

IMPACT REPORT

Level Two Unlocked: Shaping Tomorrow's Talent Today

YEAR 2



GAMECHANGERS

Liverpool City Region



METROMAYOR
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Liverpool City
Region
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY



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POWERING PROGRESS: Skills, Networks & Collective Action

GameChangers is a collaboration between the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Careers Hub, All About Futures, games studios, industry partners and skills and education partners – united in a shared mission to supercharge the Liverpool City Region games industry.

Our Pledge

GameChangers is all about bringing people together to forge effective strategic partnerships to help address the skills challenges faced by the games industry. When combined, the creative force of game development studios, the expertise from educational and career providers, and the invaluable insights of community organisations will ensure a brighter future for the Liverpool City Region games industry.

TOGETHER, WE ARE GAMECHANGERS



Members of GameChangers pledge to support the growth and development of gaming talent by working together to make our Liverpool City Region the best home for game development careers in the world_

INTRODUCTION

Two years ago, studios from across the Liverpool City Region sat around the same table with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Careers Hub and All About Futures to talk about the challenges facing the games industry - and the opportunities we could unlock by working together.

Since then, GameChangers has become a powerful, collaborative movement dedicated to developing the next generation of games talent while supporting the brilliant people already working in the sector.

In Year 2, we've launched a leadership course for GameChangers in collaboration with the City of Liverpool College, supported young people not in education, employment or training through courses with the Kings Trust and continued to inspire and support students from secondary education through to degree level.



Over the past 12 months, our GameChangers have connected with more than 6,000 students, sharing their expertise and insights into the games industry.

Through collaboration and engagement, we're driving real impact - unlocking potential, creating opportunities, and inspiring the next generation of talent across the region.

Gill Walsh,
Strategic Hub Lead,
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Careers Hub

GameChangers strength lies in the diverse network of studios, educators, skills organisations and community partners who have chosen to unite behind a shared mission: to support the growth and development of gaming talent by working together to make our Liverpool City Region the best home for game development careers in the world.



WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

Over the past year, GameChangers has gone from strength to strength as we've welcomed more members to the initiative whilst delivering new solutions to meet regional ambitions.



Experience of the Workplace

100%

of students were able to name 3 jobs in games

a 41% rise on pre-event

STUDENTS
6383
BENEFITTED

from GameChangers organised experiences and events_

“An amazing day, I never knew these jobs existed before”

Student feedback

59 HOURS
PROFESSIONAL
RESUME & PORTFOLIO
REVIEWS_



1551

HOURS OF IMMERSIVE
WORK EXPERIENCE

50%
INCREASE

in number of studios
offering work experience



93%

of Experience of the
Workplace learners said that
they used at least one Skills
Builder essential skill

**I will be able to talk more about
innovation and creativity within
industry and the types of careers
that I observed on the day.**

3

Community
workshops
with FACT

Kings Trust
courses
supported

Experience of the Workplace

99%

of students were
able to name 3
Skills in games

a 33% rise on pre-event

45

emerging
leaders
supported

Teacher feedback

EMPLOYER STANDARDS:

EVIDENCING QUALITY, CONSISTENCY AND GROWTH

The Careers & Enterprise Company's Employer Standards provide a national framework that helps employers deliver meaningful, inclusive, and high-quality engagement with young people. By adopting this framework, GameChangers studios are not only delivering more activity - they are delivering better activity, aligned to recognised benchmarks that improve outcomes for both young people and employers.

This year, eleven GameChangers studios submitted Employer Standards data, giving us the most comprehensive picture yet of how the network is growing in capability, confidence and strategic maturity. The results provide strong evidence that GameChangers is strengthening the Liverpool City Region's talent pipeline through high-quality, collaborative and impactful engagement.

Why Employer Standards Matter

Employer Standards define what excellent outreach looks like. By using them collectively, studios can:

- Codify best practice and create a shared quality baseline
- Plan and track activity more strategically
- Improve consistency across different studio environments
- Benchmark themselves nationally against their sector
- Identify areas for support, training and development
- Celebrate excellence and recognise strong leadership behaviours

For GameChangers, the introduction of the Employer Standards has helped evidence the studio's growth from enthusiastic volunteers to a connected, reflective and data-driven network capable of shaping the region's future workforce.

