

A guide for employers
July 2015



Unlock new talent

How can you integrate
social action in
recruitment?

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has more than 135,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Unlock new talent: How can you integrate social action in recruitment?

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Foreword

Historically, concern with social action, or volunteering, typically fitted within organisations' corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda, and was often seen as a bridge between companies and the community. However, as the professional body for HR and people development, we believe that there is a strong case for social action to be integrated more widely into organisations' people development and resourcing strategies.

Increasingly organisations realise that integrating social action into their learning and development activities, for example, can be very beneficial and that it can be a key tool to develop employees' capabilities and foster greater employee engagement. We know, because employers tell us, that many already recognise the huge number of skills that can be gained through participating in social action, such as communication, teamworking and problem-solving. We also know that the range of social action opportunities available for individuals to take part in is huge; this is credit to the work of charities, both locally and nationally, to engage volunteers but also to a steady stream of individuals who are taking matters into their own hands and using their initiative to find social action solutions to local problems. However, despite this, many employers tell us that they still look first and foremost at prior work experience when they hire new employees, with very few building social action into their recruitment processes.

According to the Cabinet Office Community Life Survey 2013–14, 74% of adults (aged 16+) participated in either formal or informal volunteering at least once over the course of 12 months and 48% volunteered at least once a month. This gives a clear picture of the scale of social action in the UK, and the huge pool of potentially untapped talent that employers may not be aware of. By failing to uncover this experience during the recruitment stage, employers could be missing out on enthusiastic individuals who have precisely the types of employability skills organisations tell us they need and struggle to find.

A key challenge, as we identify in this guide, is that candidates often fail to highlight their social experience, unless given the opportunity to do so, as many still regard traditional work experience as being more important to employers. For entry-level candidates this can be a particular problem, as they are unfamiliar with the recruitment process and do not know how to talk about their skills and experience and how to sell themselves during the recruitment process.

With the difficulties that many young people also face in terms of securing good-quality work experience, it is clear that social action has a huge role to play in terms of skills development. Given that these activities can take place over months, or even years, this can often be even more beneficial in terms of developing employability skills

than a short stint of traditional work experience is. With this in mind, the #iwill campaign should be commended in their efforts to drive up the number of young people participating in social action and, as one of the campaign's Business Pioneers, we have been delighted to partner with them on this new guide for recruiters and line managers on how to integrate social action into recruitment practices. By following the practical tips outlined in this guide, drawn from the best practice of some of the UK's leading employers, you will be unlocking access to a wide new pool of talent you might otherwise have overlooked, at the same time as encouraging a culture of social action amongst our young people.



Peter Cheese
Chief Executive, CIPD

Youth unemployment is one of the biggest challenges facing the UK, affecting almost half a million 16–24-year-olds. Despite being almost three times more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the population, young people are more ready than ever before to take an active part in improving their communities, while at the same time helping those around them and developing skills for life.

This is why the #iwill campaign, which aims to make social action the norm among 10–20-year-olds irrespective of background, believes it is vital to engage the business sector. We hear time and time again that, first and foremost, employers want young people with resilience, enthusiasm, good communication skills and creativity – not academic ability alone.

Along with the campaign's Business Pioneers: – Barclays, British Gas, BITC, CIPD, Chime, CBI, EDF Energy, Heathrow, Linklaters, Lloyds, National Grid, O2, PwC, and Sky; – we believe that social action enables young people to fulfil their potential. Helping them participate benefits businesses and communities alike, by increasing civic participation, strengthening engagement in education and improving work-readiness.

There is no doubt in my mind that getting involved in high-quality youth social action helps develop precisely the kinds of attributes and skills that all businesses are looking for. Add to this that such participation has a positive impact on the communities in which these

young people live, and you have a genuine 'double benefit'.

This is why we are calling on employers to recognise the value of youth social action in their recruitment processes. If young people know employers value this, more will take part and more will develop the skills employers are looking for. So please do consider the practical steps in this report, and whether your organisation can commit to helping our young people realise their potential.



Charlotte Hill
Chief Executive, Step Up To Serve

'Youth unemployment is one of the biggest challenges facing the UK, affecting almost half a million 16–24-year-olds.'

Introduction

‘67% (of employers) report that entry-level candidates who have voluntary experience demonstrate more employability skills.’

Participation in social action, by which we mean practical action in the service of others that creates positive change, for example volunteering or fundraising activities, has risen up the political and social agenda in recent years. More than ever before, young people in particular are ready to take an active part in improving their communities. By doing so they know they can help those around them at the same time as developing skills, many of which will also help them when they enter the workplace and make them a valuable addition to the workforce. From an employer’s perspective, finding candidates with the skills they look for can also be a challenge, and opening up organisations to young people with social action experience is one way to tap into a pool of talented individuals that might otherwise be overlooked.

A recent CIPD survey found that many employers recognise some of the key skills that can be developed as a result of participation in social action, with 67% reporting that entry-level candidates who have voluntary experience demonstrate more employability skills. The top three skills cited by respondents were teamwork (82%), communication (80%) and understanding the local community (45%). However, despite

these findings, very few employers reported that social action or volunteering experience was asked about during the recruitment process. Less than one fifth (16%) of employers reported that they asked about volunteering at the application stage and only a third (33%) asked about it at interview stage.¹ As a result, many employers will be failing to pick up on candidates with these valuable skills and experience and risk missing out on key talent.

However, this guide, produced jointly by the CIPD and Step Up To Serve, the national charity that co-ordinates the #iwill campaign, is here to help. The guide not only outlines why employers should integrate social action – that is, activity such as volunteering, fundraising or campaigning – into their entry-level recruitment processes, including highlighting some of the key business benefits, but it also explains how it can be done. Drawing from in-depth interviews with 11 case study organisations (Table 1), the guide brings together a range of practical tips from employers. These are designed to cater to organisations of any size, whether you are just starting out on the journey of embedding social action into recruitment, or if you are looking to completely revolutionise your recruitment practices.

About #iwill

#iwill is a UK-wide campaign that aims to make social action part of life for as many 10–20-year-olds as possible by the year 2020. The campaign is backed by leaders from across UK society, and led by HRH The Prince of Wales with renewed support from all of the main political parties.

The campaign's vision is that every young person in the UK is taking part in 'quality' social action and this will be achieved by inspiring leaders from across society to think about what they can do to help – whether that's creating opportunities themselves, or recognising what young people have achieved through social action. Both individuals and organisations are encouraged to pledge their support for the campaign online, and show what action they will take to achieve this societal shift.

