



## Skills development on pre-apprenticeship programmes

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# L&W's pre-apprenticeships work

Nicola Aylward, Head of Learning for Young People, L&W

# Promoting effective practice in pre-apprenticeship programmes

Learning and Work Institute is an independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

L&W are working with the support of J.P. Morgan to research and share effective practice in the design and delivery of inclusive and high-quality pre-apprenticeship programmes for young people in Europe and other parts of the world.

Particularly interested in programmes that have developed good practice in four key areas:

- Development of digital skills
- Blended learning approaches
- 'Learn to learn' attitudes and skills
- Development of soft/transversal skills

Identifying effective pre-apprenticeship programmes, producing a series of case studies and facilitating innovative peer learning and knowledge exchange amongst providers.

# Pre-apprenticeship resources

- Suite of case studies
- Top Tips for providers
- Interactive resource for providers
- Short films of effective practice
- Pre-recorded webinars

Tomillo Foundation Madrid, Spain

**Case study summary**

Tomillo Foundation introduced their pre-apprenticeship programme as a progression route to their existing offer of intermediate apprenticeships. The programme is delivered in four sector areas which hold a large proportion of employment in Madrid: hospitality, computer science, electronics and administration.

The programme, known as Basic Vocational Training, supports a target group of young people who are aged 16-18 in Madrid. Young people typically come from very disadvantaged backgrounds and have often left compulsory education without formal qualifications. The two-year programme is longer in duration than average pre-apprenticeship programmes. The two-year duration allows Tomillo Foundation to provide the intensive and personalised support that the target group of young people require to build the range of skills they need to enter the labour market, and in particular, for an intermediate apprenticeship with Tomillo Foundation.

This case study outlines the unique delivery methods used by Tomillo Foundation to deliver basic vocational and social skills. Such approaches are considered effective in supporting young people who are furthest away from the labour market. The excellent progression outcomes achieved by young people, with 97% of participants progressing to an intermediate apprenticeship in 2017, is indicative of how programmes can support young people furthest away from the labour market to achieve good outcomes.

**Key programme details**

- Young people attend Basic VET five days per week (Monday to Friday) for a period of two years.
- Project based learning (PBL) is used as a method for supporting young people to develop the personal, professional and social skills needed to succeed in an intermediate apprenticeship and in their wider lives.
- Each vocational area of the pre-apprenticeship programme is financially supported by a key employer, who also have input to the programme content, making it relevant to the needs of the labour market.
- The cost per person on the pre-apprenticeships across the full two years is €9500.

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**Designing and delivering pre-apprenticeships: A provider guide**



L&W LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE J.P.Morgan

**Designing and delivering pre-apprenticeships**

Tomillo Foundation  
Madrid, Spain



# Context

- Approximately 12.6% of all young Europeans, aged 15-29 were NEET in 2019 - significant numbers of young people are still not making effective transitions into the labour market
- Coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact across the world. It has triggered economic crises that are resulting in high levels of unemployment and significant changes to labour markets
- Young people are being particularly hard hit; however, the impact varies and there is a significant risk that the most disadvantaged young people will become further marginalised and left behind

# Effective practice: skills development on pre-apprenticeship programmes

Seana Friel, Researcher, L&W

# Aims and methods

## Aims

To examine pre-apprenticeship programmes across different countries, and to identify and study effective practice.

## Methods

- Scoping research (45+ programmes)
  - Desk research
  - Call for evidence
- Online deep dive study visits
  - Document review
  - Qualitative interviews (stakeholders, delivery staff, employers and young people)

# Case studies of effective practice

Pre-apprenticeship	Country
Bright Light	England
Formare	Brazil
IN-VEST 2	Ireland
Multi Industry Pilot	Australia
Integration pre-apprenticeship	Switzerland
Second Technology Opportunities School	Spain

# Target groups and programme aims

## Target groups

Young people who are unemployed, have low skills levels and often face multiple barriers to employment.

Increasingly targeted at specific groups of young people who are underrepresented in the labour market.

## Programme aims

Some targeted at young people who are very distant from the labour market; have complex and multiple barriers to employment. Such programmes typically provide intensive support and activities, with careful sequencing to build engagement, confidence and motivation over a sustained period.

