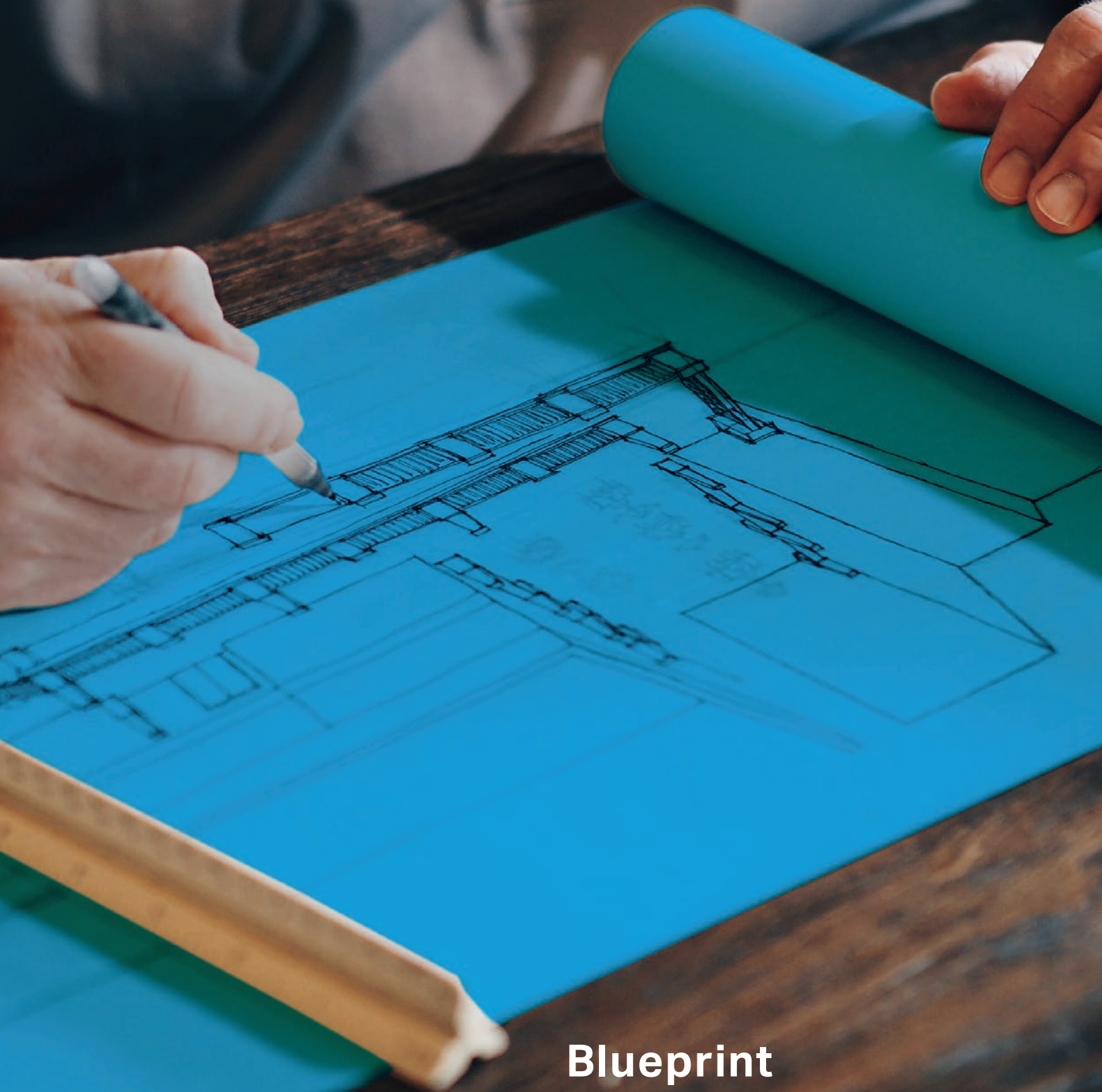


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Blueprint

Professional Interview Day

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London Enterprise Adviser Network (LEAN) Blueprints

Welcome to the LEAN Blueprints. We created 5 blueprints to help schools and businesses create effective opportunities for students to learn about careers. We've included suggestions and ideas for everything you'll need to plan and run successful and impactful careers projects.

In this Blueprint you'll see information on:

1. What is a Professional Interview Day?
2. Why run a Professional Interview Day?
3. How to run a Professional Interview Day

What is a Professional Interview Day?

A Professional Interview Day provides your students with the experience of interviewing for a job based on a real-life advert. We recommend that you use business volunteers to interview the students to give them a realistic experience.

This type of event usually happens once a year for a particular year group (usually for Year 10 or 11 students) and can require a half or full day off timetable. You can combine this event with CV and cover letter writing activities to give your students a complete experience of applying and interviewing for a job role.

This activity can help schools and colleges towards meeting [Gatsby Benchmark 5](#): Encounters with employers and employees.



Why run a Professional Interview Day?

A Professional Interview Day gives students a true to life experience of marketing themselves. Other benefits include:

- Students practice developing and testing answers for typical interview questions. They also receive personalised feedback to help them improve.
- Students can increase their confidence with communicating in a professional setting.
- Students have an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate action.
- It requires a limited amount of a volunteer's time and they don't need to do much preparation beforehand.