How GameChangers Performed

This year's Employer Standards data shows that GameChangers are exceeding the national SME average in 7 out of 9 Standards, placing the region on the leading edge of employer engagement in the digital and games sector. With one or more GameChangers studios ranked in the top 10% nationally for 6 of the 9 Standards—a significant achievement demonstrating the strength and ambition of the studios involved.

Exceeding the national average in:

S1 - Provide meaningful experiences

S2 - Be inclusive

S5 - Prepare young people for application processes

S6 - Raise awareness of pathways into work

S7 - Engage over the long-term

S8 - Partner with others

S9 - Value the engagement

Meeting the national average in:

S4 - Build essential skills and explain their relevance

Year 3 priority:

S3 - Evaluate and improve

A clear development pathway has emerged

With S3 identified as the primary growth area, Year 3 can focus on strengthening evaluation, feedback loops, resource sharing and reflective practice-work that will amplify impact across every other Standard.

What the data tells us

1. A more mature, confident network

Studios are no longer viewing engagement as an ad hoc activity. They are working more strategically, delivering experiences that have clarity, purpose and measurable outcomes.

2. Shared standards are creating shared strength

The Employer Standards provide a unifying framework. Despite differences in size, focus and capacity, studios are increasingly delivering consistent, high-quality engagement.

3. Trust and honest reflection are embedded

Some studios reported low or zero scores in specific Standards. This shows psychological safety in the network and a willingness to share challenges openly - something essential for long-term improvement.

4. Excellence is emerging naturally

Top-decile performance across multiple Standards shows that the region now has exemplar studios whose practice can be modelled, shared and scaled across the network.

5. Long-term behaviour change is taking root

High performance in S7-S9 confirms that studios are embedding engagement into their culture, not treating it as optional or peripheral.

A stronger foundation for Year 3

The Employer Standards have given GameChangers more than data - they have provided clarity, focus and shared ambition.

They confirm that:

- Engagement is improving in quality, inclusivity and impact
- Studios are increasingly aligned around common expectations
- The network is maturing into a national example of collaborative employer engagement
- GameChangers is not just doing more - it is doing better
- Most importantly, they show that the Liverpool City Region is building a games talent pipeline rooted in quality, consistency and a long-term commitment to young people.

In Year 3, GameChangers will deepen this approach, focusing on evaluation, continuous improvement and the consistent use of data to shape strategic decisions.

Together, we will continue to lead the way in innovative, meaningful and sustainable employer engagement.



STRATEGIC GROUPS

Our four strategic steering groups are the engine of GameChangers_



Image courtesy of the Liverpool Game Dev Network

game engine noun *geɪm ˈɛn.dʒɪn/* - **Definition:** A framework that runs beneath different video games, providing the core systems that power how they look, move, and respond. Developers build their games on top of a game engine to create unique worlds and interactive experiences.



Our strategic groups exist to drive meaningful, city-region wide impact on the games talent pipeline. Together, they collaborate across focus areas to deliver real progress, share best practice and create positive change for learners, industry professionals and the wider community.

DISCOVERY & LEARNING

Aim: To inspire and empower young people aged 5-18 across the city region to explore the games industry; working together to develop resources and ensure effective delivery and high impact engagement, providing them with the knowledge they need to consider games as their best next step.

We know that engaging with students, schools and colleges isn't just the right thing to do – it's a powerful way to strengthen your business and attract future talent. Estimates say 93% of young people aged 3-15 play video games but they may not be aware of the vast array of jobs available in the industry and on their doorstep in the Liverpool City Region. We've got a generation who are ready to be inspired and encouraged to pursue games as a viable career path and working together we can help to futureproof the games industry in our region.

Since Year 1, GameChangers have continued to work with and inspire young people by connecting with schools, colleges and the Careers Hub to deliver a number of different experiences – from mock interviews to whole-school assemblies and hands on workshops.

We've worked to upskill GameChangers to ensure that what they deliver is as impactful as possible and are ensuring that studios engaging with schools and colleges are fully supported by the Liverpool City Region Employer Network.