Many education leaders already see the inherent value in engaging their young people in social action, often citing the development of young people's skills and character as a motivator. In a Cabinet Office 'Decade of Youth Social Action' survey of teachers, 98% agreed that social action can be beneficial in supporting pupils' development. Many education institutions ensure that building young people's character and wider skillset (in many cases through social action) sits side by side with academic rigour, putting an equal emphasis on both.

Working in collaboration with partners such as the Confederation of British Industry, the Education Endowment Fund and those involved with the Fair Education Alliance, the #iwill campaign advocates for a shared vision of a holistic education that builds the skills and character that will set young people up for life and work.

If this work on education is the 'push' factor for increasing the number of young people participating in their communities, the work on recruitment is the 'pull' factor. By embedding social action in recruitment, companies can demonstrate to young people that the experience and skills they gain through this activity is valuable to employers, and this should encourage more young people to take part.

Table 1: Case study organisations

Organisation	Who they are
Barclays	Barclays is an international financial services provider with 325 years of history and expertise in banking. Barclays operates in over 50 countries and employs over 130,000 people.
British Gas	British Gas is part of the Centrica Group of companies – the company that supplies energy to millions of homes and offices around the UK.
Genesis Crafty	Genesis Crafty are a family-owned award-winning baking company based in Magherafelt in Northern Ireland.
Linklaters	Linklaters is a global law firm with a history spanning 175 years.
Lloyds Banking Group	Lloyds Banking Group is a financial services group with businesses focused on retail and commercial financial services operating across a number of brands including Lloyds Bank, Halifax and Bank of Scotland.
National Grid	National Grid is an electricity and gas company that connects consumers to energy sources through its networks.
Pertemps	Pertemps is a recruitment company, established in 1961, with 100 branches across the UK.
PwC	PwC UK is a member of the PwC network of firms, operating in 157 countries, with more than 184,000 people committed to delivering quality in assurance, tax and advisory services.
Sky	Sky plc is a British-based pan-European satellite broadcasting, on-demand Internet streaming media, broadband and telephone services company.
Teach First	Teach First is a charity working to end educational inequality by placing graduates in schools across England and Wales via their Leadership Development Programme.
Telefónica	Telefónica is one of the world's largest telecommunications network operators and is one of the 50 largest companies in the world.

Why integrate social action into recruitment?

‘Many young people feel that their lack of previous work experience is their biggest barrier to accessing employment.’

The case for supporting social action at its broadest level is clear: it allows individuals to give back to the community and make a difference to their environment or the people around them. A CIPD report published in September 2013, *Youth Social Action and Transitions into Work: What role for employers?*, also uncovered a number of business benefits to be gained from supporting social action activities as an employer, including an enhanced brand and providing development and engagement opportunities for employees. In this report we explore the specific benefits to be gained from integrating social action into the recruitment process.

The 11 case study organisations featured in this report were asked what benefits they saw from integrating social action into the recruitment process. Their responses broadly fell under five core themes: breaking down barriers to the labour market; access the skills those with social action experience have; promoting diversity within the organisation; attracting talent; and finally, boosting the organisation’s reputation and brand.

Breaking down barriers to the labour market

A number of organisations highlighted the value of social action in providing people with an opportunity to gain useful experience which could stand them in good stead when applying for work. This is particularly important at the stage that individuals first enter the labour market, as often they can find themselves unable to access relevant work experience.

The CIPD report, *Employers are from Mars, Young People are from Venus: Addressing the young people/jobs mismatch*, highlighted that many young people feel that their lack of previous work experience is their biggest barrier to accessing employment. Indeed, recent data collected by Business in the Community (BITC) from employers who completed their Generation Talent Self-Assessment Tool (a test used to help managers involved in recruitment identify and tackle any bias towards unemployed young people) found that only 39% of employers ask for no work experience for entry-level jobs. As this is a group of employers concerned about making their recruitment practices accessible to young people, the national picture is likely to be much higher. At the same time, only just over half of employers (54%) stated in a recent CIPD *Learning to Work* survey that they offer work experience placements, suggesting that access is not as widespread as employers might expect. While this reflects a wider issue around some employers’ unrealistic expectations of young people, the organisations we spoke to see social action as a way for young people to get experience they might struggle to find elsewhere:

‘It comes back to the, “you can’t get experience until you’ve got experience” cycle. I think social action gives a really tangible way for young people to start targeting their experience.’ **Martha Jennings, Sky**

‘Work experience is very difficult to get, and therefore this [social action] is another avenue where we can have

some really great people coming in to the organisation.’ **Sharon Goymer**
National Grid

‘I think especially now in the kind of climate where people are finding it more and more difficult to get jobs, when you see someone who has actually taken it upon themselves to do voluntary work in order to get themselves some experience, I think it’s a credit to them. If I saw [this on] their CV, it would impress me.’ **Anna-Marie, Genesis Crafty**

Employers such as Genesis Crafty understand how difficult it can be to access work experience and are impressed by candidates who are able to pick up experience in other ways. However, this only works if recruitment practices are adapted to allow candidates to highlight the experience they have gained via social action and recruiters understand and appreciate the value of it.

Skills of those with social action experience

It is overwhelmingly clear that the employers we spoke to for this report were impressed by the range and depth of skills candidates who are vocal about their social action experience are able to demonstrate. Barclays, who sponsor the Student Volunteer of the Year Award, see evidence of this in the submissions they receive:

‘They range broadly from: entrepreneurship; influence; leadership; team management; time management; commerciality; energy. There are so many different skills.’

Jane Clark, Barclays

National Grid and Linklaters also see evidence of a wide array of useful skills and positive characteristics in the candidates they meet:

‘Oh a huge amount, including overcoming problems, being

Generation Talent

In response to the high rates of youth unemployment, Business in the Community (BITC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) launched Generation Talent in 2013. This initiative has been developed by the BITC Talent and Skills Leadership Team to dismantle the hidden barriers for young people in recruitment practices by providing practical support to companies. Businesses involved are asked to commit to:

- make their vacancies more visible to unemployed young people through using Jobcentre Plus services
- ensure recruitment processes don’t disadvantage young unemployed people
- set ambitious targets to increase the number of young unemployed people recruited
- engage in the broader agenda to inspire young people and help them into work.

