

DeHavilland's Story

Work Experience

the
switch



"Politics is not a very diverse sector to work in. It's important to me to work towards the ESG side of our business and make sure that we're offering opportunities. We want to make sure that our sector is diverse and open to people from all backgrounds." – Hattie, DeHavilland

Work Experience is a vital stepping stone for young people, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds. In Tower Hamlets, where youth unemployment is above the national and London averages, access to professional opportunities can significantly shape future careers. In fields like politics, where diversity remains low, early exposure through Work Experience helps young people see themselves in the sector.

The Switch's Work Experience programme connects young people with local businesses in Tower Hamlets and the City of London, offering meaningful placements that introduce them to different career paths.

Since 2022, DeHavilland, a political monitoring and intelligence company based in the City, has welcomed students through The Switch, giving them firsthand insight into political monitoring and policy analysis in British politics.

In January 2025, DeHavilland hosted Nyela, a Year 10 student at St Paul's Way Trust School, for Work Experience. She engaged in a range of tasks, including; attending team meetings, summarising news articles, and joining a virtual event with an MP. Through these experiences, she built key research and communication skills while gaining first-hand insight into the world of political consultancy.

"Before my placement, I didn't know what political monitoring was, but now I've learnt how politics actually works in our country. It's nice to learn about the ins and outs, like knowing how many MPs are in the House of Lords and the House of Commons." – Nyela

Hattie, who supports students during their placements at DeHavilland, sees Work Experience as an opportunity to engage the younger generation in politics while helping them grow professionally.

"It's quite unique being able to capture them at such a young age. They often don't know what they want to do, but we can give them a taster of politics, and even if they don't end up in the sector, the placement gets young people interested in politics and reading the news, which is a great thing."

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Beyond student development, Hattie sees these placements as valuable development opportunities for junior staff, who take on the responsibility of mentoring and guiding the students through their tasks.

"From a development perspective, it's nice to give more junior members of the team additional responsibility for the week and say 'this week, it's your job to make sure that the students do X, Y, and Z'."

Work Experience isn't just about developing employability skills, it's also about building confidence in the workplace. For many students, it's their first opportunity to connect and network with adults beyond their family or school environment. Nyela found that even small interactions, like learning how to greet someone professionally, helped her grow in confidence throughout the week. Reflecting on her experience, she shared:

"I've improved my conversational skills and learned how to interact with adults in a professional setting. Before coming here, I'd never greeted someone with a handshake. When you first arrive, it's a little scary, but you get used to things and quickly start picking up the right habits."

Hattie echoes this sentiment and highlights how valuable it is for young people to gain early exposure to professional environments and build confidence interacting with adults.

"It's important for young people to be in the company of adults. Work Experience helps them learn how to conduct themselves in a professional environment, and it gives them confidence. I didn't do Work Experience until I was about 17, and it was daunting, so I think it gives them confidence at a younger age."

Reflecting on a past Work Experience student at DeHavilland, Hattie recalls his journey from stepping through the doors on day one to leaving on his final day.

"He was quite shy on the first couple of days, but by Thursday, he really came into his own. During lunch, he was chatting with more people in the office and even asked for a longer meeting to speak with our CEO. It was lovely to see his confidence grow over the week."

Work Experience introduces young people to new career paths while helping them develop the confidence and skills they need to succeed.

For businesses, it's an opportunity to invest in the future workforce, foster diversity, and create meaningful development experiences for staff. By opening their doors to students, employers like DeHavilland are shaping a more inclusive and dynamic sector.

Find out more about The Switch's Work Experience programme:
theswitch.org/employers/host-a-work-experience-student

theswitch.org

Registered charity no: 1040962

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