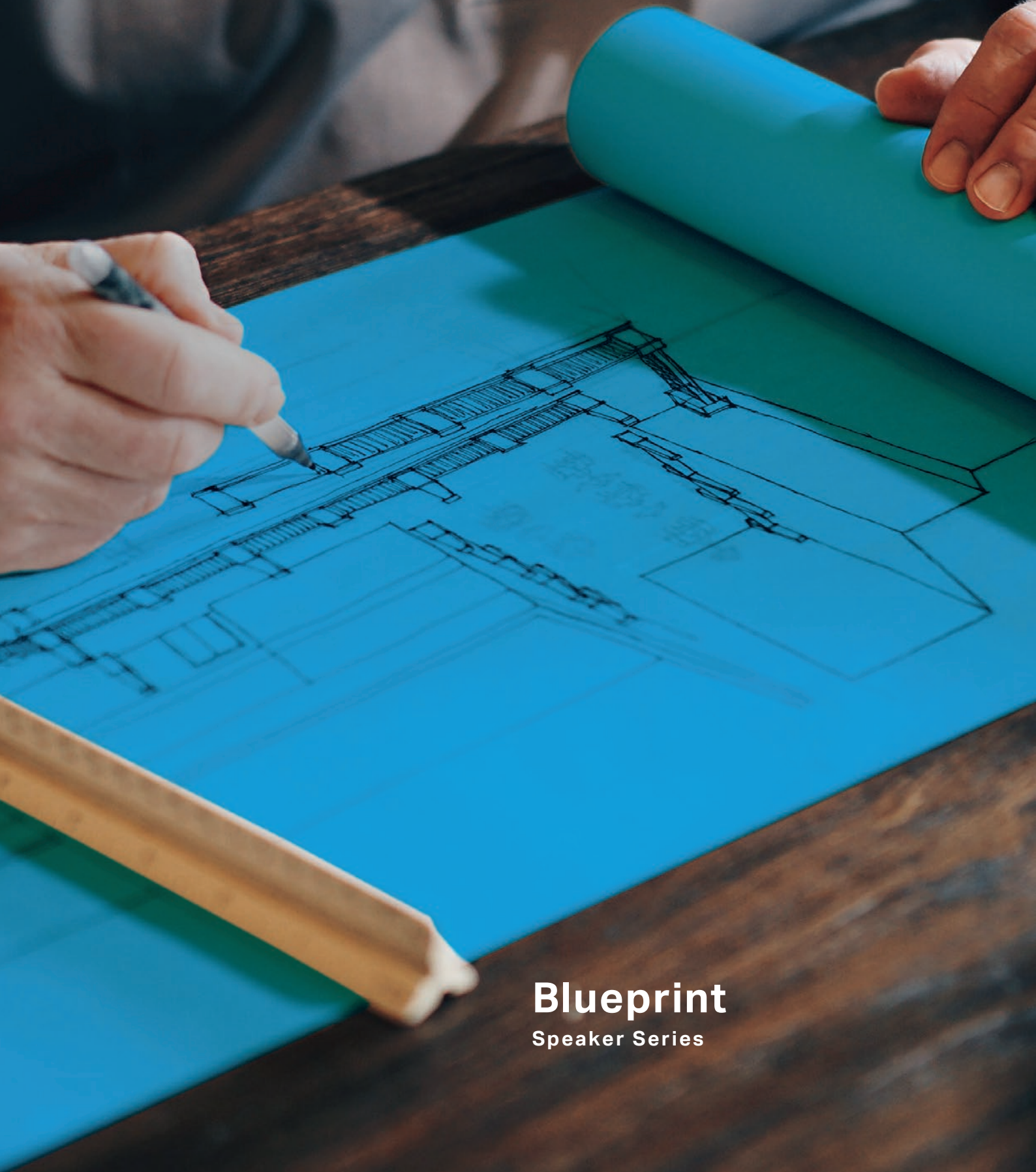# Blueprint
Speaker Series

MAYOR OF LONDON

London Enterprise Adviser Network (LEAN) Blueprints

Welcome to the LEAN Blueprints. We created 5 blueprints to help schools and businesses create effective opportunities for students to learn about careers. We've included suggestions and ideas for everything we think you'll need to plan and run successful and impactful careers projects.

In this Blueprint you'll see information on:

1. What is a Speaker Series event?
2. Why run a Speaker Series event?
3. How to run a Speaker Series event

What is a Speaker Series?

A Speaker Series is when a school or college invites a range of business volunteers from different industries in throughout an academic year to deliver 15-30-minute talks about their career journey, job and sector. This is typically followed by a student Q&A.

The talks should occur at frequent intervals throughout the term e.g. every Thursday assembly or monthly on a Wednesday lunchtime. They can be aimed at particular year groups or can be open to all students.

This activity can help schools and colleges towards meeting Gatsby Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees.

Why run a Speaker Series?

Individual employer talks are great but if you can secure a series of different speakers over a term or academic year the impact on your students' increases as:

- Students can learn about and compare a range of different job roles and industries. You can also link them to your local labour market information (LMI).

- You can invite speakers from specific industries based on student feedback.

- Your students can get used to the event format over time and as a result are able to ask more insightful questions.