To date, 90 companies have engaged with Generation Talent and another 240 businesses have taken part in events. Generation Talent has exceeded its targets – 126,000 vacancies are now visible through the Jobcentre and 18,000 apprenticeships available for young people.

Find out more and test your own recruitment practices via the Generation Talent Self-Assessment Tool at www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/generation-talent

able to analyse and come up with solutions, how they organise and plan themselves, how resilient they are, how they communicate and how they work in teams. The list is endless. These individuals will be a lot more confident and a lot more mature in their outlook, they demonstrate greater empathy and more appreciation for others, there’s a whole list.’ **Sharon Goymer, National Grid**

‘I think a key one for us is drive and commitment, just their ability to go the extra mile to do something different, to think outside of the box. It shows that they are proactive. They can absolutely demonstrate time management skills, how they organise themselves, how they prioritise themselves. Team skills also come out. So, how you collaborate with others, how you motivate

others to get on board with what you are trying to achieve. You can demonstrate leadership.’ **Jennifer Cook, Linklaters**

Interestingly, employers tell us that even skills you might not typically associate with social action are often evident, such as commercial acumen:

‘If they are fundraising, if they are thinking about how to fund a project, how they’ve gone about thinking about that and raising funds, and being commercial and innovative around that.’ **Richard Irwin, PWC**

If social action is not integrated into the recruitment process, candidates will not be able to share this experience and employers risk failing to pick up on the great skills these candidates possess, resulting in missing out on fantastic talent.

‘Increasingly, people want to understand what a potential employer is doing to give back to society and the local community.’

Linklaters believe that providing opportunities for candidates to share their social action experience, along with other extra-curricular activities, gives them an edge and allows them to select people who will perform well in the organisation:

‘I would say that everyone we recruit has some kind of volunteering or extra-curricular experience and they perform really well when they are in the firm. A key measure for us is our trainee qualification rates, and for the last two rounds that has been above 90%, which is again an assessment of the quality of the trainees coming through. So to have that many go on to be qualified lawyers at the firm is pretty impressive.’ **Jennifer Cook, Linklaters**

Promoting diversity in the organisation

Embedding social action in the recruitment process can help promote diversity in several ways. It not only opens up access to your organisation, particularly to young people who might have struggled to get traditional work experience or not been academically successful, but, once employed, the experience these individuals have means they often have a broader outlook:

‘I think the individual who has undertaken some form of social action will have greater life experience, therefore a wider perspective.’ **Arbi Rai, Lloyds Banking Group**

This wider perspective that Arbi Rai from Lloyds Banking Group describes has a knock-on effect in terms of what they bring to the organisation and how they are able to relate to other staff and customers:

‘Because they have worked with charities and not-for-profit

organisations, it is likely that they have worked with a wider demographic within the UK. This allows the individual to gain a wider perspective, level of empathy, and be able to relate to different kinds of people from different walks of life. That is important for any organisation, where individuals are able to demonstrate they can work with different people who have different perspectives.’ **Arbi Rai, Lloyds Banking Group**

Employers increasingly accept that workforce diversity is essential to business success. The key benefits of a diverse workforce are numerous and include customer care and marketplace competitiveness; corporate image, brand, ethics and values; recruitment and retention of talent; designing and delivering products and services; increasing creativity and innovation; and corporate responsibility.

Attracting talent

Weaving in social action into the recruitment process can also help organisations attract the best talent. Increasingly, people want to understand what a potential employer is doing to give back to society and the local community. By demonstrating that social action is important and valued by the organisation early on, candidates will be able to see how their values align with those of the organisation, even before they begin the recruitment process:

‘The fact that we have got a really good social action agenda internally helps attract the right types of individual. Often they’re fishing for many roles, to be able to talk about what we do, the commitment we have and the passion we have about it, it certainly helps them make more positive decisions towards us. There is endless research that suggests the millennial generation

are particularly interested in the behaviour of a corporate organisation. It's a good selling point for us as a company and a destination employer.' **Kate Sheldon, Telefónica**

'There is growing evidence to suggest that when individuals are looking at organisations to work for, they will look at how socially responsible those organisations are.'

Arbi Rai, Lloyds Banking Group

British Gas sees evidence of this during recruitment, as candidates will bring it up when they are asked about why they want to work for the company. Often those candidates will also have social action experience themselves:

'We do ask them why they want to work for British Gas and we do ask them what they know about us. I find that some people will say at the very beginning, "Oh British Gas, I hear that you do a lot of work for Shelter." You can tell those who've done their research. It's actually quite interesting because those people, if you look at their CV, they're the ones that do go on to talk about the stuff that they have done. It is of big interest to them. You find that those people are quite driven and ambitious and want to do really well.' **Emma Lawrence, British Gas**

Boosting the organisation's reputation and brand

Beyond attracting talent, showing support for social action at the recruitment stage also helps to lift the reputation of the organisation more widely, as it fits in with a broader corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda. Companies such as Lloyds Banking Group, which have a strong philanthropic tradition, see this as integral to their role and contribution to society:

'Organisations play a pivotal role in contributing to the economy, but to ensure this we have to ensure we have a stable and prosperous society. We have to lead the way to help shape and form what activity is undertaken to contribute to society.'

Arbi Rai, Lloyds Banking Group

Smaller businesses, such as catering company Genesis Crafty based in Northern Ireland, also highlight the increasing importance of demonstrating that they are a socially responsible company, as it impacts their reputation with their key customer group, the retailers they supply:

'Then you've got the ethical side of it too, with our big customers like Marks & Spencer. They now don't just audit you as a supplier on your quality, they will come in and audit you in terms of what you're doing for the community, what you're doing from a social perspective, what you're doing from an environmental perspective; they look at the ethical side of things. So, it has a much bigger impact. These customers aren't just looking for quality products; they're looking for quality companies.' **Anna-Marie, Genesis Crafty**

Practical tips: how can you embed social action into your recruitment practices?

'A first step to integrating social action into your recruitment process should be to make sure whatever you do as a business in this field is clearly stated on your website.'

In the previous section we outlined the business case for integrating social action into your recruitment processes. In this section we draw out best practice examples, from the 11 organisations who provided case studies, in order to demonstrate the range of steps you can take to ensure candidates who have social action experience are given the best opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have gained as a result of it. While the majority of tips could be applied to the recruitment process for a whole range of roles, the best examples we found relate mainly to the recruitment for entry-level positions, including apprenticeships and graduate schemes. We identified 15 key recommendations.