Others aimed at young people closer to the labour market, who require specific support to address skills gaps, for example, to build their confidence in engaging with employers, or to improve their literacy or numeracy skills.



# Digital skills on pre-apprenticeships

YP from disadvantaged backgrounds often have **lower levels of digital skills, combined with limited access to technology**, this can be a significant barrier to apprenticeships. The pandemic has further highlighted the importance of basic digital skills for young people.

- Pre-apprenticeships have a key role to play in ensuring that young people are equipped with a solid foundation of digital skills as part of their progression to an apprenticeship.
- Some pre-apprenticeships aim to support YP to progress to an IT or technology-based sector - digital skills development is a core aim of the programme.
- More commonly, pre-apprenticeships aim to support YP to develop basic digital skills needed for any sector - embedding this learning throughout the programme.

# Digital skills in practice

Providers take different approaches to supporting digital skills development.

- Developing digital skills, alongside other learning, by **creatively embedding** these skills in pre-apprenticeship programmes.
- Digital skills can be developed as part of **wider employability training**, for example, using MS Word to develop CVs and cover letters or using online databases to search for jobs.
- Specific digital skills workshops delivered in-house or through partners.

# Second Technology Opportunities School: La Rueca, Spain.

*The Second Technology Opportunities School (STOS) aims to improve access to training and employment for young people who are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion in Madrid.*

*Recognising the increasing importance of technology in society and across all employment sectors, La Rueca use technology as a tool for social change, through which young people develop personal and social skills as well as the technological skills needed to access the labour market.*

*The development of transversal or soft skills e.g. team working, and communication skills is integrated with digital skills to help young people to understand the relevance and real-life value of these types of skills.*

*Videogame Space workshops for example, use gaming as a vehicle to work on personal and social skills such as teamworking, group cohesion and communication skills. As part of the programme's focus on addressing the digital gender gap, young women are encouraged to create avatars in the game in their own image, for example a female superhero with a range of powers. Other workshops aimed at developing technological skills provide opportunities to learn and practice free photography, video and audio software*

*A core element of the programme is the Technolab, a digital social enterprise which aims to achieve transformative social change for individuals and communities through the use of technology. In the Audiovisual workshop for example, participants use digital creation tools to create and adapt content in line with their own interests. This flexible approach helps to engage young people and increase motivation to learn.*



# Basic skills (literacy and numeracy)

Literacy and numeracy are key factors in an individual's life chances and a basic level of these skills is an essential foundation for access to quality employment and better earnings.

- Typically, young people on pre-apprenticeship programmes will have lower levels of literacy and numeracy than their peers.
- Support to develop a basic level of literacy and numeracy is therefore vital for an individual's progression into an apprenticeship or employment.
- On some pre-apprenticeship programmes, for example those with a specific focus on supporting young refugees, foreign language skills can also be an important component in basic skills development.

# Basic skills in practice

Best practice shows that provision of basic skills is most effective where links are made between literacy and numeracy and learners' interests and work experience and employment goals.

- Combining vocational content with literacy and numeracy helps learners to understand how these skills are relevant to the workplace. For example, in a sector specific pre-apprenticeship such as construction, young people can be encouraged to think about mathematical concepts such as 'area' and 'perimeter' throughout their vocational learning.
- Basic skills can also be embedded throughout wider employability content, for example by encouraging young people to think about literacy such as grammar and punctuation, when developing a CV, or in preparing for mock interviews with employers
- Delivering basic skills in flexible and creative ways will also help to make learning relevant to young people's lives and employment goals This is particularly important for increasing the confidence of young people with lower levels of literacy and numeracy.

# Integration pre-apprenticeship: Switzerland

*The Integration pre-apprenticeship in Switzerland aims to provide young refugees with the necessary basic skills, including sector specific training in the host-country language and literacy and numeracy skills, alongside cultural values and transversal skills to progress to basic vocational training in a specific sector. Participants are supported to develop these skills in a practical and contextualised way throughout the programme*

