
PRESS RELEASE



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Merlin Entertainments leads partnership to create job opportunities for young people in Blackpool

Hundreds of young people across Blackpool are being thrown an employment lifeline in a unique private and public sector partnership that will offer work placements in some of the UK's most iconic tourism attractions.

Led by Merlin Entertainments, working in association with Blackpool Council and other tourism operators, the scheme will utilise Government Kickstart funding to establish the Blackpool Resort Ambassador Academy.

The academy, which will be open to young people aged between 18 and 24 who are unemployed and claiming Universal Credit, will provide placements over the summer and autumn tourism seasons.

The six-month placements, across Blackpool Tower, Madame Tussauds, SEA LIFE, Blackpool Zoo, The Grand Theatre, Winter Gardens Blackpool, Pleasure Beach, Blackpool Transport and Blackpool Sandcastle Waterpark, will give young people the opportunity to get “work-ready” as they are mentored by some of the most professional and respected people working in our tourism industry.

In addition to the placement, every young person joining the Academy will also receive industry linked NVQ training and their very own one-on-one Kickstart Coach to support them in work and to find their next job.

The scheme, which is backed by Blackpool and The Fylde College and Blackpool Council, will launch in July with an initial 92 ambassadors. It is hoped it can then be extended into future seasons, helping young people to forge lasting careers within the sector.

Kate Shane, Head of Merlin Entertainments in Blackpool, said:

“We are delighted to be spearheading this initiative and reaching out to our young people in such a positive way.

“Blackpool has one of the highest rates of young people claiming Universal Credit in the country and this is the perfect opportunity to offer an essential lifeline to work with some of the most prominent businesses, not only in Blackpool and the North West but across the UK.

“We all know the hospitality, leisure and tourism industries have had – and continue to have – major challenges over the last 16 months. As we move out of lockdown, the sector is experiencing staff shortages and difficulties retaining staff, so this scheme will also pave the way for businesses to hone local talents and, hopefully, help shape the careers of our future workforce.

“We're hoping it'll be something which can be rolled out into future years, too!”

The young recruits will act as Ambassadors for the resort of Blackpool, welcoming tourists, guiding them to the key places of interest across the town and as hosts in the participating businesses.

Cllr Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation, said:

“We are delighted to be part of this unique private and public sector partnership.

“It will enable our tourism operators to provide invaluable work experience for almost 100 young people and provide a great ambassadorial service for the resort in what is a hugely important tourism season.

“To date, our Kickstart Gateway has now provided almost 300 opportunities.”

Linda Dean, Exec Director B&FC for Business said:

“Blackpool and The Fylde College are incredibly pleased to partner with Merlin Entertainments on this exciting opportunity that will provide young people with the knowledge, skills and experience required to have a rewarding career in the hospitality and tourism industry.”

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Notes to Editors

Blackpool currently has the highest rate of 18-24 year olds claiming Universal Credit – 1,730 – 16.2% (May 2021).

Anyone who is interested in joining the Academy should contact their JCP Work Coach to discuss these opportunities.

Please note: Only young people in receipt of Universal Credit are able to apply for Kickstart work placement roles.

About Merlin Entertainments

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As Europe's Number 1 and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin operates over 135 attractions, 21 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 24

countries and across 4 continents. Merlin's purpose is to deliver memorable experiences to its millions of guests around the world, through its iconic brands and multiple attraction formats, and the commitment and passion of its employees.

See www.merlinentertainments.biz for more information and follow on Twitter [@MerlinEntsNews](https://twitter.com/MerlinEntsNews).
