



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR OXFORDSHIRE EMPLOYERS



**Working with  
our colleagues in  
OxLEP Business,  
we aim to help  
businesses reach  
their full potential.  
This high-level  
guide will give  
you an idea of the  
support on offer  
to your business  
from OxLEP Skills.**



## Creating a talent pipeline

Engaging with local schools and colleges is a fantastic way to raise awareness of your organisation and industry, develop your talent pipeline and become an employer of choice in your local community.

**Oxfordshire Careers Hub** supports all 61 mainstream secondary schools, special schools and further education colleges in Oxfordshire with their careers programmes. We have an inspirational cohort of business volunteers supporting our mission to help every young person in Oxfordshire find their best next step. We invite you to join them! Here are some examples of how you can do this.

### Become an Enterprise Adviser:

Supported by our expert team, you will be matched with a local secondary school or college, where you can use your skills, business experience and networks to help them develop a strong careers programme that supports all students.

### Give an hour:

We know from experience that even just an hour speaking to a class about your sector, carrying out a mock interview or supporting a CV workshop can create new perspectives, inspire new ideas and change a young person's thinking about a potential career pathway.

### Teacher encounters:

Do you want to ensure young people in education know about your industry and the skills needed to thrive in your business? A teacher encounter provides an opportunity for teachers to bring this to life in their lessons

through engaging directly with employers to learn about the different career pathways relevant to their subjects and to observe how their subject is applied practically in business.

### Careers Fest:

We run Oxfordshire's largest careers event, which sees around 3000 students attend across 2 days and a twilight session for parents/carers. Around 75 exhibitors from a varied range of sectors offer information, advice and guidance on future pathways and careers.

### Supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to move onto positive destinations:

This is a particular focus area for the Careers Hub and throughout the year we have various projects running which you can support through offering workplace visits and experiences for these students. We will also support you through our 'Becoming an Inclusive Employer' training, which includes developing meaningful outreach, adapted recruitment processes and successful onboarding for sustained employment.

### Bespoke support:

Our work doesn't stop there! We can support you in whatever way you would like to engage with schools/colleges, for example offering work experience, developing curriculum resources, or delivering a programme to showcase your business/sector. Our team is always on hand to advise you on what works well and to publicise your opportunities. Follow our Careers Hub LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/oxfordshirecareershub>



*We enable levy paying businesses to pledge unused levy to help micro businesses like Priory Cast Products (pictured above) to grow by employing new apprentices.'*

## Apprenticeships - helping your business grow and thrive

Oxfordshire traditionally has low unemployment and an ageing working population. Our long-standing ambition has been to support businesses to create a strong and skilled workforce. One way we do this is to promote apprenticeships to retain talent and encourage job progression for businesses to grow. Our apprenticeship team are on hand to provide fully funded advice and support.

### How to add social value through apprenticeship levy pledging

Does your business pay the apprenticeship levy? We can help you to make best use of the funds within your organisation to start or develop an apprenticeship scheme. If you don't use all your funds, we can support you to pledge up to 50% of your annual levy balance to help grow apprenticeships in

Oxfordshire and contribute to your social value targets. We can match your funds with SMEs, social enterprises and charities to help you support sectors that are important to your organisation or those with skills gaps and labour shortages. For example, we have supported the creation of apprenticeships in primary schools, hospices, GP surgeries and adult social care.

### Help to fund apprenticeship training and assessment

If you don't pay the apprenticeship levy, we can support you to access funding to pay for apprentice training and assessment and help you get started with employing an apprentice.

### Help to ensure the retention of your apprentice/s

We recognise the importance of helping your apprentice/s to complete their training journey and how the qualification adds value to your investment, both for the longer-term future of your business and for the apprentices' career progression. We are keen to ensure the apprenticeship is a success for both parties.

Our team can offer advice and guidance on how to provide optimal conditions for your apprentice to thrive in your business, highlighting the critical pathways in the workplace, the importance of the quality of the apprentice experience and the subsequent completion of the qualification, as well as providing business triage support when barriers or challenges arise.

**For more information on any of the opportunities please contact: [skills@oxfordshirelep.com](mailto:skills@oxfordshirelep.com)**

## Showcase your apprenticeship scheme

We provide opportunities for employers to promote and celebrate the success of their apprenticeship schemes and the achievements of their apprentices.

**The Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards** celebrates the achievements of apprentices and employers who offer quality apprenticeships.

The awards are sponsored, judged and awarded by businesses and managed by OxLEP Skills on a not-for-profit basis. Organisations are invited to become a supporter of the awards and nominate themselves and/or an apprentice for an award. Previous sponsors include Oxford North, Blenheim, Hill, Abbott Diabetes Care, Darke & Taylor and High Spec Composites.

## Our apprenticeship ambassador scheme

We invite current apprentices to volunteer in Oxfordshire schools and colleges to give presentations to young people about why they chose an apprenticeship as a career pathway.

This is a fantastic way for them to develop their skills whilst promoting your business and industry to other young people.

unities outlined,  
a or visit [oxlepskills.co.uk](https://oxlepskills.co.uk)



*Winners of the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2024.*



*Apprenticeship ambassadors receiving presentation training at Blenheim Palace, to help prepare them for talking to young people in local schools/colleges.*



## Community Employment Plans (CEPs)

aim to add social value for businesses involved in Oxfordshire's key development sites by enhancing training, employment and skills opportunities resulting from major development and generating inclusive economic activities for local communities in Oxfordshire.

They consider how the development can offer apprenticeships, meaningful work placements, entry-level training, or further qualifications to local communities.

They also consider how to promote the use of local supply chains and labour, social enterprises and volunteering.

If your organisation is involved in a major development, or is in the supply chain and you would like to know more, we have created a developers' handbook and evidence paper, available at <https://oxlepskills.co.uk/ceps>



## Skills Bootcamps

Starting in August 2024, through funding from the Department for Education (DfE), we will offer Skills Bootcamps, delivered by contracted providers. These free, flexible courses, lasting up to 16 weeks, are designed for adults aged 19 and over. The Skills Bootcamps aim to address identified skills shortages in the workforce as outlined in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The targeted sectors include Health & Life Sciences, Green Skills, and Engineering and Manufacturing.

Employers are invited to register to interview graduates of the Skills Bootcamps, offering a direct pathway to filling job vacancies with trained candidates. Additionally, employers can use these courses to upskill their current employees, benefiting from substantial subsidies. SMEs will pay only 10% of the course costs, while large organisations will contribute 30%.

## Access our information and resources online

You will find a wealth of information and advice on our website [oxlepskills.co.uk](https://oxlepskills.co.uk), including the opportunity to sign up to support school/college events, training provider and employability support directories, labour market information and learning resources.



**Businesses can also engage with fully funded expert support from OxLEP Business by completing the Business Support Tool: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/oxlep-business-support-tool>**





OxLEP Skills aims to ensure that every person who lives and works in the county is equipped with the skills they need to maximise their potential. We have created this offer to help organisations understand how they can get involved to make this a reality. Please note, all these programmes are fully funded and as such are free for all Oxfordshire employers to engage.



**Add social value and achieve CSR goals**



**Give an hour to inspire the next generation**



**Become an Enterprise Adviser**



**Get support with apprenticeships**



**Pledge apprenticeship levy**



**Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards**



**Apprenticeship ambassador scheme**



**Community Employment Plans**



**Skills Bootcamps**

**For more information on any of these opportunities, please contact: [skills@oxfordshirelep.com](mailto:skills@oxfordshirelep.com) or visit [oxlepskills.co.uk](http://oxlepskills.co.uk)**