Making it meaningful – The Careers & Enterprise Company

Look at the Careers & Enterprise Company's '[Making it Meaningful checklist](#)' for ideas on how to ensure these events are embedded within your school's wider careers strategy and programme.

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How to run a Professional Interview Day

1. Choose the students and the learning outcomes

Choose the students that will be involved and the learning outcomes for the activity.

The number of students involved will affect your recruitment of business volunteers. You should aim for each business volunteer to interview 5 students to ensure they have enough time to interview and provide feedback properly.

2. Agree the date, time and venue

When you are selecting the venue, try to secure either one large room or a group of classrooms that are near to each other. This helps you manage the volunteers on the day. Plan the room layout and consider the requirements for desks and chairs.

You will need to allow enough time before the event for both the students to prepare and for volunteer recruitment. We would recommend a minimum of 6-8 weeks for this but for large groups of students you may need even more time to prepare.

3. Create a list of business volunteers to invite

Work with your Enterprise Adviser, Enterprise Coordinator, colleagues, governors and parents to draw up a list of employers to contact. Use Eventbrite or create an online Google form to give interested volunteers a quick and easy way to sign up.

For further tips and templates see our [volunteer recruitment guide](#).

4. Keep in regular contact with volunteers

To reduce the risk of last-minute dropouts, keep in regular contact with your volunteers. Send them briefing notes and a volunteer instruction booklet 1 week before the event and let them speak to you on the phone if requested.

See our template for [volunteering briefing notes](#).

5. Prepare the resources for the students, business volunteers and staff

Prepare the resources well in advance of the event. Students will need:

- Job adverts
- Interview practice materials
- CV's and cover letter examples and preparation materials

In addition to any briefing materials, business volunteers will need:

- Interview questions
- Feedback form for each interview
- Guidance on how to conduct the interviews and feedback sessions

See our example [booklets for students](#) and [business volunteers](#) which contain a number of these resources.

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6. Prepare your students

To help students get the most out of this event, try to create a realistic experience of applying for a job. Provide students with the job adverts at least 2-3 weeks before the event and set a deadline for them to submit CV/job applications and cover letters.

You can build these activities into PSHE or English lessons or include the preparations in tutor time. Encourage parents and carers to get involved as well.

7. On the day - Welcome and brief your volunteers

Welcome your business volunteers at reception and take them to a waiting room. Provide them with refreshments if possible. Always have staff available to support you as volunteers without a DBS check need to be escorted.

Deliver a briefing to the volunteers 30 minutes before the interviews start including:

- Student background information
- Housekeeping i.e. toilets, refreshments, fire alarms
- Safeguarding rules
- How they can get your support with poor behaviour
- Guidance on the interview process and feedback sessions

8. On the day - Run the event

When running the event, give your business volunteers name badges or numbered tables to help students find the right volunteer. If your students had to apply for the role using a CV or cover letter, let the business volunteer look through these first. Ask the business volunteers to provide their feedback soon after the interview. Make sure students keep a record of this or receive a copy of the volunteer's feedback.

Staff should move around the room regularly to monitor behaviour and to keep the volunteers to your planned timings. Students should be given activities to complete whilst they are waiting, like practicing interview questions with each other.

9. On the day - Collect feedback

Collect feedback from all the students, business volunteers and teachers as soon as possible. Online forms are a great way to save on administration time. Just make sure you highlight that this will be sent to the participants at the end/after the event.

10. Post event follow up

Thank your volunteers at the end of the event and contact them soon afterwards, sharing any positive student feedback you received. Use this as an opportunity to signpost them to other ways they can volunteer at the school or college. If they are enthusiastic about volunteering again, log their details on [Compass+](#).

Record the event and students' attendance on Compass+. Go through the feedback and identify key learning points. Use them to improve future events.

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Case study: Walthamstow School for Girls

Career Leader – Marianna Philippou

At Walthamstow School for Girls, we set the date for a Professional Interview Day six months in advance. This gives sufficient time to book the venue and inform staff, parents/carers and students of the date.



It's helpful to combine this in a parents/carers information event if possible and we make them aware of where to find additional resources on the school website.

We reach out for business volunteers through the school's supply chain, governors and parents/carers networks. This is where the Enterprise Adviser can provide additional support by utilising their networks.

We have an assembly and PSHE lesson plans to ensure students are fully briefed and prepared for the event. This helps ensure it is a meaningful experience for them.

Top tip: We give our students very strict deadlines for submitting their job applications. If late, we prompted our volunteers to ask students about why they didn't get their applications in on time!

In the few weeks leading up to the event we regularly contact volunteers and make sure they understand how the day will run and what to expect. We also inform students and their tutors about their appointment times.

Top Tip: We provide volunteers with name badges as this means students can find their interviewer themselves. Post timetables up on the walls.

On the day of the event expect and be prepared for last minute changes because there are always some!

LEAN Blueprints

Don't forget about our other blueprints available at www.london.gov.uk/LEAN:

Gatsby Benchmark 5 blueprints (for schools)

- Speed Networking Event
- Speaker Series

Gatsby Benchmark 6 blueprints (for employers)

- Employer Insight Visit
- Work Experience

If you have any ideas on how we can improve these blueprints, please contact enterpriseadvisers@london.gov.uk