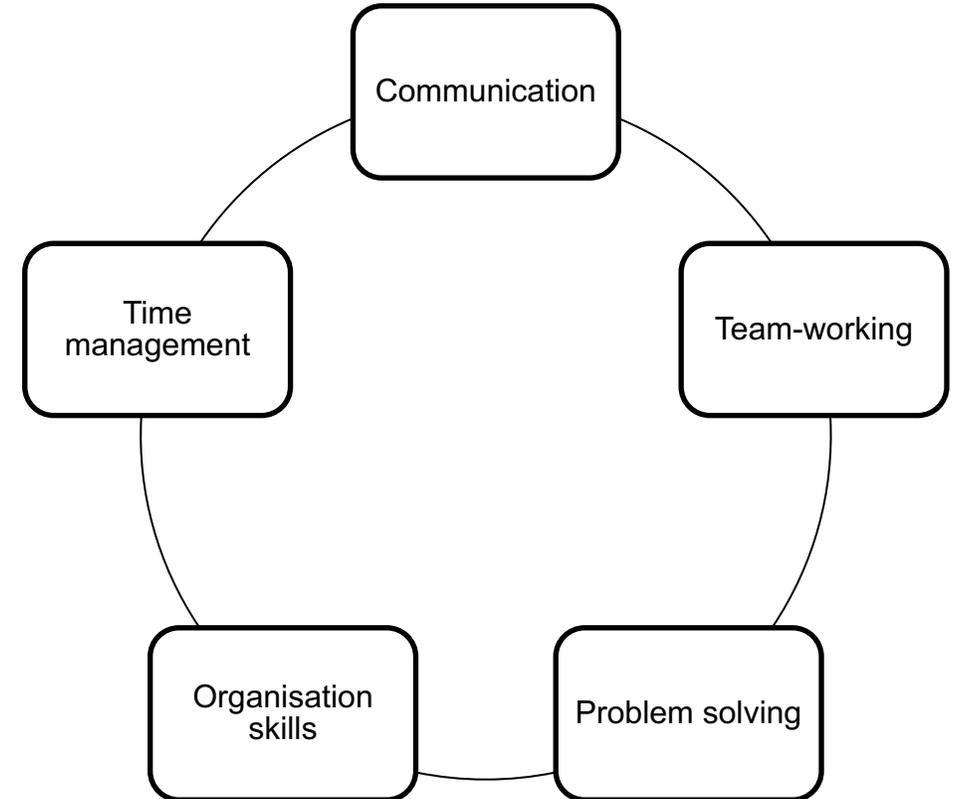
*Refugees are supported to develop their language skills (in the regional language) alongside other pre-apprenticeship training. This is an intensive element of the pre-apprenticeship, and particular attention is paid to the typical vocabulary used in their chosen sector. This helps to ensure participants can effectively and confidently communicate with colleagues and others in the workplace. Language learning is seen as essential for increasing the resilience of refugees and providing them with opportunities for education, social engagement, and access to wider services.*

*Training in language and basic skills allows young people to develop social networks and familiarity with the Swiss education system and labour market. Language and other basic skills delivered alongside vocational training helps to contextualise and consolidate learning and skills development amongst participants*



# Transversal skills

- Transversal skills (soft or transferable skills) are those non-technical skills that are extremely valuable because they can be transferred to almost every industry.
- Transversal skills such as these typically have high transferability across different jobs and sectors. These skills are particularly important for young people on pre-apprenticeships, as it enables them to demonstrate to hiring employers that they have the ability to learn on the job, which is important for successful progression to and completion of an apprenticeship.



# Transversal skills in practice

- **Project based learning:** Pre-apprenticeship providers often facilitate cooperative project-based learning (PBL) amongst young people as it's an effective way of developing a range of transversal skills, including social skills, communication and teamwork.
- **Work based learning:** The work-based learning nature of all pre-apprenticeships mean that these programmes are well placed to enable young people to develop key transversal skills. On-the-job experience, through work placements, is not only an opportunity for young people to develop specific technical skills, it's also an opportunity for young people to build skills in communication, teamwork, timekeeping, personal presentation and other transversal skills.
- **Phased learning:** This phased approach offers young people ways to learn “for work” by providing technical and transversal skills development before entering the workplace, and “from work” by providing opportunity to build on these skills in the workplace.
- **Embedded delivery:** Many pre-apprenticeship programmes combine, rather than separate, transversal skills development and other technical or employability skills development, as this helps young people to see the real-life value of these types of skills.

