

# WORKABILITY



North East England  
Tourism Awards 2006  
Gold Winner

Workability is a practical demonstration by EBC of its aim to provide equality of access to work related learning and enterprise education opportunities to all young people - regardless of their abilities, but with consideration of their special needs.

Workability was developed thanks to specialist input and guidance from teachers working in the special education field and is currently funded by The Sunderland Partnership, through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

Research has revealed that work related learning activity for pupils attending special schools is very patchy. One of the reasons for this low level of work related learning input by providers is the fact that almost all pupils with high level needs in special schools are disappplied from the national curriculum and therefore do not benefit from the statutory requirement to enjoy five days of work related learning experiences afforded for pupils in mainstream schools.

Workability seeks to bridge that gap by carefully matching activities with pupils' learning needs. Its overall aim is to give young people with a range of disabilities and barriers to learning a raised awareness of, and confidence in, their capacity to enter the jobs market (even if this is in a 'sheltered' form).

Every Workability event is unique - with activities carefully matched with pupils' abilities and needs. The programme provides pupils with an opportunity to engage with businesses in an informal setting and help them identify the skills they have to offer that can help them enter the world of work.

The target group for Workability are pupils who are likely to find the transition from school to work very difficult as a result of their physical and mental barriers they have to overcome on a daily basis.

As with all EBC's programmes activities are designed to develop pupils' key employability skills. These skills include:

- Research and planning skills.
- Communication and teamwork.
- Decision making.
- Production skills.
- Time management skills.
- Creativity and innovation.

Businesses are recruited which are known to understand the issues impacting upon the learning of special needs pupils. EBC works with both these businesses and teachers from individual special needs schools to design a range of exciting and stimulating hands on activities which give the young people involved both new experiences and a real sense of achievement and self worth.

The activities are then delivered at a large scale event with small groups of pupils, many supported by individual learning assistants, working with individual business supporters on a 'round robin' basis - giving the pupils the opportunity to get a taste of a range of activities.

Pupils with good ICT skills take on the role of Event Newshounds to produce a newsletter recording the event, and are supported in this work by a member of EBC's media team.

Education Business Connections provides:

- Recruitment of schools to take part in the event.
- Full pre-event liaison with teaching professionals to ensure activities match pupils' learning needs.
- Practical advice and guidance to companies on the development of their proposed activities.
- Full event organisation, including arrangements for venues, transport, and all related housekeeping aspects.
- Full post-event evaluation.

**'BUILDING CONFIDENCE** IN YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH A **CREATIVE APPROACH**  
**TO CURRICULUM NEEDS AND BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS'**