

west of england **MENTORING**



Engaging students to aspire and achieve

**Delivering business mentoring in secondary schools across the West of England
Operating through the Ablaze charity in partnership with three other established organisations**



Ablaze's West of England Mentoring (WEM) is a unique group mentoring programme that matches business mentors with groups of local school students aged between 12 and 15. The programme consists of six two hour sessions that take place for targeted student groups, five of which are held in the workplace and the sixth in the school, over twelve weeks. We believe the employability, skills, and experiences of every kind of employee can be inspirational to school students.

How businesses work with schools



- The WEM Project Manager co-ordinates 6 mentoring sessions over 12 weeks with the school mentor lead and supports reporting and celebrating successes.
- Businesses are asked to nominate a mentoring lead to co-ordinate their involvement, bringing together a group of 6 or more colleagues to mentor together.
- The WEM Project Manager supports business mentors with training and resources
- Using these core elements mentors can decide how to deliver each session drawing on their own strengths and experiences.



The aim of WEM is to create positive change



WEM:

- impacts on behaviour engagement
- builds confidence and self esteem
- explores skills and knowledge
- encourages aspiration and achievement
- motivates progression and attainment

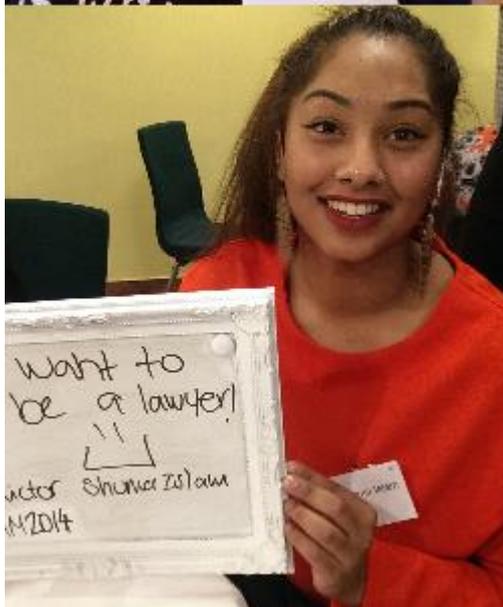


What role do the mentors have?

Mentors impart knowledge of workplace skills, employability opportunities and pathways, inspiring and motivating students to raise their aspirations. The activities encourage students to build confidence and communication skills, set goals and work out pathways to achieving them. Our volunteer business mentors can inspire and encourage them to realise the clear benefits of school, build their confidence and self-esteem and enable them to develop a clear and achievable career plan.

Our six core sessions cover:

- Session one: Dreams and aspirations, role models
- Session two: Career choices and pathways
- Session three: Overcoming barriers personal and external
- Session four: Employability (CV building and Interview skills)
- Session five: Setting goals and producing an action plan
- Session six: School visit and a celebration/graduation



Mentor help students understand options, keeping them engaged with school

This programme targets pupils who are capable but may benefit from extra encouragement to fulfil their potential. Typically, they will be from disadvantaged, challenging backgrounds with low aspirations but high capability, and may be within the school's FSM and / or PP cohort. Mentors help them widen their horizons and plan for the future.

Impact and Outcomes

Gatsby Benchmarks

WEM offers schools tangible evidence of activity against four of the eight Gatsby benchmarks.

Gatsby Benchmark	Description & How WEM Delivers the Benchmark
2. Learning from career and labour market information	Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good-quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.
	Using business mentors WEM provides students with updated and local labour market information. Real people talk about real jobs and study options that could lead to these careers.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.
	WEM centres around the relationship between students and business mentors. The programme provides multiple encounters with employers and informs students about work, employment and valued workplace skills.
6. Experiences of workplaces	Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.
	WEM is delivered at the workplace. The mentors host the students for 5 out of 6 sessions. This gives them a repeated experience of a workplace. Learning about the mentors' own jobs also provides an insight into various career opportunities.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.
	Based on the real-life experience of volunteers, WEM delivers on career pathways and shows students clear academic and vocational routes for different careers. One WEM group is recruited from UWE and is delivered on the university campus.

Evaluation Data

We can show the difference that group mentoring can make to individual students and to the wider school. Evaluation data collected to date shows that WEM has a tangible, positive impact on young people who take part. 97% of students being more confident in themselves and their ability to make decisions, 100% of students have better knowledge of careers and 98% understanding and improving skills for employment. Schools report that behaviour and confidence dramatically increase for most students that take part.

Some schools that have taken part have told us:

"The students are more able to talk about, and plan for, their future careers and have gained some incredibly useful, practical insights into how to succeed." (Bedminster Down)

"Students confirmed that they had learnt a lot about different careers, skills employers like and it has helped with their future career journey." (Hayesfield Girls' School)

"The support, guidance and encouragement they received has increased their self-esteem and improved their understanding of the actions they can take to open up future career choices and paths." (Kingsbury Green Academy)

Some students that have taken part have told us:

"the mentors have been a good influence on me and have inspired me to do better" (Kingsbury Green)

"I now work better in a team and have better conversations" (Norton Hill)

"I have learned to listen better in group discussions, I have learnt to plan instead of rushing into things" (Oasis Brislington)

"I understand a lot more about lessons and skills I'll need in the future" (Bedminster Down)

"I feel more confident about the future because before I believed I can't do nothing but now I believe I can do anything I try" (City Academy)

WEM Project Manager

The WEM Project Manager makes the partnerships happen by identifying schools and businesses and bringing them together. DBS checks, session resources and training are provided for mentors. Pre and post evaluations are done, and an evaluation report is provided at the end of the programme so both businesses and schools can see the impact of the programme and the difference that was made.

For more information please contact Ceri Bowers, WEM Project Manager
Email: ceri.bowers@ablazebristol.org or Mobile: 07971533558
www.wementoring.org.uk



We look forward to working with you!

