

Oxfordshire County Council invites employers to take part in the Reverse Recruitment Fair 2026, delivered with Skills Builder Partnership. This is an opportunity to meet young people with **special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**, hear about their strengths and ambitions, and explore how your organisation can support inclusive routes into employment.

## EVENT TIMETABLE

**Date:** Thursday 26 November 2026

**11am–1pm:** Arrival, networking and lunch

**1pm–3pm:** Session 1 – Young people and educators, *with parents/carers invited to explore the marketplace and speak with Oxfordshire's Parent Carer Forum (OxPCF)*

**3pm–5pm:** Session 2 – Young people, parents/carers and educators

**Venue:** Kassam Stadium, Oxfordshire

**What is a Reverse Recruitment Fair?** A Reverse Recruitment Fair turns the usual recruitment model around. Instead of employers promoting vacancies, young people lead the conversation by sharing their skills, interests and ambitions. Employers are invited to listen, ask questions, and explore opportunities such as work experience, supported internships, apprenticeships or future employment. The event is designed to build connections, increase understanding and open conversations. Employers are not expected to offer placements or jobs on the day, although they should be prepared to identify future opportunities that the young people can explore.

**Why take part?** Taking part helps your organisation connect with local talent, strengthen inclusive recruitment practice and gain confidence in recognising and supporting the talents of young people with SEND. It is also a practical opportunity to learn from Skills Builder Partnership's essential skills framework and consider how your organisation could offer future work experience, supported internships, apprenticeships or employment pathways.

### What employers can expect on the day

- The opportunity to meet young people aged 14+ with SEND from across Oxfordshire
- Structured, strengths-based conversations supported by 1-page skills profiles
- Practical insight into the skills, talents and perspectives young people can bring to different workplace settings
- Support from event staff and clear information about inclusive practice and next steps
- The chance to explore future opportunities including work experience, supported internships, apprenticeships and employment pathways

Young people attending may have a range of special educational needs and disabilities and will have different communication styles, strengths, interests and support needs.

- We recognise that young people communicate and present themselves in different ways. Employers will be supported to engage in flexible, inclusive conversations that enable young people to share their strengths in ways that work for them.

**What we ask of employers** We ask employers to come ready to listen, ask thoughtful questions, and focus on each young person's strengths and potential. You do not need to bring live vacancies, but we would appreciate all employers being prepared to offer opportunities for students, which could include a short workplace visit for groups of, or individual, students, the offer of a careers talk in school or work experience. We hope organisations will use the event to make connections, learn more about inclusive recruitment, and consider future opportunities they may be able to offer.

**Preparing for the event** Before the event, employers will receive information about the format, practical arrangements, and how to support positive conversations with young people. We will also share materials linked to Skills Builder Partnership's essential skills framework, so employers understand the language and approach being used and arrive on the day with a shared understanding.

**If your organisation would like to take part, please register your interest by 30<sup>th</sup> September** by completing our expression of interest form: [Reverse Recruitment Fair 2026 - Expression of Interest Form – Fill in form](#)

**Any questions please reach out to** [lydia.martin@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lydia.martin@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

We would be delighted to work with employers committed to widening opportunity, valuing difference, and recognising the skills and potential that young people with SEND bring to the workplace.

## WHY THIS MATTERS – NEW NATIONAL REPORT

- Nearly 1 million young people aged 16 to 24 in the UK are not in education, employment or training - around 1 in 8 young people.
- For young people with SEND, the challenge can be even greater. In 2025, the disability employment gap was 29.7 percentage points, showing how much further there is to go in creating fair access to work.
- Employers can help change this by creating inclusive opportunities that build skills, confidence and routes into employment.
- This reflects findings from the recently published Young people and work: interim report, released in May 2026, which highlights why early action and inclusive pathways into employment matter.

# Reverse Recruitment Fair 2026 - Expression of Interest Form

