

# The Value of Virtual Engagement with Young People Summary

## What key areas does the research focus on?

- To what extent do virtual engagements work for young people; what aspects work well and less well
- What are the features of impactful virtual learning experiences and how can these be retained in a blended model of virtual and in-person engagement
- The benefits of both virtual and in-person learning experiences and how the benefits vary depending on the type of experience

# KEY FINDINGS

**Online support cannot substitute for 'hands on' experience of the world of work however, a blended approach can work**

- **Stakeholders, including young people**, agree that virtual learning experiences are here to stay and future support about the world of work should be a mixture of both face-to-face and online support.
- **Any virtual engagement** should always add value compared to what could be done in person, enhancing the offer around the world of work rather than using it as an alternative.
- **Online engagement** can encourage more employers to volunteer their time, breaks down geographic barriers and can increase employer reach.
- **Virtual experiences** expose young people to employers and opportunities that could be inaccessible in person, which is a benefit to all young people and particularly to those living in rural areas or who have additional learning needs.
- **Digital accessibility** varies across Scotland and digital poverty impacts the positive experience of virtual engagement.
- **Consideration** of the impact of digital poverty must be taken whenever virtual experiences require young people to access opportunities from home.

# BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF VIRTUAL DELIVERY

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- **Virtual delivery** engages a wider range of young people and employers; young people should have access to a diverse portfolio of local and national opportunities based their requirements and the geographical offer should reflect the needs of the school/region.



- **Young people find** it more difficult to build relationships with others via online engagements. For longer virtual engagements such as work experience or apprenticeships, provide young people with a blended offer where possible, with opportunities to meet both online and in person.
- **Young people prefer** engaging with the world of work in person. Online engagement should be used to enhance the offer around the world of work rather than used as an alternative with each learning experience considered on a case by case basis.

# WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF IMPACTFUL, ENGAGING VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES?

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## **Involve young people in the design of virtual opportunities**

Work with young people and educators to focus opportunities on industry sectors of interest to young people and to boost engagement.

## **Create interactive and engaging virtual world of work experiences**

Deliver live, interactive experiences when possible with a blend of on and off camera work. Getting the balance right between time spent online and independent learning is important.

## **Consider the age and stage of young people**

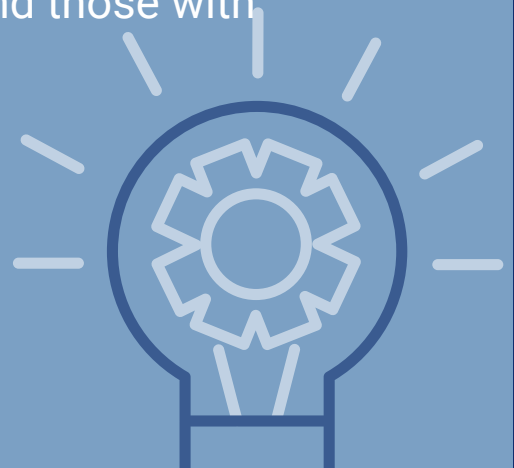
When designing the activity consider the intended audience and provide employers with support and best practice examples on how to create engaging experiences.

## **Short bursts of activity**

Deliver online activity in short bursts rather than day long virtual events.

## **Virtual delivery is supported by an in-person facilitator**

Support from a facilitator in the classroom is important, particularly for groups of younger pupils and those with additional learning needs.



# KEY DATA



**Young people in S4 - S6** prefer live online experiences to those which are pre-recorded

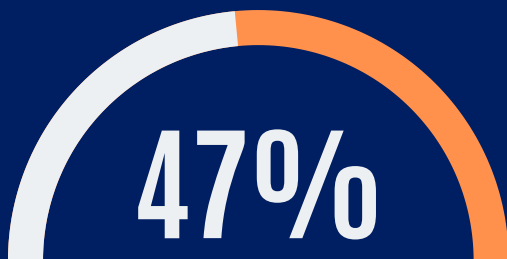


**S1-S3**

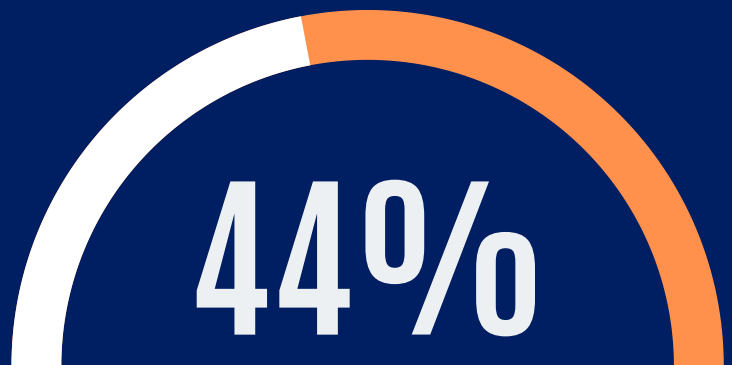


**S4-S6**

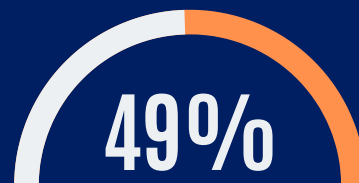
Think **future support** about the world of work should be a mixture of both face to face and online support



**Young people** prefer having a teacher involved in online experiences to not having a teacher involved



**Young people in S4-S6** think there should be as much face-to-face/in person work-related support as possible



**Young people in S4-S6** prefer interactive online experiences to those which were not interactive



# WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT IN-PERSON SUPPORT

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Face to face support is more engaging

It is easier to concentrate in person

In person support is more interactive

There is more scope for question and answer in person

Technical difficulties limit the impact of online support



# WHAT COULD BLENDED LEARNING LOOK LIKE?

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Each learning experience should be considered on a case by case basis to determine whether virtual delivery can enhance the offer for different groups of young people.

## Checklist for virtual experiences:

- ☐ Will using virtual experiences broaden horizons for the young people? For example, will it expose them to employers / workplaces they would not otherwise be able to access?
- ☐ Can measures be put in place to ensure disadvantaged young people, and those with additional support needs have equal access to the virtual experience?
- ☐ Has the employer been supported to design virtual engagement that is interactive and engaging? And can it be accessed on multiple devices to the same standard and quality of experience.
- ☐ Is there a member of staff (eg DYW coordinator / teacher) who has the time energy and skills to support young people to engage with the experience?
- ☐ Does DYW / the school / the employer have the digital infrastructure, time and space to deliver the experience virtually?
- ☐ Overall, will adding a virtual element enhance the experience for young people?
- ☐ Are the outcomes and expectations of young people clear and proportionate?
  - o Is the engagement meaningful and positive for young people?
- ☐ Does it clearly link with their curriculum and / or age appropriate world of work opportunities?

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