

Virtual careers expo is returning



Find out more about the Ladder for the Black Country:
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More than 21,500 delegates attended the first Black Country Virtual Careers Expo during the four weeks from January 14.

The Ladder for the Black Country is urging young people considering apprenticeships to take part in two further expos this year. Feedback received from schools and colleges, young adults and parents about how useful, informative and relevant the first expo was positive.

Enhance

The Black Country Skills Factory, funded by the Careers Enterprise Company, has joined together with Aspire to HE, to run the Black Country expo again from May 24 to June 18, and from July 5 to 30.

The expo will also be in 3D, to further enhance the visitor's experience.

Ensuring the Black Country workforce of tomorrow is skilled and adaptable is vital – and the Expo is designed to help young people from across the region gain an insight into the future world of the workplace and create links with local employers, colleges, training providers



Young people considering an apprenticeship will be able to join in the virtual events

and universities. It provided pupils, parents and teachers from across the Black Country with access to a wide range of careers advice, employment information, apprenticeships, skills and training programmes, FE and HE information and SEN opportunities, all under one virtual roof.

There will also be a live vacancies section for anyone searching for employment and apprenticeship opportunities across the Black Country. A mix of local and

national organisations are already lined up. Students can visit all of the online exhibitors and watch a collection of helpful pre-recorded videos to help them make an informed decision.

Organisations from across the Black Country are being invited to get involved in the two new expos.

Contact Vikki Haines, Black Country Careers Hub and Enterprise Adviser Network lead, by emailing vikki_haines@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk

WHY SHOULD YOU GET INVOLVED IN THE LADDER?

What are we asking employers?

Quite simply, we want businesses across the Black Country – big and small – to take on one or more apprentice. The Ladder can offer impartial advice.

Why are we doing this?

Youth unemployment has doubled since the beginning of 2020 and the number of apprenticeships on offer is almost 50 per cent lower than this time last year, so we are eager to encourage businesses.

What are the benefits for firms?

- Skilled and motivated workforce
- Fresh innovative ideas
- Increased productivity
- Bridging the skills gap
- Contribute to the growth of the local economy

What are the incentives for taking on an apprentice?

The Government has introduced incentive payments of £3,000 to employers for each new apprentice they hire.

Third across the region struggle with their money

More than 1.7 million people – 37 per cent of the population – in the West Midlands are struggling with their financial wellbeing. A study found that around 762,590 (16 per cent) in the region were fortunate to combine healthy finances and a positive money mindset, but 524,281 (11 per cent) struggled with both. The study from pensions and investment company Aegon has, for the first time, assessed the role of mindset in financial wellbeing.

Based on responses from 10,000 people, Aegon's financial wellbeing index measures both the health of people's financial position and the critical role mindset plays in influencing financial wellbeing.

The study found many were struggling, with 40 per cent of the population in the West Midlands having less than £100 left at the end of the month, 29 per cent having no emergency savings and just eight per cent paying more than the auto-enrolment minimum of eight per cent of qualifying earnings into their workplace pension. Some 53 per cent in the West Midlands also have some form of unsecured debt, which averaged £6,230.

The study found 38 per cent in the region had only a vague idea of where they want to be financially in 10 years' time against 30 per cent with a specific idea.

Just 12 per cent have a financial plan to achieve long-term goals. Steven Cameron, pensions director at Aegon, said: "It's not always possible to make quick changes to income or savings but by thinking about what sort of future you're working towards, you can make big strides towards a better relationship with your money."

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THE LAKES & DALES

Narrowboat, Steam & Sail

Departing Fri 23 Jul '21, Fri 20 Aug '21

From a journey on the heritage Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway to relaxing cruises on Lake Windermere and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, this is the perfect chance to step back in time and enjoy the enduring appeal of the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales.

Your break includes

- ✓ Return coach travel from **Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall, Halesowen, Cannock, Kidderminster, Stourport & more**
- ✓ 2 nights at a selected 3 or 4-star hotel in the North West area with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Heritage train journey on the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway
- ✓ Cruise on Lake Windermere
- ✓ Narrow boat cruise on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal

3 Days by Coach only £189

Single Supplement £70

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ABBA TRIBUTE

Live in Liverpool

Departing Sun 24 Oct '21

Unleash your inner Dancing Queen and join us for an outstanding ABBA tribute act live at the iconic Adelphi Hotel! The fun continues with a 2 for 1 bar and a live DJ so you can dance the night away, and there is also time to enjoy the delights of Liverpool.

Your break includes

- ✓ Return coach travel from **Walsall & Stafford**
- ✓ Overnight stay at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool with dinner & breakfast (all meals buffet style)
- ✓ 2 for 1 bar (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
- ✓ ABBA tribute act plus a live DJ at the hotel
- ✓ Free time in Liverpool

2 Days by Coach only £89

Single Supplement £35



BOURNEMOUTH

& Isle of Wight by Hovercraft

Departing Mon 25 Oct '21

Home to seven miles of golden sands, Bournemouth offers a traditional seaside ambience. From our base here, we explore the charming Dorchester Market and the town of Weymouth. We also discover golden-sanded Ryde after taking a journey to the Isle of Wight by hovercraft.

Your break includes

- ✓ Return coach travel from **Wolverhampton, Dudley, Halesowen, Cannock & Stafford**
 - ✓ 4 nights at the Heathlands Hotel, Bournemouth with dinner & breakfast
 - ✓ Return hovercraft journey to Ryde, Isle of Wight
 - ✓ Excursions to Dorchester Market, Weymouth & the Isle of Wight
- Optional excursion to Salisbury (£12pp)

5 Days by Coach only £279

Single Supplement £60

For more information or to book, please call:

03332 342 529 Quote **woL**

033 numbers are free within inclusive minutes packages otherwise standard rates apply.

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