

GETTING AHEAD

Information for potential volunteers

GETTING AHEAD is a programme of employability skills based conferences for young people in Tower Hamlets secondary schools. Group Advisors – an adult volunteer with experience of life/work/business – work with small groups of young people through several workshops across a day long conference.



Tower Hamlets EBP organise a one or two day conference at either the school involved or another Tower Hamlets venue. Each workshop covers a certain area of the world of work.

The conferences are chaired by the **GETTING AHEAD** manager from Tower Hamlets EBP. There are usually around 60 students at each event and they are split into teams of six or seven with one or two Group Advisor/s each.

What's covered in the conferences?

School's pick from a menu of workshops so each conference is slightly different. Broadly speaking, the conferences aim to cover two general areas:

1. Work skills – can include first impressions, writing a CV, completing an application form, interview technique, how to behave in the workplace, what will be expected of you, etc.
2. Life skills – working with people, listening and communicating, problem solving, following and interpreting instructions, etc.

Students also get to know their Group Advisor and find out more about the Advisor's chosen career and the path they took to get it.

What would I do as a volunteer?

Volunteers act as Group Advisors to a group of students. Their role is to guide, support and motivate their team as they work through the workshops, while also maintaining the order and focus of their group. The Group Advisors act as role models and add real experience and credibility to the conferences.

The workshops are short, active and fun. Volunteers build up a real rapport with their group and really enjoy themselves.

Support and Resources for Volunteers

Before the day, you will be given information on your role, a timetable and directions to the venue. The Advisors are briefed thoroughly on the morning of the event by the conference Chair Person from THEBP. Group Advisors also receive guidelines and materials – a Group Advisor 'pack' – to use in each session.

The Chair is with the volunteers all day to introduce each workshop and provide support. Teachers are also present throughout.

Refreshments will be available through the day and lunch will be provided.

Benefits for Students

- Exposure to the world of work and employer expectations.
- Improved employability skills and knowledge.
- A positive role model.
- Increased self confidence and self esteem.
- Broadening of horizons.
- Helps students identify their own skills and achievements.



The conferences are usually organised prior to pupils going out to Work Experience and many students find that **GETTING AHEAD** is useful in helping them to prepare for their two week placement. The workshops are designed to be useful for all students whatever plans for post-16 they may have.

Benefits for Volunteers

It's not just the students who gain something from the conferences:

- Develop communication and management skills.
- A good team working opportunity for colleagues volunteering together.
- Chance to do something different and have a positive impact on the development of local young people.
- Opportunity to test skills in a new, challenging environment.
- Helps to put work into perspective.
- Opportunity to learn about different cultures and religions.
- Exciting team building opportunity for colleagues volunteering together.
- Chance to meet Advisors from other organisations.

Sample student comments from 2007/08:

'It was fun, challenging and enjoyable'.

'I liked working and getting advice from working people... We were treated as young business people rather than students'.

'I really enjoyed the activities and my group advisors were very helpful and supportive'.

'It was a right laugh working with everyone and has made me very confident'.

'World of work here I come!'

Volunteer comments:

'Excellent exercises - fun and educational. Enjoyed by students and volunteers alike'.



'Fantastic students - excellent behaviour and dedicated to tasks'.

'Chair was great, everything was very clear and I felt very relaxed'.

'Excellent - well organised from a volunteer's perspective and highly beneficial for the kids'.

'Really enjoyed it. All the kids were enthusiastic, intelligent and thoughtful - I hope they got something out of it'.

'I wish I had something similar when I was this age!'

School comments:

'GETTING AHEAD was a great experience for the students. They all enjoyed it thoroughly. The organisation of the event was excellent'. Peter McEvoy, Head of Year, Bishop Challoner Catholic Collegiate School.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

There are around 40 conferences/events a year and we are always recruiting volunteers. We welcome individual volunteers as well as teams/groups.

If you would like to be involved in a **GETTING AHEAD** Conference, or have any questions about **GETTING AHEAD**, please contact:

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See also our website: <http://www.thebp.org/ga.htm>