- This event format also provides a gentle introduction for businesses looking to get involved in their local schools or colleges.

Making it meaningful – The Careers & Enterprise Company

Take a look at the Careers & Enterprise Company's 'Making it Meaningful checklist' for ideas on how to ensure these events are embedded within your school's wider careers strategy and programme.

THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

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How to run a Speaker Series

1. **Set the dates and times for the Speaker Series**

   When you set up the speaker series, try to provide a regular slot so students can get used to the format e.g. weekly lunchtime for half a term or during assembly time throughout the year.

   Allow up to 45 minutes each time for the speaker's presentation and a Q&A.

2. **Choose the industries or jobs to focus on**

   Use an online student survey at the start of the year to find out which industries the students are interested in. Match your speakers to their interests to increase student attendance at these events.

   Your students will not be aware of many jobs or sectors, so also look for national or local growth industries and consider jobs and sectors that are less well known.

3. **Find your speakers**

   To find business volunteers to speak at these events, write a short paragraph explaining what you are looking for and the commitment required e.g. 45 mins on a Friday between 1-2pm.

   Send this to your network (staff, governors, alumni, friends, family), post it on LinkedIn, include in the school newsletter and contact parents. Your Enterprise Adviser and Enterprise Coordinator may be able to help with this

   There are also providers who can help you source speakers:

   - Speakers for Schools
   - Inspiring the Future
   - STEM Ambassadors
   - Founders for Schools

   These platforms often host many requests from schools and colleges, so try to make yours stand out. Many will let you to place a rolling request for speakers across the entire academic year.

   For further tips and templates see our volunteer recruitment guide.

4. **Confirm your speaker and help them prepare**

   Agree the time and dates for each speaker and provide them with joining instructions (i.e. arrival time, directions and parking arrangements, what to do on arrival and point of contact's details).

   Be clear about your expectations, whether they can bring slides, show clips etc. and give them ideas for content.

   Remember that whilst your speakers may be comfortable presenting, your input at this stage is crucial as they'll need to adapt their style to work for young people.

A typical 30-minute structure could include:

- 5 minutes – Teacher or student introduces the speaker
- 10 minutes – Industry/job overview and their personal career journey
- 5 minutes – Interactive activity (i.e. Industry quiz)
- 5 minutes – Overview of routes into the industry/job role
- 5 minutes – Question and Answer session

Founders for Schools and Inspiring the Future both provide useful advice to business volunteers giving career talks at schools or colleges.

- Founders4Schools: Career-talks
- Inspiring the Future: Career Insight Talks

5. Plan publicity across the school

You will need to advertise the event to students if it is not mandatory. Tell relevant subject teachers about the talks and ask them to promote it to their classes, linking the opportunity to their curriculum's content if possible.

Advertise the event more widely across the school community by creating posters, newsletters or presentations for form tutors to use. You can also choose to invite parents.

Visit LMI for All to collect key statistics on the job role and industry to use in your publicity.

6. Prepare the students for the talk

Ask tutors and subject teachers to allow time for students to research the sector and prepare their questions in advance of the talk. What do they want to know? Prepare a few questions yourself in case students are reluctant to ask the first question.

Select two students; one to welcome the speaker and one to close the talk by thanking them and starting the questions.

7. Reconfirm the speaker

To reduce the risk of last-minute dropouts, arrange to call the speaker one week before the event. Confirm with them the joining instructions, agenda, expected audience numbers, timings, IT requirements and any pre-planned questions.

8. Run the talk

On the day of the talk, make sure the room is ready and that the IT equipment is working. Ensure a staff member is available to welcome the speaker and offer refreshments. The speaker will be taking time out of work so keeping to time is key.

If the speaker does not have a DBS check they will need to be accompanied around the school/college at all times.

During the talk circulate among the students to help manage behaviour. If students are reluctant to ask questions, give them two minutes to come up with questions in pairs.

When the talk finishes, make sure to ask the students to give the speaker a round of applause and direct students to tools they can use to find out more about the job/sector.

9. Collect feedback

Collect feedback from all the students, the speaker and teachers as soon as possible. Try to collect this before they leave the room and allocate enough time at the end of the event to make sure it's not rushed.

Online forms are a great way to save on administration time, just make sure you highlight that this will be sent to the participants at the end/after the event.

Consider running follow up activities that allow students to reflect on what they have learned and conduct further research around the industry and its access routes.

10. Post event follow up

Thank your speaker at the end of the event and contact them soon afterwards, sharing any positive student feedback you received. Use this as an opportunity to signpost them to other ways they can volunteer at the school. If they are enthusiastic about volunteering again, log their details on Compass+.

Record the event and students' attendance on Compass+. Go through the feedback and identify key learning points. Record these and use them to improve future events.

LEAN Blueprints

Don't forget about our other blueprints available at www.london.gov.uk/LEAN:

Gatsby Benchmark 5 blueprints
(for schools)

- Speed Networking Event
- Professional Interview Day

Gatsby Benchmark 6 blueprints
(for employers)

- Employer Insight Visit
- Work Experience

If you have any ideas on how we can improve these blueprints, please contact enterpriseadvisers@london.gov.uk