

## Making the most of career events and job fairs

A fantastic range of career and recruitment events take place each year. Some take place locally, in schools, colleges or community centres. Others are held in key cities, like Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Attending them is a great way to:

- meet, and talk with, people who can give you the sort of information and advice you won't find in books or on websites
- speak directly to people who recruit, select and interview young people for jobs and apprenticeships
- explore the different learning and career pathways open to you after school
- get ahead of the competition – job, course or apprenticeship applicants who don't make the effort to go along
- find out about careers, jobs, apprenticeships and courses at college or university.

### Before you go – planning is everything

- Find out as much as you can about the event before you go – the location, date and time.
- Find out which organisations and businesses will be there, and what they do. Get a list of the exhibitors.
- Ask yourself this important question. What do I want to get out of this? Information on a specific career, or college, or employers who plan to recruit?
- Prioritise what you want to do and who you want to speak with – you may not have the time to do everything you want.
- Look at the floor plan or layout of the event. Plan your route around the event.
- Check out the times and locations of any activities you want to take part in – workshops, presentations, skill challenges or taster sessions.
- Note your plan down. Which stands? Which activities? When?
- Have something to say – write down the questions you want to ask. (See our advice below.)
- Plan what to wear. Something smart and presentable, comfy shoes.
- Take a notepad and pen – you won't remember everything you find out.

### On the day

- Relax and enjoy the event.
- Don't go round in a group – you come first, so go your own way and meet friends later to share notes.
- The main thing is to take part. Speak to people, even if you feel nervous.
- Remember they are there to promote their organisation, courses, careers, sector or industry. They want you to speak up.
- Ask them the questions you couldn't get answers to on their websites or in prospectuses.
- Try to keep to your plan – but be flexible about times, stands may be so busy you have to keep going back to get the chance to speak to an exhibitor.
- Take notes. Record the names of useful contacts, and important dates or events.
- Get independent advice from careers advisers – organisations that provide support to young people are usually also at these events.

## After the event

- Read the information you've collected.
- Put any important dates, for example application dates, or contacts in your calendar.
- Reflect on what you found out and what it might mean for your future plans.
- Get online and find out more.
- Follow up on any contacts you've made.
- Act on what you found out – apply, research, update your career or learning plans.

## Something to say!

It's easy to get tongue tied at events, no matter how confident you are. Here are some suggestions of questions you might want to ask.

- Do you recruit all year round or at a specific time of year?
- How do you select the best person for the apprenticeship/job?
- Do you offer work experience placements for young people?
- How do you train new employees?
- What skills and qualities do you look for when you recruit?
- What's the best route into this type of career?
- Why did you decide to become a (job title)?
- Why did you join the (NHS, Army or Police)?
- What was your first year as a (student/apprentice/job title) like?

## Some annual events

- [Skills Scotland](#) exhibitions (run by Prospects Events) in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow in October or November.
- [Scottish Apprenticeship Week](#) which usually takes place in February or March and consists of a variety of events.

Download our free **Career or job fair preparation** worksheet to help you plan ahead.