# INVEST 2: Ireland

*During the pilot programme, the first group of learners found the soft skills sessions challenging as they felt the delivery method was more rooted in therapeutic practices than a 'world of work' approach. Based on this feedback, for subsequent programmes soft skills development was embedded within the ICT lessons so that they would be more contextualised for the tech sector environment. For example, the importance of effective communication with colleagues, if undertaking an IT support role.*

*The strong focus on soft skills and integration with ICT skills ensures that the learning of soft skills is contextualised, and participants understand the importance of developing these skills for successful progression into the workplace in a sector that they are keen to work in.*



# Learn-to-learn skills

- Learn to learn is a concept closely linked to transversal skills, it involves supporting young people to develop the skills and qualities required to adapt to a constantly changing labour market.
- For some programmes, learn to learn is about helping young people to re-integrate into the learning environment, perhaps following negative experiences of compulsory education.
- Examples include mentoring, phased learning, community-based projects, all focused on reintegration to a learning environment, increasing confidence
- Linked to career adaptability (learning skills for life)

# Second Chance School, Savoie

*The Second Chance School programme in Savoie, France, is made up of three phases and is designed to help young people become more confident, skilled and clearer about their career aspirations as they progress through the programme.*

*This phased learning helps young people to gradually develop the range of skills required to progress fully into the labour market. The first phase lasts for four weeks and aims to re-introduce learners to an education and training environment; to rediscover a positive view of education and work; and to prepare for positive engagement in training.*

*This intensive period of re-introduction is considered key to engaging young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and enabling them to sustain their engagement and progress.*



# Blended learning on pre-apprenticeships

- Providers across the world have had to adapt their provision as a result of the recent coronavirus pandemic. This has shed light on a number of key principles and emerging effective practice in delivering online and blended learning on pre-apprenticeships.
- Blended learning is a mode of delivery where learners benefit from a combination of teaching in a digital environment and face to face learning. The benefits of blended learning include that young people can learn independently, within their own time frames, and via interface with digital technology. Alongside this they are able to engage directly with staff and other learners, and benefit from the support and interaction that face to face contact can bring.
- Blended learning can consist of a range of approaches including face-to-face time with learners, online theory based learning, activities delivered online, e.g. through recorded lessons, flipped learning (learners work on tasks at home before discussions in class), live-streaming, use of textbooks and other physical resources to work at home.

# Online learning during the pandemic

- Ongoing one-to-one support.
- Redressing digital exclusion.
- Using a range of platforms and delivery methods to foster engagement.
- Creative ways to practice skills at home.
- Online employer engagement e.g. online job fairs.



# Bright Light: a pre-apprenticeship for care leavers in London

Emma Allix, Catch 22



# Catch22

Catch22 is a **social business**, a not for profit business with a social mission.

For over **200 years** we have designed and delivered services that build resilience and aspiration in people and communities.

In **2019/20**, our 1600 staff supported over **110,000 people** to lead better lives.

We believe that to thrive, people need:



- **Justice and rehabilitation:** offender management, violence reduction interventions, rehabilitation and victim services. Working with young people and adults, we provide intervention services in custody and in the community that are focused on building strong, consistent and trusting relationships to help unlock potential and make positive changes in life.
- **Education:** alternative provision schools for pupils outside mainstream education. We provide high quality teaching and learning based on effective relationships which help young people to progress and succeed in sustained education or employment.
- **National Citizen Service:** a four-phase programme giving young people the opportunity to meet new friends, learn new skills and make a difference in their community. Participants improve communication skills, work in a team and develop as leaders, in line with the NCS aim of developing a more cohesive, engaged and responsible society

**Young People and Families:** **child sexual and criminal exploitation services, mental health support, family intervention services.** We work with young people and families in trouble, providing early intervention, targeted and specialist support services to those in crisis, leaving care, missing from home or with substance misuse or mental health problems.

**Employability and Vocational Training:** **apprenticeship programmes and programmes to help people into work.** We offer learning and training opportunities for students who don't want to stay in a traditional academic environment and help who have struggled to find work through conventional routes.

