ARC INITIATIVE

Schools & Colleges

Career programmes, employer encounters, mentoring and workplace experiences for students aged 16 to 25

PARTNERSHIP PACK

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WHERE
Newham, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Barking and Dagenham, plus virtual delivery

COST
Free to your students. Where a programme is not already funded, we will say so and look for funding with you

TALK TO US
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01 Who we are

Arc Initiative helps young people aged 16 to 25 build confidence, develop real-world skills and take a clear next step into work, education or training.

We are a Black-led and lived-experience-led charity working across East London. Chidi O'Hanekwu founded Arc in 2021, and we registered with the Charity Commission in July 2022, charity number 1199808.

We started as a career's charity. The young people who kept coming back, and who needed us longest, were care leavers and care-experienced, and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in under resourced communities with little to no access to career training/coaching, personal development or mentoring, and much of our work now sits there.

We work with students who are doing well and want direction, and with students who have stopped turning up. We are used to both.

Our facilitators come from a range of industries, and many have lived experience of the barriers our students face. Alumni come back as volunteers and facilitators, and a youth board of 20 young people shapes what we deliver.

> *To bridge the gap between potential and opportunity.*
>
> Our mission. Our vision is to empower people to navigate their careers with confidence, authenticity and purpose.

02 Why schools and colleges work with us

We bring employers to you

Our network spans finance, education, the creative arts industries, sport, technology and the public sector, and we handle the organising.

We are good with the students you worry about

Care-experienced young people, young carers, and students who are disengaged or at risk of becoming NEET.

We work around real lives

Face to face on your site and online, around part-time work, caring responsibilities, travel costs and unstable housing.

We do not run through exams

We work around exam periods and holidays and put on wellbeing drop-ins instead.

You get evidence, not anecdotes

Baseline, midpoint and exit measures, attendance, destinations and an end of programme report for your records.

We do not disappear

We do not close a case when a programme ends. Students come back, and a good number stay on as volunteers.

03 How we support the Gatsby Benchmarks

Our offer is built to strengthen your careers programme and to give you something concrete to put in front of a governor, an inspector or a careers lead.

BENCHMARK	HOW WE SUPPORT IT	WHAT YOU CAN EVIDENCE
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil	One to one conversations, personal development plans, mentoring and tailored support for students facing specific barriers, including care-experienced students	Individual development plans, attendance and progress records, destinations
5. Encounters with employers and employees	Employer talks, panels, interactive sessions, career evenings and mock interviews with people who do the job	Encounter records, student reflections, employer feedback
6. Experiences of workplaces	Work placements, shadowing and site visits, with preparation before and structured reflection afterwards	Placement records, reflection logs, employer sign-off
2. Career and labour market information	Sessions on routes into work, apprenticeships and further study, and what employers in our network actually look for	Session materials, student action plans
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	Workshops connecting what students study to workplace behaviours, communication and professional expectations	Session materials, student reflections

04 What we deliver

Employer encounters

Employers come to you, in person or online, for talks, panels, question and answer sessions and interactive workshops. Students meet people who do the job and ask the questions they would not ask a teacher.

Employability workshops

Interactive sessions on CVs, applications, interview technique, communication, personal branding and workplace readiness. One session, a short series, or a full programme.

Mentoring

One to one and small group mentoring with industry professionals. It runs alongside group sessions on most programmes, and as a 12 month commitment on Life Leaders.

Workplace experiences

Placements, shadowing and site visits, with preparation and reflection built around them, so the experience becomes something a student can talk about in an interview.

05 Our programmes

Seven programmes, from a three week sprint to a year of mentoring. Every one of them can be shortened, combined or rebuilt around your cohort.

PROGRAMME	WHO IT IS FOR	LENGTH	FORMAT	GROUP
Career Compass	Students deciding on direction and building job-ready skills	Flexible series	Online sessions with one-to-one support between them	Up to 15
Skills for Life	Students who need to rebuild confidence and direction	12 weeks	Hybrid, 6 group sessions plus mentoring	12 to 15
Level Up	Students ready for an intensive push	3 weeks	Face to face, 6 sessions plus 3 drop-ins	12
Work Ready	Students who are NEET or want first work experience	Half term block	Employer evening plus a week of work experience	10
Be Your Best Self	Students applying for work, apprenticeships or study	3 months	24 sessions over 12 weeks	6 to 8
Accelerating Your Potential	Students working on self-awareness and working with others	6 months	13 sessions over 26 weeks	6 to 8
Life Leaders	Students who need one trusted adult over time	12 months	24 one to one mentoring sessions	Individual

A word on age

Our programmes are for young people aged 16 to 25. Where a care-experienced young person younger than this (aged 15) needs support and it is the right thing to do, we have worked with them by prior agreement with the school or college and the local authority, with safeguarding arrangements confirmed first.

Career Compass

Our employability series for students who are working out what they want to do and what it takes to get there, pairing self-awareness and wellbeing work with practical business of CVs, applications and interviews.

