



# Development placement overview for colleagues hosting a Kickstart placement

January 2021



## Introducing the Kickstart Scheme

The government has launched a new £2 billion “Kickstart Scheme” aimed at helping young people into work during the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

Many young people are at risk of long-term unemployment – Kickstart will help them enter the job market by providing government funding for employers to create ‘skills development placements’.

It will fund new placements for 16- to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. Under the scheme, employers can offer young people placements for 26 weeks.

“The Kickstart Scheme will directly pay employers to create new jobs for any 16 to 24-year-old at risk of long-term unemployment. ‘These will be new jobs – with the funding conditional on the firm proving these jobs are additional.’

Chancellor Rishi Sunak

### Why Kickstart was introduced

In July 2020, there were almost 538,000 people aged 24 or younger on Universal Credit, a rise of around 250,000 from that March. At the end of 2020 the estimated unemployment rate for young people was over 20%.

Announcing the rollout of the scheme, Chancellor Rishi Sunak said:

“This isn’t just about kickstarting our country’s economy – it is an opportunity to kickstart the careers of thousands of young people who could otherwise be left behind as a result of the pandemic. The scheme will open the door to a brighter future for a new generation and ensure the UK bounces back stronger as a country.”

### Why we’re supporting Kickstart

We’ve recently developed a skills strategy to increase the diversity of our workforce and help us make sure we have the right skills to help us fulfil our Purpose – now and for the future.

The first principle of our new skills strategy focuses on building a pipeline of skills from the local community. With unemployment levels increasing every day and young people being particularly affected, we’re supporting the Kickstart Scheme by offering ‘skills development placements’ to help us build this pipeline and support young people into meaningful employment.

## Skills strategy principles

| Principle 1  | Principle 2   | Principle 3  | Principle 4  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Improve the diversity of our workforce by building a pipeline of skills from local communities and the education sector</p>   | <p>Create careers, not just jobs, by investing in our people and fostering a culture of lifelong learning</p>   | <p>Establish sustainable strategic skills partnerships</p>   | <p>Adopt a leading position in the industry and with our supply chain on the development of skills</p>   |
| <p>This will help us to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase productivity</li> <li>• Increase people performance</li> <li>• Reduce recruitment costs</li> <li>• Promote socioeconomic diversity</li> <li>• Support the development of STEM and digital skills</li> </ul>   | <p>This will help us to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase employee engagement</li> <li>• Strengthen our skills base</li> <li>• Build an experienced and flexible workforce</li> <li>• Help us spend our apprenticeship levy more effectively</li> <li>• Empower our experienced workforce to educate future generations</li> </ul> | <p>This will help us to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain more influence to achieve our goals</li> <li>• Provide significant benefits and cost savings across the business</li> <li>• Support local and national economies</li> <li>• Build a positive brand association through our Thames Water Academy, which will support learning and development</li> </ul> | <p>This will help us to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build our reputation</li> <li>• Demonstrate our positive impact on economic prosperity to the government and local authorities</li> <li>• Pioneer education initiatives</li> </ul> |
| <p>Our principles will be underpinned by three core pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creating a strong support structure to deliver our strategy</li> <li>2. Creating a long-term view of skills through strategic workforce planning</li> <li>3. Equipping our leaders with the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be effective</li> </ol> |   |  |  |

### Can you provide the right placement?

- 26-week placement of 25 hours per week
- Placements can start at any time between Jan 2021 and Dec 2021
- Business unit to complete Kickstart Placement Application Form (previously known as Proforma)' which includes job description
- Business unit must agree and assign a hiring mentor
- Job descriptions are shared with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who will match candidates to the vacancy
- The Skills and Emerging Talent team will further screen candidates before referring to the hiring mentor and support with booking an interview
- If successful, we'll make the offer and arrange on-boarding and start date
- If unsuccessful, we'll collect feedback and manage directly with candidate
- Hiring mentor will be required to meet new starter on day 1 (virtually in some cases)
- Hiring mentor to be day-to-day contact for candidates and to ensure workload and activities are set

### What types of candidates can we expect?

The Kickstart Scheme is aimed at people aged 16-24. The candidates will be a mix of people but envision some of the following to apply:

- Employees in the retail, hospitality or leisure sector who have been made redundant. They may have 2-3 years of work experience in their field.
- Recent graduates who have been unable to find employment. They may have some work experience but potentially less than those coming from industry.
- Recent apprentices who were not able to secure employment or continue their learning after qualifying. They may have some work experience.



Individuals will be matched against the job description we provide. We'd like to ensure we match candidates that have a direct interest in the roles and the potential of employment in the future.

We're not obliged to offer employment at the end of the placement, but we've set an internal target to place 50% into employment with Thames Water and the remaining with our supply chain if possible.