We've collated data from the Careers and Enterprise Company Employer Standards from 11 of our studios, which will help us to identify areas for further support and improvement moving forward.

In 2025, we've delivered another two experiences of the workplace supported by GameChangers Pledge Members for over 200 students and their educators – working to align this modern work experience opportunity to the new equalex framework.

For Year 3, we look forward to continuing to work together to inspire the next generation of video game creators by supporting our GameChangers to deliver even more high-quality, high impact engagement our region.

Together, we are opening doors to new ideas, skills and experiences - inspiring the next generation and strengthening the creative pipeline for the Liverpool City Region's games industry.

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When we inspire young people in the Liverpool City Region to see games as a serious career, it's not just about the industry; it's about the future. Games are where imagination meets innovation, shaping not only how we play, but how we live, learn, and connect with technology.

Michelle Dow,
Managing Director, **A11 About Futures**





EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Aim: To strengthen connections between Further and Higher Education and the games industry; empowering college and university students across the Liverpool City Region to gain the knowledge, skills and insights they need to explore games as a viable future career path.

By working collaboratively, we're supporting educators, shaping curriculum-aligned activity, and creating meaningful opportunities for students to engage with industry professionals.

Since the start of the year, we've worked closely with studios including Lucid Games, d3t, Wushu and Skyhook, alongside education partners such as the University of Liverpool, LJMU, COLC and LMA. Together, we've delivered activity ranging from industry-shaped live briefs to portfolio feedback sessions, podcasts, and ongoing support via Discord channels.

A key milestone was the launch of our pilot **GameChangers Online Event**, where students from three institutions heard directly from professionals across multiple studios. Around **20 students** took part in talks covering topics from portfolio development to AI in games, with strong engagement and positive feedback. Students stepped out of their comfort zones, asked thoughtful questions, and gained insights that will support their final-year projects and future progression. The Discord setup provided a secure and effective space for talks, networking and peer learning.

Looking ahead to 2026, we're excited to scale this online model, offering broader access to studios and deeper links to curriculum needs identified by lecturers. Collaboration remains at the heart of our work.

Together, we are strengthening the journey of learners on games courses – building their skills, boosting their industry readiness, and supporting their progression into the Liverpool City Region's games sector.

APPRENTICESHIP, TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

Aim: To raise awareness of vocational and non-graduate routes into the games industry by bringing together leading employers, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, and skills and training providers.

Our goal is to promote, support and amplify high-quality vocational programmes that offer real progression pathways for learners across the region.

We know that accessible vocational pathways are essential to building a diverse and future-ready talent pipeline. Many learners are eager to enter the industry but aren't always aware of the range of technical and apprenticeship opportunities available locally. By working collaboratively across studios, training providers and education partners, the group is helping to change that.

Over the past year, we have strengthened partnerships and expanded awareness of vocational routes through a series of high-impact activities. At the Liverpool Games Summit, GameChangers members delivered a panel - From Classroom to Career - to an audience of over 130 students, educators and developers, alongside speakers from NextGen, COLC, The Game Assembly, Universally Speaking, Sony and The King's Trust.

We also supported Lucid's workshops at FACT, which offered hands-on training for the community in ideation, character design, level design and Unreal 5. These well-attended sessions will continue into next year, expanding into Blender to meet growing industry demand.

One of the year's standout achievements was the King's Trust & Sony PlayStation Liverpool "Get Ready" Programme, a 3-week pilot course introducing participants to QA compliance training. The programme combined employability sessions, intensive in-house QA training, and a Meet the Employer event featuring Universally Speaking, Avalanche and Lucid. This activity has already led to successful outcomes, including a contract at Universally Speaking and an apprenticeship at Sony PlayStation.

Looking ahead to Year 3, our focus is to define, align and consolidate. The group has identified key challenges - including the need for clearer data on future skills and consistent job role definitions - and is committed to advocating for a regional dataset that will help shape targeted training provision and unlock access to funding opportunities such as skills bootcamps and apprenticeships.

We will continue to champion and expand high-quality vocational programmes, building on successful partnerships with the King's Trust, Sony PlayStation and local studios.