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Format	Online sessions with one to one support between them
Content	Baseline skills assessment, silent coaching, the five energies and wellbeing, colour insights, personal brand, values, self-awareness, CV writing and interview preparation
Takeaways	A completed CV, a personal brand statement, a skills assessment with context, and a certificate
Track record	Delivered across Newham, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Barking and Dagenham with funding from the NHS North Central and East London CAMHS Provider Collaborative, supporting 86 young people over 34 weeks and four cohorts

Skills for Life

Twelve weeks for students who need to reset, recognise the skills they already have, rebuild confidence and get practical about what comes next.

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Format	One group session every two weeks, six in total, face to face on your site and online, with drop-in or one to one mentoring between sessions
Month 1, reset and rebuild	Identity and confidence. Strengths, values and personal qualities. Resilience and self-awareness. Dealing with rejection and setbacks. Responding to feedback
Month 2, skills for the real world	Transferable skills and personal brand. Communication and body language. CV writing and personal profiles. Workplace behaviours, timekeeping, attitude and reliability
Month 3, what comes next	Interview preparation using the STAR and STARE techniques, practice interviews with feedback, job and apprenticeship searching, education and training pathways, action planning
Takeaways	A completed or improved CV, a personal development plan, interview examples they can use, and a clear next step

Level Up

Three intensive weeks, working on emotional intelligence with real world practice.

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Format	Two group sessions each week plus a weekly open drop-in. Six structured sessions and three drop-ins in total
Week 1, ready to go	Personal development, confidence and self-awareness. CV review, mindset workshop, goal setting and baseline
Week 2, level up live	Real world skill building. Mock interviews, peer challenges, role plays and feedback
Week 3, make your move	Transition planning. Job matching, future mapping, showcase and next steps
Subjects covered	Effective communication, personal branding and impact, elevator pitch, emotional intelligence, colour insights, silent coaching, CV writing, interview preparation

95%
attendance across the 2024 cohort

12
young people, all finishing with a CV ready to use

16%
moved into employment during the programme

41%
moved into further education

Work Ready

A targeted programme for students who are looking for their first experience of work, built around a real employer.

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Self-awareness workshop	What it means to work in a professional environment. Expectations, behaviours, communication and conduct, with reflective exercises on how students come across and respond to instruction
Career evening	A live event hosted by an employer, where students meet managers, ask questions and get an honest picture of the work
Work experience	A supported week of work experience, arranged in small groups
Reflection workshop	A guided session afterwards to explore what students learned, what was hard, and what they do next
Takeaways	Confidence in professional spaces, direct employer feedback, experience worth putting on a CV, and a clearer sense of the options
Employer partners	Work Ready is sponsored and hosted by corporate partners through our long-standing relationships with their senior leaders, including Nationwide Building Society. Host sites and availability vary, so the employer and the placement locations are confirmed cohort by cohort

Be Your Best Self

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Format	24 sessions over 12 weeks, in groups of six to eight with one facilitator
Content	CV and cover letter writing, including setting up a professional email address and signature. LinkedIn. Interview preparation. Effective communication. Personal branding. A personality profile with feedback
Takeaways	A CV, a cover letter, a LinkedIn profile, interview practice and a personality profile they understand

Accelerating Your Potential

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Format	13 sessions over 26 weeks, in groups of six to eight
Content	An emotional intelligence workbook running through the programme, colour insights, Johari's window, unconscious bias, moral reasoning, silent coaching, inclusion and diversity, stakeholder management, and wellbeing through the five energies
Takeaways	A completed workbook, a clearer picture of their strengths and triggers, and practical tools for working with other people

Life Leaders

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Format	24 one to one mentoring sessions over 12 months with an industry professional
How it works	Mentor and mentee work to a shared framework, with a guide for the mentor and an overview for the young person, and agree their own focus and pace
Takeaways	A sustained relationship, career and life guidance, and a network beyond the school gates

06 Built around your students

Our programmes are a starting point, not a menu you have to order from.
We rebuild them around the group in front of us.

Tell us the students you are worried about, the time you have and what you need to be different by the end, and we will shape the programme to fit. We change the length, the balance of group and one to one work, the delivery pattern and the content itself. The structure stays, the material moves.

Length and pattern

A three week sprint, a term, or a year. Weekly, fortnightly, or blocked into a single week. In person, virtual, or both.

Content

We swap in the themes your students need, whether that is money and independence, speaking up, managing authority, or applications and interviews.

Cohort

Open to a whole year group or targeted at a small group that staff have identified. Small enough for honest conversation is usually the right call.

Language and framing

We use the language of the group we are working with, and we build the examples out of their lives rather than ours.

> *We rebuilt Skills for Life for a group of young footballers who had just been released by their academies. Same programme, same structure, but every example, every exercise and every conversation was about identity beyond the club, dealing with rejection, and turning what they had learned in football into something an employer would recognise.*
>
> An example of what tailoring looks like in practice

That is the approach for any cohort with something specific going on, whether they are care leavers preparing to live independently, young carers, students who have been excluded, or a group leaving a sport, a course or a placement that did not work out.

07 Standalone workshops

Any of these can be booked on their own as a half day. Most run for 2 to 3 hours with up to 15 students, in person or online, at a time.

