

Top tips for delivering hybrid youth employability programmes

Evidence from L&W's review of EY Foundation's employability programmes for young people suggest that hybrid models of delivery can be particularly effective. These tips can help providers considering hybrid delivery make decisions about when to use online or face-to-face, as well as ensure that online delivery is high quality.

Setting up



Use the **initial assessment** process to get a full picture of every young person's access needs and confidence with digital tools.



Provide clear and accessible instructions, support, and encouragement for young people on how to use the digital tools they need. This could include videos, factsheets and drop in sessions.



Brief young people on how to behave in an online workplace to ensure they understand what behaviour is expected of them before they start.



Provide all the technology young people will need, for example laptops, Wi-Fi dongles, software, and headphones.

Identify when face-to-face matters



The first day of the programme could be an opportunity for people to get to know each other face-to-face, pick up equipment, ask questions, learn how to use technology, and establish ground rules.



Part or all of a work experience placement might be better face-to-face depending on the type of business.



A graduation ceremony or certificate evening could provide a good chance to meet in person.

Work experience

- **Sequence work experience activities** to give young people experience of working both online and in a face-to-face environment, and gradually build upon the responsibilities they are given.
- **Make online work experience tasks real** and show young people what will happen with the work they have done.
- **Provide clear guidance for employers** on best practice in designing and delivering online elements of business experience, include example case studies of what works, and a forum for sharing resources.
- **Use hybrid possibilities to the full**, for example, employees could dial in from international locations to meet young people who are based in a physical workplace.
- **Make sure young people have access** to, and are familiar with, the digital tools that are used in the organisation where they will do their work experience. Consider how this could be extended beyond the work experience placement, for example, using social media tools such as Twitter and LinkedIn.
- **Use online networks to link young people** with, for example, Black or LGBTQI* people, in their work experience organisation.



Value digital communication

- **Invest equal time and money in online delivery;** it should not be seen as a cheap alternative. Ensure that the approach is person rather than technology centred.
- **Avoid using terms like 'real life' versus digital.** Recognise digital relationships and communications as significant, important and an integral part of modern working practices.
- **Young people need to learn how to work in an online environment.** Explicitly teach them these skills and behaviours.
- **Recognise that teaching and learning online is a different specialism** and invest in training for staff and volunteers.



Inclusivity



- **Let young people communicate in the ways that suit them.** This might be chat, using a microphone, or liking other people's comments. These preferences may change over time.
- **Keep sessions short and interactive**, with a range of different activities such as polls, quizzes, group activities, and paired discussions.
- **Be as flexible as possible:** if a young person does not have a quiet safe place to work, then consider whether face-to-face delivery might be better for them, or whether they can be given a co-working space.
- **Establish blurred backgrounds and headphone use as standard** for staff, volunteers, and young people so no one feels uncomfortable about their home environment.
- **Keep mentoring online** and match young people with mentors using lived experience and interests rather than location.

Keeping young people engaged online

- **Encourage but don't enforce camera use.** Work on building confidence and encourage young people to turn cameras on for specific activities.
- **Keep track of young people's learning** in different ways, for example scheduled 1-2-1 meetings, group discussions, drop in sessions, and online journals or learning logs.
- **Keep sessions simple**, for example, choose a smaller number of speakers so they have a chance to get to know all the young people.
- **Schedule more breaks** than you would expect in a face-to-face environment.
- **Give young people the chance to prepare in advance**, for example, think of questions to ask speakers, or an experience they might want to share.
- **Create social bubbles** of small groups of young people who can support each other and socialise together through the whole programme.
- **Link activities**, for example support young people to develop an online CV and then use it in a mock interview.



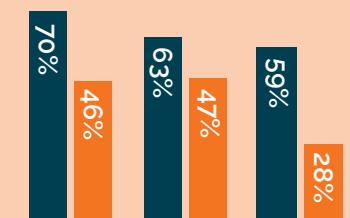
Getting feedback and improving



Collect data about how well different groups of young people do in different models of delivery.



Regularly ask young people what they think about the programme and how they want it to be delivered. Use varied methods to capture feedback and be creative.



Evaluate the impact that different elements of the programme have upon young people and the value for money that they provide in contributing to employment-related outcomes.