### Things to consider if you'd like to offer a placement

- Ensure you have the time to properly support someone through the placement
- They'll need a dedicated hiring mentor
- Ensure whoever the hiring mentor is has the right skills and approach to support a young person in the early stages of their career
- Might you be able to create a team of people on placements collaborating on a single task to help them learn from each other?
- This could be an opportunity to create 'hit squads' to tackle lower-priority work you might otherwise struggle to complete
- Can you make the placement work around COVID-19 challenges such as social distancing / remote working?

### Additional support for placement

As well as the support and guidance provided by the hiring mentor, we'll offer 'wrap-around support' to help individuals gain the employability skills they need to be successful during the placement and in securing sustainable employment in the future.

All placements will also be assigned a work coach, provided by the Skills and Emerging Talent Team, who will:

- Liaise with the individual each month to check their progress and that they're receiving the support they need
- Check in with the hiring mentor once a month to ensure smooth progress and answer any questions/queries
- Be responsible for any safeguarding issues
- Meet the placement and hiring mentor once every 6 weeks for a 3-way meeting

Towards the end of the placement, the work coach will support with directing applications for roles within Thames Water and/or the supply chain.

All individuals in placements will receive the following additional training:

- Attendance/timekeeping
- Teamwork/communication
- Commuting
- CV and interviews
- Looking for long term work
- Resilience training



## Additional support for hiring mentor

- The hiring mentor will receive training (if required or applicable) to host placements
- Some candidates may be care leavers or more vulnerable groups – we'll provide awareness training to ensure the hiring mentor is supported
- Learning mentor level 3 apprenticeships will also be available to all mentors
- Learning on TAP – please check the many coaching courses online – from a crash course in the basics to learning like a pro
- You can find out more at: [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education / Learning mentor /](#)

## Hiring mentor - how to host a successful placement

Make sure you have the time to properly support someone through the placement

Have the right skills to support a young person in the early stages of their career. They may need more guidance than other colleagues. Things like workday structure and working hours and patterns may need to be more flexible.

Remember you'll receive additional support, with regular check-ins to monitor progress health.

Support the young person in reflecting on the skills they've acquired and how these can be expressed to potential employers. Many young people struggle to relate their skills to what's required in the workplace.

For some of these young people they are new to the world of work or sector, so the way they are managed is crucial.

Good mentoring will help them develop more quickly, building up their confidence and demonstrating that they can perform a positive role in the world of work. ill-health.

## The following behaviours are key to getting the best out of a placement

1. Providing feedback, praise, and recognition
2. Balancing guidance with appropriate levels of autonomy and empowerment
3. Taking an interest in the individual
4. Being available to talk if a placement has a question or a problem
5. Having a personable and approachable manner

## Example placements

### Customer experience team

- Handling basic customer queries
- Emails, admin, meetings, and minutes

### Operations

- Opportunity for those interested in mechanical electrical careers
- Help with asset audit and general compliance
- HGV, with logistics training

### Admin (across the business)

- Support PA roles



- Department-specific administration

#### Skills team

- Will host admin team to support Kickstart Scheme management

#### FWOW

- Support with admin and other areas required

#### Social media/design

- Placements within social media and/or design team to help with content creation

#### Create hit squads

- To tackle work you might otherwise never get to but that would help someone learn new skills and more about the world of work
- Are there circumstances where you could create a team of people on placements dedicated to a task so that they learn from each other?

#### Feed into Apprenticeship recruitment

- Certain opportunities could build a pipeline into Apprenticeship recruitment
- E.g. MEICA Apprenticeships

#### Next steps

| Process |   |
|---------|---|
| 1       | Agree which business unit will host a 'skills development placement' (HRBPs/business unit)  |
| 2       | Business unit to agree placement type and role, and assign a 'hiring mentor'  |
| 3       | Business unit to complete Kickstart Placement Application Form (previously known as Proforma)' which includes details of the job description                        |
| 4       | Email the Kickstart Placement Application Form (previously "Proforma") to <a href="mailto:kickstart@thameswater.co.uk">kickstart@thameswater.co.uk</a> and cc: HRBP |
| 5       | Vacancy is placed with DWP and advertised on the Kickstart portal   |
| 6       | Candidates matched to vacancy by DWP and initial screening carried out  |
| 7       | Candidate referred to Skills and Emerging Talent team for 2nd screening   |
| 8       | The Skills and Emerging Talent team contact hiring mentor to arrange interview for candidate  |
| 9       | Post interview we make offer or decline with feedback on behalf of hiring mentor  |
| 10      | If offer is made, we start the onboarding process   |
| 11      | Onboarding booked by skills team to include employability training and start date   |
| 12      | Hiring mentor to be given details on dates and training...further details to follow at this time  |