Together, we remain committed to creating strong, visible and accessible vocational pathways into the games industry across our region.



Talent is everywhere in
our region. Access is not.

That's why networks matter.

Marcia Deakin
Co-Founder, NextGen Skills Academy





Together, we are building a stronger, better-connected and more confident workforce_

SKILLS & PATHWAYS

Aim: To build an ecosystem of employers of all sizes that can work collectively to nurture and develop our people enabling them to set the bar for thriving and inclusive working environments, high quality technical and creative output, and successful businesses.

We know that developing people is vital to strengthening the region's games industry. By collaborating across studios, training providers and partners, we are ensuring that leads, managers and aspiring leaders can access high-quality professional development that supports both personal growth and studio success.

Over the past year, we have seen strong progress across leadership, management and skills development. Liverpool City College, in collaboration with GameChangers, has developed a new pilot leadership programme which will support 17 emerging leads across the region to achieve The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 3 Diploma in Principles of Management & Leadership.

28 leads have also received upskilling support through Skills Bootcamps and Mastered, co-funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. In Year 2, the Skills and Careers strategic group has supported 45 individuals through our upskilling initiatives.

We have also continued to strengthen peer learning and cross-studio collaboration. HR and People Leads from studios across

the region are now meeting regularly to share best practice—thanks to Hollie Lapworth, Head of Talent at Lucid Games, for convening and facilitating this community. Work has also begun to support skill-sharing across disciplines, starting with our first panel, Discovering the Path to QA Leadership, hosted by Barry Draper (PlayStation) and Joe Correll (Universally Speaking).

Looking ahead to Year Three, we will build on these foundations. The first cohort of the leadership programme will complete their training, and a second group will begin their development journey. We will continue to track upskilling activity across the region, aiming to see even more leads accessing coaching, mentoring and structured training.

Next year, we also aim to more deeply connect game developers across the region - creating opportunities for them to share skills, experiences and stories to learn and grow together. Through panels, roundtables, workshops, show-and-tells and other formats, we aim to engage at least 300 people. Communities within HR and QA are already underway, with volunteers stepping forward to explore similar approaches in production and design.

Together, we are building a stronger, better-connected and more confident workforce - one that can continue to raise the bar for the Liverpool City Region's games industry.

PLAY IT FORWARD: GAMECHANGERS IN ACTION

Over the past two year, GameChangers has turned strategy into impact, bringing ideas to life through hands-on activities, collaborations, and real experiences for students and studios alike. From classrooms to careers fairs, work experience to workshops, these stories show how our collective effort is inspiring young people, supporting educators, and strengthening the talent pipeline across the Liverpool City Region.



SKYHOOK & SPRINGPOD

Skyhook Games partnered with the Careers and Enterprise Company and Springpod to develop a virtual work experience in digital and creative media. With two free courses for students exploring quality assurance and marketing in the industry, this free opportunity has the potential to influence hundreds of young people towards a career in games.



SCENEGRAPH STUDIOS

Scenegraph Studios have provided access to its PxL Persona Platform for 26 local schools – reaching hundreds of students across the Liverpool City Region. Access to the platform gives students experience in software testing as well as provides them with the chance to practice interview skills with an AI-powered avatar.





Women in Games at LMA YouFest

GameChangers studios including Skyhook, Lucid, Wushu, along with All About Futures, supported LMA's YouFest Women in Games Panel in January to showcase the brilliant women in the games industry. Sharing their experiences and tips for being a woman in a male dominated sector, the session inspired students from LMA.



LUCID & FACT

Lucid Games supported FACT's new Studio Lab by delivering Unreal Engine and ideation workshops for local artists and community members, helping them build digital skills widely used in the games industry.

Lucid also supported FACT's Art Plays Games residency, providing technical guidance to participating artists.



Wushu and the National UTC Showcase

Wushu helped to judge the game design showcase at the UTC Creative and Digital Media Showcase, enjoyed playable demos and ran an employability workshop for students on the day of the finals, supporting students from the Liverpool City Region and beyond.