Advertising opportunities

1 Include reference to your own social action activities on your website

When initially starting to research or look into a job or company, the majority of people will start with the organisation's website. Indeed, we often remind jobseekers that prior research should form a big part of the recruitment process, as they will be better prepared.²

In the previous section, we also highlighted how promotion of your organisation's social action activities can also help attract talent to your business. So, it makes sense that a first step to integrating social action into your recruitment process should be to make sure whatever you do as a business in this field is clearly stated on your website.

Organisations such as PwC and Linklaters already do this, and find that candidates often refer to it during the recruitment process:

'I know that we promote this on our website and that students do sometimes mention this in their applications to us, and comment on the work that we're doing with other charities or organisations. So they are aware.' **Kruti Shah, PwC**

'I do think it is something that students and future joiners are increasingly looking at. We recently undertook a piece of work called Our Deal, which signposts a series of promises and expectations that Linklaters expect from its people, and vice versa. There are six of those, and one of them looks at the CSR angle. It is increasingly something that students ask us about. We purposely make a point of elaborating on our activities on our graduate recruitment website.'

Jennifer Cook, Linklaters

2 Job adverts – highlight early on that social action experience is of interest to you

Advertising, including the job advert itself, forms an important part of the recruitment process. The wrong wording in a job advert or description can quickly reduce the pool of talented people you will be able to select from. In an effort to make recruitment practices more youth friendly, the CIPD recommends that employers keep job adverts simple and clear. We also believe that, for entry-level roles in particular, the

emphasis should be on ability rather than experience, an issue the recruitment agency Pertemps has addressed in recent years:

'When I was taught to write adverts, it was always about essential criteria and desirable criteria. Now, for entry-level positions, we don't put anything that's essential in it as we'd be missing that potential. It's more open now. For example, previously we might have said, "It is essential that you have two years' experience of working in a call centre." But now we say, "We are looking for lively people who are keen to learn and work in an interactive environment."' **Sue Purnell, Pertemps**

An increasing number of employers are also recognising that formal work experience is not the only way that young people can evidence their suitability for a role. Barclays aims to stress this early on, particularly for their apprenticeship opportunities:

'One of the key elements that we try to get across in our communications is the whole ethos of transferable skills and the fact that if you don't have work experience, that doesn't predetermine that you wouldn't have an opportunity in Barclays. We tell candidates to think about hobbies that you have, think about extracurricular activities; think about things that you do in the community, and think about how those skills and experiences could apply themselves to what we look for as an organisation and the potential that we look for in individuals.' **Shaun Meekins, Barclays**

British Gas, which embeds social action via the Duke of Edinburgh Award in a number of

its apprenticeship programmes (see page 18 for more information), also makes sure this is highlighted in the advert for the role. They also let candidates know that this is something that they will be asked about:

'It really clearly states quite high up in the application process that you will be asked about what social action or what volunteering you've carried out in your community.' **Joy, British Gas**

3 Use social action as part of your recruitment campaign

Barclays went a step beyond referencing social action in the job advert by placing it at the heart of their student attraction campaign in university campuses across the country. Not only did this result in 1,500 commitments from students to volunteer, but it also helped to raise awareness of the company's own commitment to local communities:

'In the UK we ran a campaign on [university] campuses called the Promise Tree Campaign. We asked students to make a pledge or a promise, pledging their time to a local cause. That campaign was really successful. We reached over 10,000 students. So, this is a really good example of how our attraction campaign also gives students a little bit more of an insight into Barclays. ... That is a really powerful message for us to take out onto campus and for any potential candidates that are wanting to come and work for Barclays.' **Jane Clark, Barclays**

Providing support to candidates

4 Provide guidance to candidates around the application process

One of the key obstacles many young people face when they begin to look for work is that

they do not know how to market themselves to employers.³ They often lack the ability to articulate their skills and experience in a coherent way, or may worry that the experience they do have isn't relevant or what employers are looking for. Those managing recruitment report seeing evidence of this on a day-to-day basis:

'What I find is, talking to many students, that sometimes they don't reflect on the achievements enough and you get – we call it the, "Well, I only" group: "Oh, well I only helped in the local charity shop." And I think [the challenge] is trying to get the students to understand that those transferable skills are very, very important and can really help bring an application form to life.' **Jane Clark, Barclays**

'I think there's a myth amongst many potential applicants that firms like PwC will only value team working examples, for example, that are from a corporate environment. That couldn't be further from the truth.' **Richard Irwin, PwC**

'Sometimes people have voluntary experience but the way that they articulate it or the way that they have perceived that experience might not necessarily demonstrate the right competencies.' **Tullulah Bygraves, Teach First**

In order to overcome this hurdle, a number of organisations are actively providing support to potential candidates to help them think about the recruitment process and how to evidence their skills effectively. An easy way to do this is to make written guidance available, either on your website or as a booklet, which accompanies the application process.

‘On top of providing written or video evidence, organisations such as Barclays and PwC take this a step further by running face-to-face sessions with potential candidates.’

Propeller

Propeller is a free online tool that helps young people turn their social action into job interview answers that demonstrate the skills employers value. It is an excellent tool for increasing the diversity of your workforce as you can signpost Propeller to candidates who may traditionally find job interviews challenging.

www.thisispropeller.org.uk

*‘On our website we’ve got an employability guide, which demonstrates the skills that we’re looking for and how you might develop these.’ **Kruti Shah, PwC***

Telefónica and PwC are also taking advantage of technology to illustrate to candidates how they can apply the experience they do have to the application and interview process. Here, just a simple video or case study of someone who has taken part in social action, explaining how they referred to it in their application and interview, can help others understand how they can do the same:

*‘The other thing that we’re just about to do is to do a video of some of our young people who’ve joined our organisation who used examples of social action in their CVs, video interviews and interviews to actually talk to other young people about how they can use it.’ **Elizabeth Carter, Telefónica***

‘We’ve also got our online interview e-learn course to support interview preparation, and there is an example on there where one of the candidates talks about her gap year experience,

*where she taught English abroad, and uses this example to demonstrate some of the behaviours that are assessed in that interview.’ **Kruti Shah, PwC***

5 Provide face-to-face support to candidates

On top of providing written or video evidence, organisations such as Barclays and PwC take this a step further by running face-to-face sessions with potential candidates. These sessions help candidates to understand more about the company and give real insight

Steps Ahead Mentoring

The CIPD encourages HR professionals to volunteer to help prepare jobseekers for the job search, application and interview process via our Steps Ahead Mentoring programme. Steps Ahead Mentoring offers jobseekers one-to-one mentoring sessions to help them improve their employability skills, boost their confidence and find work. Mentees (primarily young jobseekers, aged 18–24) are referred to Steps Ahead by Jobcentre Plus, and other selected partners. The programme is run by the CIPD (at no cost to the young people or Jobcentre Plus) with support from Nesta and the Cabinet Office. Almost 2,700 mentors, all CIPD members, and 2,600 mentees are signed up (as of May 2015) and 73% of the mentees who complete the programme go on to find work or work experience.

