

We asked Skills North East 2017 sponsor Virgin Money about their exhibiting experience. Virgin Money sponsored and hosted the Careers Hub which they ran with a circus theme.

### What has specifically been a success for you by attending our event this year?

The 15 minute skills workshops run throughout the day covered financial wellness, CVs, interview skills, growth mindset and personal brand and were all full to capacity – these sessions helped over 200 young people with their employability and life skills.

During the evening session we ran 30 minute info sessions on apprenticeships (twice, by popular demand!) and our new work experience programme. These were standing room only and were attended by around 150 students and their parents, who in particular asked lots of questions about how apprenticeships could help their family, and even their own personal career aspirations.

### What is the benefit to you of attending Skills North East?

Have engaging conversations with local students, teachers and parents which we're hopeful will result, in time, with some individuals joining the bank.

### What would you say to an employer considering exhibiting at Skills North East? Would you recommend it?

Yes I would recommend it. If you pitch your stand right and can engage with the young people, the returns are immeasurable on the impact we can have to our future generation.



### Have you had any valuable conversations with visitors, if so is there one that stands out and why?

We handed out lots of little red cards to young people we'd love to hear from again and we think might really enjoy working at VM. Little red cards are our mechanism of tracking great conversations and interactions as we ask students to tell us they have a red card when they contact us.

### Has a particular activity / demonstration worked well on your stand to engage visitors?

The circus games worked well for the initial engagement and the popcorn to encourage sign up for the workshops!

### How will you measure return on investment from exhibiting today?

A successful recruitment would be great however we take a lot from sharing our knowledge and experience with the young people in our community.

### What recruitment opportunities do you offer for young people?

Our main opportunities are work experience, apprenticeships and entry level customer service roles. We also have our Strive to Thrive programme which is a great opportunity for targeted young people. Doing 'the right thing' is a driving concept behind every Virgin business. We're here to be successful organisations but we don't plan to do that at the expense of the industries or the communities we operate within. We aim to work in partnership to achieve a better outcome for everyone. This is our mission – to prove that business can and should be a force for good in the world. To make everyone better off.

It's with this intention in mind that we've created the Strive2Thrive programme. We hope to use the skills in our organisations to support those who have yet to start their careers, those who've hit a bump, or are taking a new direction in their careers, to be successful. That doesn't have to be with us at Virgin. Perhaps some will be but it's not compulsory. Their success is our primary aim.