## Employability

**Aims to improve social mobility through supporting 16years+ to access Employability services**

- ✓ **Barriers to employment:** NEET's, mental health, physical health, Care leavers, Ex-offenders, low confidence
- ✓ **Offer:** Bespoke action plans, community based model, work experience opportunities, employment advice, benefits advice, training/courses, employability skills, job brokerage, in work support
- ✓ **Contracts:** Barclays Connect with Work, The Social Switch Project, Inspiring Families & Bright Light



catch  
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## Bright Light Programme Partnership



**Bright Light:** Is a pilot programme being delivered in partnership by Catch22 and The Children's Society.

**Programme Aim:** With the main aim of progressing care leavers into apprenticeships AND to understand barriers associated with this to develop solutions, share learnings and to influence national policy.

**Targets:** 2.5 year programme, with the aim of moving 40 Care leavers into apprenticeships, 40 Care leavers into employment/education/training opportunities and to positively impact on a further 80 Care Leavers

**Quality of service:** In order to ensure we can deliver intense support and an localised approach with employers we have limited our referrals from a small number of Care leaving teams



The  
Children's  
Society

No child  
should feel  
alone



# Who are we and what are we known for?



## Catch22

- Established charity for over 200 years.
- Vision is based on the **3 Ps** – a good **P**lace to live, a **P**urpose and good **P**eople around them.
- Award winning employability provider. Has a 70% sustainability rate in employability.

## The Children's Society

- Established charity for over 130 years.
- Fights for change for disadvantaged young people through direct practice, lobbying and campaigning for policy change.
- Supported 9872 vulnerable YP last year, while policy changes will improve the lives of more than half a million.

*Together we have over 1,800 professionals in our networks, operating from 144 locations across the UK, working to support over 51,000 people every year.*

**Bright opportunities for London's care leavers**



# Meet the Bright Light Team



**Emma Allix**  
Operations  
Manager



**Allison Hughes**  
Partnership  
Development  
Manager



**Carl Thomas**  
Career Coach



**Maggie Lawlor**  
Career Coach



**Viktoria Mogyla**  
Career Coach



# What is Bright Light?

Employability programme for care leavers **ONLY** - funded by the Clothworkers' foundation

## Uses the strengths of both organisations to:

- Progress care leavers into sustainable careers via apprenticeships, training & sector specific routeways
- Support care leavers to access opportunities, build confidence and overcome barriers
- Provide wraparound support, i.e. in house therapeutic services – (Disruption Exploitation programme and TCS wider therapy team)

## Delivery Model:

- **Onboarding** - referral from PA along with pathway plan summary. Rapport & confidence building, identifying goals and barriers to build a bespoke action plan
- **On programme** - Signposting and referrals to wrap around support, Workstar, access to vacancies and PDM support. Tailored employability upskilling – i.e CV's, cover/disclosure letters, application & interview skills & mock interviews
- **Progression** – Better off calculations and financial support, travel training, employers expectations. Ongoing In work/training support

## Bright Light Criteria

**Cohort:** Young people aged 16-25 who are leaving or have left care

**Willing & Ready:** Able to start work or apprenticeship within the next 12 months

# Headline Statistics 2019-2020

## Why is Bright Light needed?

### Homes for Good statistics report– 2019-2020

- *Three times more likely to be NEET than non care leavers*
- *Make up almost half of men aged 21 in contact with the criminal justice system*
- *There are currently 99,000 children who are classified as looked after away from home*
- *8,600 young people leave the care system each year*
- *Just 6% of care leavers aged 19-21 go on to higher education*
- *Care leavers make up 25% of the UK's homeless population*



# What makes Bright Light unique?

## Employer Engagement

### Exclusive Partnership Development Manager (PDM)

- ✓ Opportunities brokered solely for care leavers in accordance to their sectors of interest
- ✓ Supporting and motivating employers to meet their CSR targets
- ✓ Educating employers around the benefits or recruiting care leavers
- ✓ Working with employers to ensure opportunities more accessible – i.e. reducing the application process
- ✓ Providing support throughout the recruitment process, assisting with any training needs, screening and job matching
- ✓ Additional support to the participants during the recruitment process - i.e mock interviews and work trials
- ✓ Tailored jobs fairs for Bright Light participants to broaden career options and mind sets
- ✓ In work support for up to 18 months for both the care leaver and employer alike, addressing the challenges that both parties can face when hiring young person with personal barriers.