To find out how to register as a mentor, please visit

[cipd.co.uk/
stepsaheadmentoring](http://cipd.co.uk/stepsaheadmentoring)

Lloyds Scholars programme – promoting employability skills

Lloyds Scholars is a unique social mobility programme run by Lloyds Banking Group. Partnering with leading universities across the UK, Lloyds offers students from lower-income households a complete package of financial support, paid internships, a business mentor and the opportunity to develop their employability skills. In return for this support, Lloyds asks for a commitment from candidates to complete at least 100 hours' volunteering in the local community each academic year. As well as it being personally rewarding, and a way to connect with and give something back to the local community, Lloyds also highlights that volunteering is a way to develop the transferable skills that employers value:

'We see some impressive candidates apply for the Lloyds Scholars programme, a number of them either participate in volunteering already alongside their studies or have clear ideas as to what volunteering they would want to undertake. They see the benefits that the volunteering aspect gives them in building their experience and skills. The candidates undertaking volunteering can be a real inspiration and are able to use their experiences to reflect their skills and potential throughout the recruitment process.' **Arbi Rai, Lloyds Banking Group**

into the skills they will be expected to demonstrate and how to present these:

'One of the campaigns that we ran on campus this year was a CV and a bike clinic. So whilst your bike was being fixed your CV was also being looked at. So, it gives the students an opportunity to come and work with Barclays representatives to talk through their CV and for the Barclays representative to start to really tease out some of the experience that these students have.' **Jane Clark, Barclays**

'We run a whole range of sessions on campus to talk about what we do, what employability skills we look for and how to develop and demonstrate these skills. We spend a lot of time talking to students about how the skills that they could demonstrate, through volunteering for example, are just as much of value and often greater value to us than a project they did during an internship at a large corporate.' **Richard Irwin, PwC**

Candidates who take part in these sessions are often at an advantage, as it helps them to understand how much these organisations value social action experience. As Jane Clark at Barclays explains, *'you can see the light bulb moment and then what you'll see is they'll start to then go back through the CV and start to adapt it and that's really what you're wanting to see.'*

Application process

6 Applications forms – include a question that allows applicants to share their social action experience

British Gas and National Grid both include a question around volunteering and community work in their application form:

'During the online application we state, "We work with the local community, we think this is important and we would like to hear about if you have any experience."' **John Madden, British Gas**

'Rather than just asking for work experience, we specifically say, "Are you involved in any social action? Are you involved in any volunteering initiatives?" The team are then looking at that and making some really sensible decisions and screening candidates based on the fact that these candidates may not have work experience, but boy do they have some other fantastic skills that they've developed through some of the other activities they've been involved in.' **Sharon Goymer, National Grid**

A number of other organisations we spoke to did not include a specific question around volunteering, but encouraged applicants to highlight their experience via open-ended questions, such as *'Do you have any other activities that you can tell us about that would support your application?'*

'We make it very clear that we're looking for students to draw on examples from across the board. I'd hope that means that things like volunteering or social action come to mind.' **Martha Jennings, Sky**

7 Introduce flexible shortlisting criteria

A common challenge for recruiters, particularly those overseeing entry- or graduate-level recruitment, is the volume of applicants. In a bid to reduce the pool of potential candidates, and recruit who they perceive to be the best person for the role, many organisations have stated

A killer question?

A long-term goal for the CIPD is to promote inclusive, good recruitment that considers the different needs of candidates, whatever their age, social background, abilities or ethnicity. Part of this is ensuring that candidates are not discriminated against on the basis that they have not had the opportunity to take part in certain activities.

A number of organisations we spoke to also highlighted concerns about sifting out candidates who did not have social action experience, particularly as it could disadvantage those that did not have the opportunity to be involved:

'We are very conscious that we are working with a very bespoke community. A lot of young people that we do assess have not had the opportunity to be involved in things like this.' **Shaun Meekins, Barclays**

'I'd be reluctant to actually add in a specific question because I think it disadvantages those who aren't in a position to be able to do some form of social action.' **Martha Jennings, Sky**

'If it became mandatory you could be discriminating against applicants, which I don't think would be right.' **James Darley, Teach First**

British Gas, which does include specific questions around volunteering/community work throughout its recruitment process, is also conscious of this issue:

'If an applicant said, "Actually, I haven't got any volunteering experience," that doesn't stop that application being processed. We think that's quite important because not everyone has been introduced to volunteering, so we try and keep it as inclusive as possible.' **John Madden, British Gas**

One of the key principles behind the Step Up To Serve #iwill campaign is that social action is embedded into existing pathways and accessible to all. The campaign is working with partners from across education, business and the voluntary sector with the aspiration that opportunities are available to all young people, regardless of their background, starting with embedding social action in schools and colleges. Nevertheless, we agree that involvement in social action should not be used as a 'killer' question during the recruitment process, but integrated as a means of bringing out that great experience in candidates that have had it.

levels of academic attainment as a minimum requirement for these types of roles. However, by doing this, you could be missing out on the best candidates, who might not have excelled academically, but have demonstrated their competency for the position via their social action or other experience.

