

## 🌀 May 2025 Update: Transition 🌀

As we approach the mid-point of the summer term we look ahead to the changes and transition points that are looming in the coming months. The May session theme was **Transition**, to help us unpack what might be going to happen, raise awareness of what helps to manage the transitions. Principal, **Adele Darlington** and Employability Job Coach, **Ruth James** were presenting and answering questions that came up during the session.



**Ruth James' role as Employability Job Coach is foundational for each transitional part of the LFT student journey**, be that moving from pre-internship to supported internships, beginning to look at the employment world beyond LFT, or finding, securing and moving on to a place of

work. Ruth works exceptionally hard to support the job coach team with their training needs, to empower them with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach job-searching effectively and consistently on placements. This collaborative approach (which begins in earnest in January) is used to help Ruth get to know the young people on their placements, so she can focus on the right sector when helping individuals look for and secure their next job.

### *How Ruth supports our interns:*

- Sharing lots of relevant job information with young people. She does this by interviewing them, getting to know them, tailoring suggestions, as well as asking job coaches.
- Being present at interviews (if needed and/or wanted).
- Coaching interview techniques, preparation and reasonable adjustments.
- Creating bespoke information packs for interviews.
- Providing enthusiasm throughout the process.
- Teaching post-interview evaluating skills, to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Linking with employers in advance, priming them and helping the employer know who to expect, to smooth the process.

- Letting interns know what their rights are and what can be asked for (both in interviews and in the workplace).

Ruth is now also working with **pre-interns**, supporting with readiness for their next stage in LFT. This helps to build confidence when thinking beyond the pre-internship, by building relationship with students early-on, and so they become familiar with the people and organisations that we partner with.

**LFT Associates:** When students graduate from LFT, if they need it, they can still access the invaluable support from Ruth, in the form of weekly, day-long, employment-focused sessions. These cover updating/tailoring CVS, contacting employers who may have opportunities, helping with job searches, job applications, preparing for and attending interviews.

### *Q&A with Ruth.*

**Do you go into interviews?** Yes, if wished. Job coaches can also.

**How do you help someone who has fixed ideas on what they want to do?** I help them understand and manage their expectations, to make realistic choices in relation to what their skillset and experiences are.



**Adele Darlington led a discussion about transitions at LFT, and the Q&A session.**

**How do you support YP who are about to complete their SI?** To aid the transition process from LFT to world of work, we are using Vocational Portfolios. These expand

the vocational profiles which are established at the beginning of students' time at LFT. We include the 'Reasonable Adjustment Passports', and now, with the help of occupational health team we provide a Sensory Profile for each student. The aim is that this approach could become a city-wide transition policy for Leeds.

★ **How are YP with sensory processing difficulties supported?** Using the sensory profiles and an occupational health audit for LFT's environment, we are more able to create workspaces that are suitable for students, in all our campus buildings.

This is being rolled out to include employer partners too, building awareness about sensory needs and how these can be provided for.

★ *My YP is worried about what will happen if they haven't got a job yet. What is done to help with this?* We do a lot of work with individuals who are afraid of leaving LFT. By working to encourage them to support themselves as well as offering support on going too. We help them develop the skills to do it themselves to future proof. We have other places we can signpost to in future if needed.

Our aspiration for all interns is paid employment. We will do everything we can to ensure this. Even though they might be leaving this programme, the support continues.

★ *Apart from the sessions offered by Ruth for associate graduates, what else is there, if my YP doesn't get a job straight away?* We are currently looking at a scheme called 'Connect to Work, which is an all-age programme to support anyone classed as "economically inactive". If successful, we will have more 'supported employment' help to offer. WYCA will roll this out. This will be bespoke, centred around Vocational Profiles and job matching. It is linked to 'Get Britain Working'. Our plan would be to focus on younger age range for this.

★ *My YP is moving from pre-intern to SI. What is happening to help with this?* Transition for the groups of pre-interns is already happening. After May half term even more will happen. Young people will get to know employers, SI staff and become familiar with the new settings and environments.