# What makes Bright Light unique?

## Flexible Approach

- ✓ Care leavers are involved with service design - they even named the programme!
- ✓ We listen to ensure that care leavers are at the heart of the programme – Expert Youth Panel
- ✓ Ongoing surveys with employers and care leavers to evaluate the learnings and the programme effectiveness
- ✓ Dedicated career coach embedded in each Local Authority (currently – Hounslow, Enfield and Wandsworth)
- ✓ Coordinating the needs of care leavers with all key workers involved
- ✓ Wrap around services to address barriers and provide additional support
- ✓ Researching and accessing education/training courses and work experience
- ✓ Tailored support and coaching to succeed through an application process, ensuring that care leavers have the skills and confidence required to apply and start work/education
- ✓ Opportunity to access live apprenticeship/employment vacancies via the Partnership Development Manager
- ✓ Financial supporting with travel, clothing and other expenses related to starting work/education

# catch 22

## What have we achieved so far?

- ✓ **Consulted** with over 100 businesses, many who have positively engaged offering apprenticeship, employment, work experience, traineeships and training opportunities to our care leavers
- ✓ **Launched** the Expert Youth Panel to ensure our care leavers voices are heard and they have an input in our delivery
- ✓ **Signed up** over 120 care leavers to the programme
- ✓ **Delivered** two jobs fairs purely for care leavers during lockdown. Great feedback from the employers and Young people alike
- ✓ **Engagement** with care leavers on Bright Light has been higher than any other of our employment contracts
- ✓ **Progressed** 32 care leavers into opportunities, with an additional 4 more due to start apprenticeships in December



**The  
Children's  
Society**

**No child  
should feel  
alone**

## **Digital Exclusion**

On the 19th April 2020 the Education Secretary announced that vulnerable and disadvantaged young people across the country would receive free digital equipment to enhance online learning. Whilst this is a positive step, the reality is that this equipment is not reaching all care leavers, such as those not in education or training. As a result of this, many of our young people continue to face digital poverty, therefore disadvantaging Young People completing online applications.

## **Work, apprenticeship and training placements**

50% of our young people have had their work/training cancelled/stopped as a direct result of COVID-19. This is due to businesses closing, furlough not being applied for and training/education courses being put on hold or cancelled until further notice. Our teams are working tirelessly to try and find alternative options for the young people and we hope that as lockdown eases, opportunities will begin to reappear.

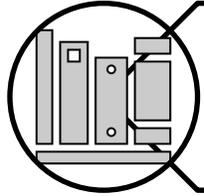
## **Decline of opportunities**

Due to the pandemic we have seen a huge fall in new apprenticeships. This will also have implications for future job opportunities as we emerge from the pandemic, with there being increased competition for the jobs that are available. Young people in the programme have told us that they have major concerns about future job opportunities and what the job market will be like for them. It is crucial that going forward there is emphasis on employer engagement in programmes such as Bright Light to secure long-term opportunities for young people.

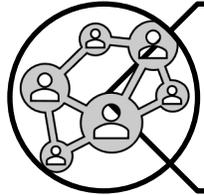
## **Flexible delivery**

Care leavers on the programme have enjoyed the informal catch ups delivered virtually through video calls. We will continue this regularly between the care leavers and their Career Coaches. We are aware the video calls are increasingly popular amongst employers for interviews and selection processes, offering some virtual programme engagement allow care leavers to become familiar with using online video calls before they engage with prospective employers.

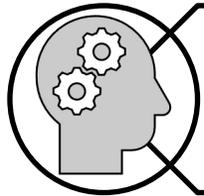
# Upcoming activities



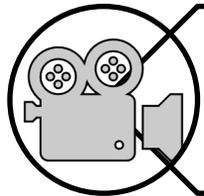
Publication of new **case studies and resources** (Winter 2020).



Delivery of a programme of cross-country **peer learning activity** (March 2021).



A series of **knowledge exchange activities**, including events and a webinar series (Early 2021).



Development of **short films** which showcase good practice (Spring 2021).

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**Thank you for joining us!**

**Visit: [L&W's pre-apprenticeship resources](#)**

**Get involved: [seana.friel@learningandwork.org.uk](mailto:seana.friel@learningandwork.org.uk)**



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