PwC, one of the largest recruiters of graduates in the UK, has recently announced plans to drop A-level requirements when recruiting candidates for their graduate programme. This is part of a shift *'to a focus on contemporary employability skills as opposed to traditional measures of academic success'*,

states Richard Irwin, PwC, who believes that candidates' A-level results do not always accurately reflect the skills they can bring to the organisation. The move also seeks to increase social mobility and broaden diversity at PwC, which cautions that employers that put too much emphasis on UCAS scores (a system that converts A-level grades and other exam results into a points total) may be missing out on key talent from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Another way that PwC ensures that candidates with great extracurricular experience are not automatically screened out of the application process is

their Outstanding Achievement programme:

'[Candidates] who may not have met our degree requirements but may have done something outstanding in their own time are still considered. That may involve being a representative for your country in a sport or doing something really outstanding around social action.' **Kruti Shah, PwC**

Sky also keeps an open mind when it comes to setting rigid academic criteria for candidates:

'When we're recruiting, we're always looking for potential. We don't say that anyone has to have

any specific qualifications to get to this stage. So you don't have to have a marketing degree, for example, to do our marketing graduate programme. So by that very nature, it means that we're looking for people to draw on examples from quite a broad range of experiences. These can come from some form of social action, whether that is they volunteered for a student society to do their marketing, or they set something up at their university.'

Martha Jennings, Sky

As a result, these employers are opening up access to talent they might have otherwise screened out of the process, as Jennifer Cook from Linklaters outlines:

'Be open-minded, really look at that diversity of experience. I would be hesitant about using online screening, and filtering out on grades. I think you do lose a lot of talented people that way, and you are not looking at the whole.'

Jennifer Cook, Linklaters

Interview process

8 Interviews and assessment centres – train interviewers to tease out the experience of the candidates

Many of the organisations we spoke to highlighted that they are keen to give candidates the best possible chance to demonstrate their skills during face-to-face interviews and assessment centres. This is not only beneficial to the candidates, but also allows the employer to get a rounded picture of the person they are interviewing. There are a number of steps employers can take to help the candidate feel more comfortable, particularly if they are applying for their first job, such as providing detailed information about the process to the candidate in advance and

starting the interview with an informal chat.⁴

Barclays put candidates at ease by making it clear that they are not just looking for a particular type of person:

'We always tell candidates that whoever they sit in front of, we are not looking for any kind of stereotypical person. We just want them to be the person that they are to allow their personality and their abilities to shine through on their own.'

Tracy Longhurst, Barclays

Employers also increasingly appreciate that they cannot expect candidates to be perfect, as Emma Lawrence at British Gas explains, *'For entry-level, we realise that we're giving them the opportunity to have a fantastic career, so we do realise that they're not the end product, they're not the finished product by any means.'* This understanding is reflected in the approach that many of the organisations we spoke to take when they are interviewing for entry-level positions. Instead of expecting candidates to have perfect answers to every question, assessors and interviewers are trained in how to coax out as much relevant information as possible:

'We're looking to tease out the candidate's best examples and the candidate's skills.' **Richard Irwin, PwC**

'We provide training for our line managers in interviewing on how to tease out anything from young people.' **Martha Jennings, Sky**

'You need to take a different approach to interviewing a young person than someone with lots of work experience. When we meet

with the younger people it's more about the interviewer chatting to them and trying to get them to open up and tell us about their experience in all parts of life.'

Sue Purnell, Pertemps

'They are meticulously trained to be able to extract evidence related to the competencies and then convert that evidence into a score. They are trained to make sure they get the best out of every single answer or every single exercise.' **James Darely, Teach First**

Practically, this involves the interviewer asking broader questions around the candidate's past experience, including drawing on any social action they may have participated in:

'It includes things like saying, "If they're struggling for an answer, get them to think about what else they might have done other than being in the classroom."' **Martha Jennings, Sky**

'We'll pick points out of an individual's CV, for example, if they've achieved a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, we would ask them to tell us what they felt they got out of it and get them to describe what they did in the various elements when working towards the award, what projects they worked on and who they worked with.' **Sue Purnell, Pertemps**

9 Weave social action into interview questions

Competency-based questions form an integral part of many organisations' interview processes as they allow employers to assess how a candidate's experience relates to the skills they are looking for. However, when it comes to recruiting young people, some

Envision

Education charity Envision runs the inter-school competition the Community-Apprentice. Based on the TV show *The Apprentice*, young people are required to develop, and crucially demonstrate, competencies while managing their own social action projects to see who can make the biggest impact on their communities.

Envision engages hundreds of volunteers from local companies to help young people evidence and articulate the competencies they have developed. Volunteers draw out the best examples from each individual and write these up as a 'reference', which is verified by Envision.

The charity has trialled different ways of drawing out this information and developed a training session to enable its volunteers to get the best results.

'The first year our corporate volunteers asked young people to give examples of specific competencies they had developed, such as teamwork or resilience. More often than not they talked in a conceptual way about what they thought these terms meant. The quality of evidence was relatively poor.'

'The next year we simply asked them to talk through their projects, occasionally adding prompt questions at relevant points, such as tell us about your role in that? What are you most proud of? What did you learn and if you did it all again what might you do differently? The quality of examples they captured was dramatically improved.'

Jennie Butterworth, CEO Envision
www.envision.org.uk

employers feel that they are not the most effective method for accurately predicting an individual's suitability for the role, as young people are disadvantaged as they do not have the previous work experience to draw on:

'We decided to redesign our interviews to get the best out of people rather than making them something that people fear because they may feel they have to make things up in order to answer the questions.' **Sue Purnell, Pertemps**

Pertemps and Barclays have both adopted a strengths-based interview approach for a number of positions, which allows them to assess a candidate's interests and potential while opening up the pool of talent they are able to recruit from:

'We've moved away from competency-based interviews to strengths-based interviewing; it's more of the here and now. We feel it's a fairer process for students.' **Jane Clark, Barclays**

'We redesigned the whole interview process for students and young people who previously hadn't worked. The questions that covered people's previous experience were removed.' **Sue Purnell, Pertemps**

A number of questions used by Pertemps as part of this style of interviewing provide opportunities for candidates to talk about their social action:

'We ask, "What motivates you?" So that isn't just about what you like doing at work, that's about what motivates you in your life and what makes you get up in the morning. When you ask that question, because it's such an

open question, you can get all sorts of responses.' **Sue Purnell, Pertemps**

'We'll ask them, "What did you do in school? Did you do any activities in the evening? Have you done volunteering?" because some people are very new to having an interview and you do have to sort of lead them down the path. Once they explain we will ask them to tell us more about it.' **Sue Purnell, Pertemps**

Other questions you could also include to draw out social action via strengths-based interviews include:

- What do you enjoy?
- What things give you energy?
- Describe a successful day you have had.
- When did you achieve something you were really proud of?

