



Spotlight on – Recruitment and Retention Spring and Summer Recap!

Dear all,

Welcome to the seventh recruitment and retention spotlight which is focused on sharing the recruitment and retention activity within the Leicestershire Local Authority. Here is a snapshot of what we have been up to since January 2026!

Meet the Team

We are delighted to welcome Joanna Beck to the Workforce Team - who joins us with experience working with employer partnerships and recruitment activity. Joanna has been actively engaged with inspiring the next generation of childcare students and supporting job seekers to begin their career working with children.

		
Victoria Cockram Workforce Improvement Advisor	Joanna Beck Workforce Improvement Advisor	Thomas Wilson Workforce Improvement Advisor

So far this year, our team has delivered an impressive programme of activity across Leicester and Leicestershire, engaging in a total of 39 events. These include:

- 27 careers fairs
- 21 careers talks and “Careers in Childcare” workshops.
- 1 mock interview session and 3 “What’s My Job?” sessions.

- 6 speed networking sessions

And we still have more planned for the remainder of the academic year!

If you would like to learn more about these opportunities and explore how you can get involved to support recruitment for your organisation, please contact us at eytraining@leics.gov.uk. The events take place throughout the year across all areas of Leicestershire, offering a valuable opportunity to connect with your future workforce, nurture new talent, and identify potential apprentices or employees.

Primary, Secondary School & Post 16 Engagement

Careers Fairs and Events



The Workforce Team have engaged with an increased range of schools and colleges. The students are engaging effectively with the information about working in the sector, gaining an understanding of the wide range of career roles, employment opportunities, and qualifications available to them after they complete their GCSEs. A particularly rewarding aspect is supporting their active participation in activities, helping them recognise the importance of play and how it can be linked holistically to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and its areas of learning. Here is a snapshot of the sessions completed:



Unbox Your Future

In partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Hub, the Workforce Team delivered the *Unbox Your Future* programme to Year 9 students at John Fernley College. This innovative, project-based workplace experience supports students at a key stage in choosing their GCSE options, particularly those considering Child Development.



The programme began with whole-school Careers in Childcare assemblies, with a targeted focus on Year 9 ahead of choosing their GCSE options. Students who opted in then took part in a series of four structured sessions delivered across the academic year. Throughout the programme, students:

- Explored career pathways, roles, and responsibilities within childcare.
- Developed key knowledge, skills and behaviours such as communication, teamwork, and confidence.
- Designed and created a child-focused activity linked to a story and EYFS principles.
- Explored the role of play in supporting children's learning and development, and how to promote this through meaningful activities.
- Applied their learning in a real-world setting.

The programme ended with visits to local early years settings, where students delivered their planned activities, gaining valuable hands-on experience of working with children.

Student feedback demonstrated the significant impact of the programme on the 22 participants. Ninety percent of students rated the planning sessions as highly enjoyable, and 100% reported recognising childcare as an important and valuable career. The sessions positively influenced students' perceptions of the role and the sector, with feedback indicating an increased appreciation of the work involved. Overall, there was also a rise in interest in post-16 education pathways into Early Years, with 40% of students identifying this as their preferred career pathway and a further 45% now considering it.

A huge thank you to **Little Stars** and **Little Robins** for their support in hosting students and helping bring the experience to life.

Unbox Your Future provides a meaningful link between education and employment, helping students make informed decisions about their future while supporting early years providers to engage with their future workforce. The impact of the programme was evident, with the number of students choosing Child Development at GCSE doubling, resulting in the expansion from one to two classes.

If your setting would like to be involved in planning and supporting future sessions this academic year, please contact eytraining@leics.gov.uk.



'We had a lovely morning welcoming the Year 9 students as part of the 'Unbox Your Future' programme. The students planned and delivered excellent activities inspired by familiar and much-loved books, demonstrating great enthusiasm, strong communication skills, and wonderful interactions with our children. Every child was fully engaged and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, as reflected in their smiles, participation, and excitement throughout the morning. It was a pleasure to be part of this valuable initiative with John Ferneley College and The Workforce Team. Thank you for asking us to be a part of it' – Mandy, Little Robins Pre School.

DWP – Youth Guarantee and Youth Hub Go Live!

The Youth Guarantee Scheme is a new government initiative launching on the 30th of June 2026 and is available across Leicestershire, designed to support young people aged 16-24 into employment, education, and training. Backed by a 2.5 billion national investment, the programme aims to create opportunities for nearly one million young people and help employers access a strong pipeline of emerging talent. For employers, the Youth Guarantee offers a range of support including:

- Funded training and apprenticeship opportunities
- Financial incentive for recruiting young people.
- Access to work experience placements and tailored recruitment support
- Opportunities to engage through Youth Hubs and sector-based training programmes.

The workforce team will continue to deliver 'Careers in Childcare' workshops to job seekers to work with the DWP to support employment and training into the Early Years Sector, but this is a fantastic opportunity for settings to help build and shape the future workforce. Our latest 'Childcare Roadshows' where we held sessions across Leicestershire saw 67 job seekers attend to explore a role working with children.

Below and attached is the link to the Recruit with DWP website where you can access more information and register your interest in the programme: [Recruit the right people with Jobcentre Plus](#)



New Degree Launched – De Montfort University - Leicester

De Montfort University has launched a **new FdA Early Years Education with SEND and SLCN** to start in September 2026. This programme is designed for those who are passionate about supporting and leading an embedded approach to SEND and early communication in their early education and care settings. The course explores the holistic learning and development of babies and children from conception to the age of eight, through the dual perspectives of SEND and SLCN and is taught by specialists in Early Years, education, SEND and Speech and Language Therapy. On successful completion of the course, you will be able to implement evidence-based and inclusive SEND and communication-supportive strategies in your settings and can choose to continue your studies with us through our Level 6 top-up. Learning takes place in immersive classrooms on campus, live online sessions and within your early years setting. The course is delivered over 2 evenings per week – on campus on a Tuesday and live online on a Thursday – to support you balancing work, study, and personal commitments.

For more information about the course, you can:

- Visit the [course webpage](#).
- For further information or ask questions about the course please email: admissions@dmu.ac.uk

Can You Help??

Recently Qualified? Achieved a new qualification or been promoted? Have a long career in the sector and would like to inspire others?

- Our Careers in Childcare landing page is always looking for new information – if you would like to be involved and share your career journey – we desperately need case studies to feature in this section!

Celebrating Success!

We would like to showcase Your Achievements within our next spotlight. Please email: Victoria.Cockram@leics.gov.uk

Please ensure that you circulate this update with any relevant staff members within your organisation.

Thank you.