WORKSHOP	WHAT STUDENTS DO	WHAT THEY TAKE AWAY
CV writing	Build or rewrite a CV, including how to describe experience that does not look like work experience	A CV they can send
Cover letters and applications	Write a cover letter and tailor an application to a real advert	A cover letter draft
LinkedIn and professional presence	Set up a profile, a professional email address and a signature	A live profile
Interview skills	Practise the STAR interview technique, with feedback	Three strong examples
Mock interviews with employers	A real interview with someone who interviews for a living	Written feedback
Personal branding and elevator pitch	Work out what they stand for and how they come across, then say it in 30 seconds	A pitch they can use
Effective communication	Body language, listening to understand, and adjusting to the person in front of them	Practical tools
Emotional intelligence	Self-awareness, growth mindset and managing pressure	A self-assessment
Colour insights	A profiling exercise on working styles and working with people unlike them	Their profile, with context
Values and self-awareness	Identify personal values and see how they show up in decisions	A values grid
Unconscious bias, inclusion and diversity	What bias is, how it operates at work, and what to do about it	Discussion and reflection
Stakeholder management	Who matters in a workplace and how to build those relationships	A stakeholder map
Wellbeing and the five energies	A practical look at energy, balance and sustainable effort	A wellbeing plan
Silent coaching	A guided visioning exercise on what comes next	A next steps plan
Using AI ethically	How to use AI honestly in applications and study, and where the line sits	Clear ground rules
Results day drop-in	What the grades mean and how to have the conversation at home	A plan for the next week

Why the AI session exists

We added it because most of the young people we meet are frightened of using AI, having been warned off it at school, while better-resourced peers use it freely.
The session is about honest, sensible use rather than avoidance.

08 Working together

1 A conversation
Twenty minutes on your students, your gaps against the benchmarks and the time you have. No charge, no obligation, and we will tell you if we are not the right fit.

2 A plan
We put the programme, dates, group size and intended outcomes in writing so you can check it against what you actually need.

3 Agreements
We confirm safeguarding arrangements, data sharing, consent and insurance, and you give us a named contact.

4 Delivery
We deliver, keep attendance, and tell you promptly if a student stops attending or if anything concerns us.

5 Evaluation
Students complete baseline, midpoint and exit reflections. You receive an end of programme report with attendance, progress and destinations.

WHAT WE BRING	WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU
Programme design and delivery	Students aged 16 to 25
Facilitators, mentors and employer volunteers, all DBS checked	A suitable space for face to face delivery
CV, interview and personal development resources	A named programme contact we can reach
Personal development plans and progress reviews	Relevant safeguarding and learner information, shared lawfully
Certificates and a celebration or graduation session	Help encouraging attendance and engagement
An end of programme report for your records	Open communication with us throughout

09 Safeguarding and practicalities

- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Chidi O'Hanekwu, Chief Executive Officer, trained to Level 3
- Our child and adult safeguarding policies were reviewed in 2026 and are published on our website, alongside our equality, diversity and inclusion policy, privacy and data protection policy and cookies policy
- All staff, facilitators and volunteers complete safeguarding training and hold an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check before working with young people
- We hold public liability insurance, renewed in May 2026, and a certificate is available on request
- When we deliver on your site, we follow your safeguarding procedures as well as our own, and we confirm the name of your designated safeguarding lead before we start
- We handle student information in line with our Privacy and Data Protection Policy, and agree with you in advance what is shared and why
- We ask separately for permission before using any photograph, video or quotation, and a student can say no without it affecting their place
- We are a referral partner into the NHS North Central and East London CAMHS Provider Collaborative, so where a student needs mental health support there is a route that does not start at the back of a queue

10 Our impact

120	173	86	20
care-experienced young people supported in 2024 to 2025	children and young people advanced through our funded work	young people on Career Compass across four boroughs in East London	young people on our youth board shaping what we deliver

How we evidence it

Every young person completes a baseline questionnaire covering confidence, wellbeing, relationships, sense of direction and readiness for work or study. They repeat it at the end, and complete a midpoint check on longer programmes. Alongside that we keep session feedback, facilitator notes, attendance, referral routes and destinations, and we follow up afterwards to see whether a young person is still where they said they would be.

We run focus groups and end of programme circles where young people say what changed, what did not work and what they still need. Our Level Up evaluation is published in full, and schools and colleges receive a report on their own cohort.

Who we work with

- Secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges, supporting Years 11/12 to 13 and further education
- Alternative provision and settings supporting students outside mainstream education
- Local authorities and trusts, particularly on work with care-experienced young people
- Delivery partners on creative and sport pathways, and education routes
- Funders including the National Lottery Community Fund, BBC Children in Need, Nationwide Building Society, UK Youth Fund. and the NHS NCEL CAMHS Provider Collaborative

11 Next steps

The quickest start is a twenty minute conversation about the students you want to support and the time you have available.

> *Tell us about the students, not the slot. We will work out the rest with you.*
> Arc Initiative, registered charity in England and Wales. Our programmes are free to the young people who take part.

HOW TO REACH US	DETAILS
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