

## Press Release

### Serco Joins in Big Conversation

**15 September 2009**

Serco has joined a business-led campaign in the UK to improve the work experience that companies offer to young people across the country.

The Work Inspiration campaign [www.workinspiration.com](http://www.workinspiration.com) led by Business in the Community has been launched today at an event called the Big Conversation which is bringing together young people (14-16 yr olds) and Chief Executives to talk about how work placements can be made more relevant.

Serco across its business has a strong track record and considerable experience of providing valuable and inspiring work placements to young people, for example: with scientists at the Serco-operated National Physical Laboratory; at RAF Fylingdales where Serco has been providing services for 40 years; in education contracts in Bradford and Walsall where we match thousands of young people with valuable work experience opportunities every year; or, providing work experience and a chance of a better future to the young people in our care at Ashfield Young Offenders Institute.

Christopher Hyman, Chief Executive of Serco Group plc, said: "In Serco the skills and commitment of our people are fundamental to the quality and efficiency of the essential services that we deliver. "We are a people-led business and are absolutely committed to developing and nurturing young talent and to providing young people with stimulating, relevant and rewarding experiences of work. "We are delighted to support the Big Conversation and join with other businesses in the drive to inspire the young people of tomorrow."

Serco is one of the corporate supporters of the Work Inspirations campaign alongside Accenture, Ballymore, BT, Chime Communications, Logistik, Marks & Spencer, McDonalds, National Grid and Royal Mail.

**Ends**

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### **For further information please contact Serco:**

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### **About Serco**

Serco is a FTSE 100 international service company, which combines commercial know-how with a deep public service ethos. We improve services by managing people, processes, technology and assets more effectively. We advise policy makers, design innovative solutions, integrate systems and - most of all - deliver to the public.

Serco supports governments, agencies and companies who seek a trusted partner with a solid track record of providing assured service excellence. Our people offer operational, management and consulting expertise in the aviation, BPO, defence, education, health, home affairs, local government, science, technology, transport and the commercial sectors.

More information can be found at [www.serco.com](http://www.serco.com)

### **About Work Experience in Serco – Case Studies**

#### **National Physical Laboratory**

At NPL we have a Student work experience programme – called The Academy – a great example of what this campaign is all about.

- Young people of school age (14-16) can apply for the one-week work experience – on the last occasion we had 39 students.
- We then match the students to their area of interest which could be in science or functions such as HR.
- There is a defined programme which includes a session mid-week when the students are brought back together for a bit of fun with a mini water rocket competition
- On the last day they each have to prepare a presentation, maximum of 5 minutes, about what they had done, learnt, enjoyed, about the work experience. This presentation is given to guests of the students (parents, teachers, etc). This year there were 90 guests.
- Students were asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of their work experience – the feedback has been extremely positive.

In 2010 NPL will provide a more focused approach by advertising on the website specific projects that students can apply to work on. It is hoped that this approach will make the work experience more relevant to the student as well as helping NPL to ensure they have the right person in the right place.

Once students have been through the week's placement, then they are offered the opportunity to contact NPL if they wanted to return in the summer for longer placements of several weeks for which transport and food costs are covered.

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Outside of this scheme NPL provide work experience on an ad hoc basis. 400 applications received so far in 2009 with 40 placements being made.

### **RAF Fylingdales – Education Bradford**

In a tie up between two Serco contracts, a work-placement programme has been running for the past five years where typically eight pupils each year from Education Bradford are offered the opportunity to take part in an intensive week-long work placement at RAF Fylingdales working alongside both Serco and RAF personnel.

After a lengthy selection process, students are given the opportunity to gain an understanding of the purpose of the military site, and how Serco work alongside the RAF, MOD Police and Fire Services to ensure its smooth operation and maintenance. Students not only learn about Serco and its contracts, but also take part in exercises which test their fitness, logistics, intelligence and engineering abilities as well as gaining experience of working in a team. They receive help with other activities such as learning how to write a cv and receive professional coaching on interviewing techniques. Competition for the eight places on this one week's work experience is fierce with several hundred applications being received from students.

### **Ashfield Young Offenders Institute**

At Ashfield we work with local businesses to provide work experience to the young people in our care and a chance of a better future.

One example is a partnership with a local automotive academy; boys that graduate from the workshop in Ashfield have, in some cases, been taken on as apprentices.

Recently some of the boys were featured in the local media restoring a classic sports car - an MG TC 1946 - for a local resident who was ill with cancer and unable to do it himself. One of the boys involved is now working in a local specialist Porsche Garage.

### **Education Bradford**

Xperience is the trading name of the work experience team within the Education Business Partnership at Education Bradford. The team delivers work experience for schools in both Bradford and Leeds.

Over 15,500 students are given a work placement with an employer every academic year. Placements include one or two week blocks or longer. Bespoke placements are offered to support 14-19 Diplomas and Apprenticeships.

All students are issued with a Work Experience Journal which is linked to an accreditation. It identifies their Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) and assists in their learning prior to their placement. On completion of a successful placement students are issued with a certificate.

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Xperience uses a bespoke Web based, interactive booking system, accessed by school users. This is password protected to ensure the data is secure. A partnership agreement is in place with all schools and a support network is run for all users. All new staff are given full training and ongoing staff training is given three times a year to improve the quality of student preparation and debriefing.

The Database holds details of 14,366 organisations offering 19,851 placements across the region.

Xperience supports a website offering information and guidance to employers, students, schools, parents and local authorities. More information is at [www.xperience-uk.org](http://www.xperience-uk.org).

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