We also found that where the organisations we interviewed are using competency-based questions, they are keen for candidates to draw from their wider background, not just work experience. Teach First, for example, one of the most popular post-university programmes for graduates, uses competency questions throughout their application and interview process. Several of the competencies candidates are assessed against relate very strongly to the type of experience those who have undertaken social action are likely to be able to demonstrate, including 'humility, respect and empathy':

'Those candidates who have done volunteering or social action work should be able to give plenty of examples of where they have demonstrated or

they have a proficiency in that competency.’ **James Darley, Teach First**

Indeed, candidates who have social action experience often have some of the best examples to draw on, which is no surprise given the whole raft of skills employers tell us that they see (outlined in the first section of this guide):

‘Certainly my observations have been those that take part in volunteering, whether it be the Duke of Edinburgh Award or coaching their own football team in a league in their spare time, they are certainly people that when it comes to those competency-based questions, can definitely give more of a rounded example, without a shadow of a doubt.’ **Emma Lawrence, British Gas**

‘One of the things we measure people on is their passion. If the candidate is volunteering, and dedicating their time to do something to give back to the community, this is an area where we really see individuals’ passions coming through.’ **Arbi Rai, Lloyds Banking Group**

Organisations that specifically ask about extra-curricular activities and volunteering or social action during the interview also often see it helping certain candidates to stand out from the crowd:

‘It can be the USP [unique selling point] of their application. What I have found from past experience is that when you ask students about this, it’s a question that they feel really confident about. That they can really talk to; they can really articulate. You know that there’s energy there. They get quite excited about telling the story of what they’ve done. I think that sometimes that can really be that differentiator.’ **Jane Clark, Barclays**

10 Provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates and point them to where they can get experience

Unsuccessful candidates will not have the chance to develop if they don’t at least have the opportunity to receive feedback. The CIPD recommends that employers give as much feedback as possible to those that have taken the time to apply to you. While a personalised response to every applicant is often not feasible, applications can be acknowledged with an automated response, and a letter or email indicating ‘common reasons’ for why they have not been shortlisted. We also recommend that anyone who has attended an interview or assessment centre should be offered personalised feedback.

Often candidates are rejected because they do not have enough or the right sort of experience. This is where the simple step of sign-posting to social action opportunities via a feedback email or conversation can have a huge impact on their future prospects. Telefónica already use this as an opportunity to link back to initiatives they run to support young people:

‘On our websites we create links back to our “Go Think Big” or “Think Big” programmes. So if you’re not successful with us, here’s how you can get some valuable work experience or how you can secure a small amount of funding to support work in your local community.’ **Kate Sheldon, Telefónica**

However, any organisation can provide links to a whole range of external sites that provide information on social action and volunteering opportunities,

‘Organisations that specifically ask about extra-curricular activities and volunteering or social action during the interview also often see it helping certain candidates to stand out from the crowd.’

which will also help candidates to understand how valuable those experiences are to employers. A list of suggested sites you can link to in your feedback include:

- Volunteermatters.org.uk
- Do-it.org
- Vinspired.com

A further list of opportunities provided by Step Up To Serve #iwill partners can be found at www.iwill.org.uk/get-involved/young-people

You can also tailor the list of social action opportunities you promote so that they are relevant for the types of skills and experience you are looking for. This is something that Teach First is promoting to undergraduates interested in its programme via a network of student-led Teach First societies in universities:

'We are trying to link undergraduates with Teach First schools to do volunteering and social action work. I'm keen to get to a position where, if there is an undergraduate on any campus in any university in the country who needs to build their skills and their experience and build their employability capital, they are thinking about Teach First eligible schools to do that. Whether you are an English grad and you go and read to pupils or whether you're a finance grad and you help the school with their budgets. I just think we could massively up-skill undergraduates.'
James Daley, Teach First

Further actions

11 Integrate social action into training programmes

The CIPD *Volunteering to Learn* report, published in September 2014, highlights the case for integrating social action into employee learning and

development (L&D), particularly as it can be a great way to engage employees and allow them to develop new skills through practical application. Several of the organisations we interviewed for this report also highlighted how social action is being used throughout a number of the programmes they offer:

'Some of the charity partners that we have will reach out to us; for example, it could be an IT solution that they're looking for. As part of the Graduate Development Programme we ask our graduates to actually work on some of these projects.' **Jane Clark, Barclays**

'As part of the traineeship module in Liverpool and Sunderland, throughout the two-week work experience there is actually a community day where the trainees will step out of the office and go and work with a local charity. This could be working in an elderly care home, in a residential home; it could be doing gardening for a certain charity; it could be painting and decorating, working with the homeless. This is a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate to our candidates and our trainees that Barclays is very much about citizenship; we are about community.' **Shaun Meekins, Barclays**

At Linklaters, apprentices participate in social action by helping to educate school students about what apprenticeships are:

'We run an apprenticeship challenge which is where we work with one of our partner charities to teach students who are around sort of 14, 15 age, coming up to their A-levels and making decisions about what they want to do next to help them

British Gas

In 2006 British Gas took the step of integrating the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award into its longer apprenticeship programme for all of those aged under 25. A requirement for the Award is that individuals take part in a minimum of 48 hours of volunteering a year. As a result, British Gas apprentices have contributed thousands of hours to their local communities while participating in a prestigious and well-recognised personal development programme.

understand apprenticeships. This is not recruiting for the Linklaters apprenticeship, but helping young people understand what apprenticeships are in general, and what opportunities you can get from them.' **Louise Smith, Linklaters**

As Louise highlights, often these experiences can be more valuable than other traditional methods of training:

'L&D's model recognises that about 70% of learning that you do on your job is not direct, it's not going into classrooms, it's not doing online courses. It is quite a lot to do with what you learn from your experiences and your job. And a good way to gain new experiences and learn new things is through volunteering.' **Louise Smith, Linklaters**

12 Speak to others who have already integrated social action into their recruitment process

A very simple but effective tip that came from National Grid, one of the organisations featured in this guide, is for those interested in social action

and how it can be effectively integrated into recruitment processes to reach out to those organisations that are already doing it:

'Speak to some recruiters that have already done it. Rather than try and start from scratch, use their knowledge and their experience of what they've done, and how simple it has been, to help speed up that whole process of thinking through how it can be implemented.' **Sharon Goymer, National Grid**