★ *My YP is feeling very anxious about the changes coming up. What help is there for them?* Our aim is to normalise nerves and nervousness and anticipation regarding change. Supporting this, all staff can listen and help provide reassurance about specific worries. If they are really struggling, or if needed they can also access counselling free at LFT. Counselling sessions can support with this specifically and can be beneficial to help with nerves, worries or anxiety about job interviews, changes coming up, the future, etc. YP can refer directly to Emily via [counselling@lighthousefuturetrust.co.uk](mailto:counselling@lighthousefuturetrust.co.uk) or via text/call on 07884 576 886. Alternatively, they can ask their job coach to do a referral on their behalf.



★ *How do you help them cope with nervousness about job interviews?* By having curiosity about and talking about enjoying the process of job interviews. By encouraging them to interview the interviewer when they are there – it can take the pressure off. Also, using every job interview as an experience that is valuable – nothing is wasted even if they don't get the job!

★ *What else can be offered?* Sometimes employers will offer **Work Trials**. These are like extended interviews. We are constantly developing lots of **employer connections** to build relationships with supportive, inclusive employers across the city.

We also offer alternatives to the jobs fairs which are often very overwhelming experiences for YP. Instead, we offer **Reverse Job Fairs**. Which means we invite employers to meet YP on their terms. It encourages open, more relaxed conversations and helps with learning to speak to employers. Interns have had job offers from these, as well as work experience offers. They are confidence-building events, which now happen earlier on in the internship. This is where the **Digital portfolios** really showcase and help them stand out. They include testimonials, videos, as well as CVS, etc. They are all available via QR codes.



In addition, we build into the employability curriculum lots of practise of **public speaking**, Q&A sessions and presenting to an audience.

**Coming up soon: Employer event.** This will be held in the first week in July, for all internships. YP and their parents and carers will be invited to this, to talk about all the roles, environments, skills involved, to ask and take questions, for opportunities to carve roles for specific interns. They will receive the **Placement Brochure** to help them think more about the employers they want to try. They will choose 3 and go to these employers for their **Inspiration Days** in September. Do encourage your YP to pick a mix of types of employers to find out what they really love, as well as what they don't like!

★ *Is there a list of employers?* There are still some to be finalised, however, currently on-board are: NHS, JLP, Arla Foods, KPMG, Sodexo, HMRC. Situ, Caring 4 Life, Crag House Farm, Denton Reserve, and a children's nursery.

★ **Are the days different on different programmes?**

Supported interns have three days on site plus 1 day or 1.5 days at college. Pre-interns do four days and have one day off.

**Inspiration days** will depend on what was selected. These days will be staggered from second and third weeks in September. Soon after the choices are submitted, you will be notified about the dates of the inspiration days to attend.

★ **What will the start of Supported Internships be like next term?** From mid-September we start by gradually increasing the days. By mid-October all interns should be at their employer site, but some of them start sooner.

★ **How can parents and carers help?**

- **Bring awareness** of what is happening into conversations at home. Talk about things openly. Encourage an open mind. Be curious and willing to try new things.
- **Practical things** to help with: **Personal ID**, (provision driving license, for example) **bank account**, a **mobile phone** that they can access, ensure they know their **National Insurance number**. Ensure they have their own **e-mail address**. Begin organising **transport**. (please bear in mind that LCC are reducing post 16 transport funding, so applications need to be in soon.) LFT are working more with the **Travel Training** team. Please let us know and DWP **know if you are an appointee**. (Somebody responsible for making decisions or signing for things on YP's behalf.)

Coming in June:

Students will be attending the **SEND Next Choices fair** on the **24th of June** at Leeds Arena. Tickets are needed – this is a free event. [Click here for details: firstdirectarena.com/events/detail/send-next-choices-2025](https://firstdirectarena.com/events/detail/send-next-choices-2025)

Witherslack Group will be hosting their annual **Virtual Send Conference** on **June 25th**. Delivered via Zoom, the conference will provide a line-up of workshops to support parents and carers with “**Strategies To Support Behaviour & Mental Health**” This is a free event – to sign up and find out more, [click here or visit witherslackgroup.co.uk](https://witherslackgroup.co.uk).



Huge thanks to Ruth and Adele for helping to make this a really informative and helpful session. We look forward to seeing you at [our next in-person group session, 5:00-6:30pm on Thursday June 12th](#), either in-person, or [book here to join remotely](#). We will be joined by LFT CEO Katie Parlett and special guests, who will speak to us about the theme of *supported, assisted and independent living*.

[Please book your free ticket on Eventbrite](#) and we will see you then!

Best wishes,  
Emily, Shelley & Julie