If you would like to be put in touch with businesses pioneering social action, including those that have successfully integrated it into their recruitment, please get in touch with the #iwill team via hello@stepuptoserve.org.uk

13 Build social action into your organisation's values and culture

'One of the reasons it has been accepted is that it's very much seen as part of the firm's wider commitment to doing the right thing.' **Richard Irwin, PwC**

PwC, like the majority of organisations we spoke to, found that integrating social action into the recruitment process has been relatively straightforward because it is already a core part of the organisation's values and/or culture:

'It's something that's encouraged at Sky and there's significant internal support if you personally want to do some form of social action. In that sense, it's embedded in our culture and people should be aware of it and what the opportunities might be within it.' **Martha Jennings, Sky**

One of the common themes amongst those organisations that already consider social action to

be a firm part of their recruitment process is the level of buy-in from senior leaders in the organisation:

'I think what's worked for us well is senior engagement and the really deep understanding of the organisation as to why it's important for us, not just for our customers or internally.' **Kate Sheldon, Telefónica**

'We have an executive sponsor, he is a group director for one of our business areas. One of the pledges that he has made is that he will work with us on developing a volunteering culture within our emerging talent cohort, so graduates and apprentices, with a view to then widening that out across the business. So we've got some actions there from a very senior person.' **Emily Austin, Lloyds Banking Group**

These individuals can really help champion social action across the business, so a key step is presenting the business case to them and getting their support.

14 Integrate social action into employee appraisals and development plans

One way to ensure that social action is fully integrated into your business, by giving employees at every level the opportunity to see the value of it, is to include it as part of your performance and development measures. Barclays, National Grid and Lloyds are leading the way in doing this:

'In Barclays, citizenship, and community investment, and how we interact with our communities, is such a critical aspect and objective for every single employee within the organisation. It's part of how we are measured from a performance development framework, so it is something that

is embedded and driven in all of us in Barclays.' **Shaun Meekins, Barclays**

'It's measured as part of performance development, so when you have your performance review we evaluate individuals around the National Grid values and obviously that's extra over and above evidence to support individuals that get involved in [social action].' **Sharon Goymer, National Grid**

'Volunteering is part of your scorecard. Your performance in this area is actually measured, because it's absolutely fundamental to the ethos of the company.' **Gavin Mason, Lloyds Banking Group**

This encourages all staff to take part in social action, building the reputation of your organisation in the local community, but it also helps to secure buy-in from line managers and assessors who might be reluctant to integrate social action into recruitment processes. If they are volunteering themselves they can see first-hand how these opportunities can help with the development of employability skills:

'Most of the assessors that come along to assessment centres will do their own volunteering. So they'll know, first hand, from their own experience, that they can look for evidence from all sorts of different avenues, not just work experience.' **Sharon Goymer, National Grid**

15 Measure the impact

Finally, the last step you can take as an organisation to fully embed social action into your recruitment process is to record and measure the impact. Several of the organisations featured in this report recognised that it is

a crucial step towards proving the positive correlation between candidates with social action experience and their ability to add value to the organisation:

'We are relatively young in terms of collecting data but we have started to measure whether candidates have come to us with social action.' **Sharon Goymer, National Grid**

This will help to develop your own unique 'business case' for integrating social action throughout your organisation, which can be shared with colleagues, investors and, where appropriate, publicised to customers and wider stakeholders.

Outlined below are a number of key indicators that could be recorded if you are to develop robust measures for this activity:

- percentage of candidates who highlight social action experience in their job application
- percentage of candidates who highlight social action experience during the interview
- percentage of successful candidates with social action experience
- performance level of successful candidates with social action experience after 1, 2, 3 years, and so on
- percentage of employees involved in social action
- performance level of employees involved in social action after 1, 2, 3 years, and so on.

Further information on the wider value of human capital information and measures can be sourced via the CIPD's Valuing your Talent programme. This is a research and engagement programme that we've been working on in collaboration with the UKCES, Investors in People, CMI, CIMA and the RSA to help give employers a clearer understanding of, and common means of describing, the way in which people impact the performance of their organisation.

Next steps

In order to ensure commitment to and raise awareness of the best practice brought to life in this guide, the CIPD and Step Up To Serve are asking for organisations to sign up to the following pledge:

#iwill recognise and value the skills and qualities developed through youth social action in our recruitment processes by:

- **highlighting the value our organisation places on youth social action in recruitment materials such as job adverts and guidance to candidates**
- **encouraging applicants to use youth social action to demonstrate their skills and competences, including in job applications, at interviews and at assessment centres**
- **briefing and training recruiting managers to enable them to discuss and evaluate examples of youth social action effectively.**

Organisations can commit to the pledge by contacting Step Up To Serve at hello@stepuptoserve.org.uk

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Endnotes

- 1 The CIPD paper, *From Big Society to the Big Organisation? The role of organisations in supporting employee volunteering*, published in February 2015, explores the current state of play of employee volunteering in more detail and is available at: www.cipd.co.uk/publicpolicy/policy-reports/big-society-organisation.aspx
- 2 The CIPD has prepared a guide aimed at young jobseekers to help them understand the recruitment process; this is available for free at: www.cipd.co.uk/ypemployment
- 3 The challenges young people and employers face during the recruitment process are explored in more detail in the CIPD report *Employers are from Mars, Young People are from Venus; Addressing the young people/jobs mismatch*, published in April 2013. Available at: www.cipd.co.uk/publicpolicy/policy-reports/mars-venus-jobs-mismatch.aspx
- 4 For additional tips on recruiting young people, please see the CIPD's *Recruiting Young People: Top tips for employers* booklet, available at: www.cipd.co.uk/publicpolicy/policy-reports/mars-venus-jobs-mismatch.aspx
- 5 Apprentices on programmes that last for 12 months do not take part in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

CIPD | Learning to Work

The **Learning to Work** programme is led by the CIPD to promote the role of employers in reducing youth unemployment. The CIPD's purpose is to **champion better work and working lives**, which starts with young people being able to access the labour market.

The overall aim of the programme is to promote the business case for investing in the future workforce. We encourage HR professionals to offer a wide range of access routes into their organisations and ensure their recruitment and management practices are youth-friendly. We also promote direct contact with young people via two youth volunteering programmes, **Steps Ahead Mentoring** and **Inspiring the Future**.

cipd.co.uk/learningtowork

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201
E cipd@cipd.co.uk **W** cipd.co.uk

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