A GameChangers Success Story

Thomas Murphy

My GameChangers journey has been incredible. It all started with the Experience of the Workplace event, an inspiring opportunity to learn directly from industry professionals. Their presentations and hands-on sessions squeezed a lot into the day and helped me understand how creative and technical roles come together in game development.

“It showed me that I was capable of creating something that stood out.”

The event opened with a games-industry competition where I won a tour of Ripstone Games; a fantastic experience. Later, we took part in a month-long game design challenge. I created Continent in Arms (later Tabletop Battlegrounds), a multiplayer, turn-based strategy game inspired by the 1920s.

It was my first attempt at a multiplayer project in Unreal Engine 5, and being named one of the validated all my effort.

A few months later, I joined the King's Trust Get Ready for a Career in Gaming course, which built on the confidence and skills I'd gained. We learned about QA, marketing, and HR, visited Sony's Liverpool office, and developed our own game concepts.



I was thrilled to later receive an offer from Games Assembly UK; a real reward for everything I'd learned.

Looking back, every stage felt connected - each opportunity leading naturally to the next. That joined-up support is what makes GameChangers so powerful: partners working together to give young people real experiences, clear pathways, and the confidence to keep moving forward.

Since then, I've shared my story through the LCR Careers Hub Let's Make it Work, SME campaign, encouraging businesses to open their doors to young people.

Reflecting on how far I've come, I'm grateful for the support and inspiration these experiences have given me, and excited to see where the next level of my journey leads.

Real Stories, Real Impact

GameChangers leading the Way

Let's Make It Work! A national campaign from The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) showcasing how businesses of all sizes, from small SMEs to large employers, across all sectors, can offer meaningful, modern work experiences that inspire young people, develop essential skills, and leave a lasting legacy.

Liverpool City Region was chosen to feature in the Let's Make It Work! campaign because of the innovative work happening here and the development of the GameChangers network. Through creative, flexible, and collaborative approaches, GameChangers are opening doors to workplace experiences for young people across the region.

Spotlight on Lucid Games

Lucid Games, along with colleagues in the GameChangers network, has reached hundreds of students despite challenges such as studio security and non-disclosure agreements. With support from Liverpool City Region's Combined Authority Careers Hub and Employer Network, Lucid has delivered interactive workshops, skills sessions, talks and more, introducing students to careers in gaming and beyond. Lucid's work is featured in the national Let's Make It Work! campaign materials, including videos, highlighting the real-world impact of GameChangers and demonstrating how

flexible creative approaches can inspire the next generation. At the heart of Let's Make It Work! are authentic stories from students and employers, capturing the tangible impact of workplace experiences. The campaign's videos bring to life the difference how even a single business, acting collaboratively, can make.

Flexible, Modern Work experiences

The GameChangers approach is transformative, reshaping how students engage with employers and the world of work. Moving beyond traditional week-long placements, it embraces creativity and flexibility, offering tailored opportunities that suit both businesses and young people. This model allows employers to showcase real work, develop practical skills, and spark curiosity, all while overcoming barriers such as operational or security constraints.

Mutual Benefit & Lasting Legacy

The benefits are clear for both students and businesses. Young people gain skills, confidence and insight into careers they might not have considered. Businesses strengthen local talent pipelines, expand networks, and make a tangible contribution to their communities. GameChangers show that, with creativity, collaboration, and flexible approaches, barriers can be overcome, and lasting impact achieved

The benefits are clear

for both students

and businesses_

Let's Make it Work

Modern Work Experience

To see this impact brought to life, we invite you to watch the short film created for the national Let's Make It Work! campaign. It spotlights Lucid's contribution to GameChangers and shows how flexible, creative employer engagement can unlock confidence, curiosity, and real aspiration in young people.

Contact:

careershubs@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk

*It's a powerful reminder
that when industry
opens its doors, the next
generation walks through.*

www.youtube.com/@LiverpoolCityRegionCareersHub



TOGETHER INTO 2026

As we look ahead to 2026, we hope to continue strengthening every stage of the talent pipeline across the Liverpool City Region.

We hope to broaden our reach in schools to inspire more young people, deepen our collaboration with colleges and universities so learners gain clearer and more confident routes into the industry, and further highlight and reinforce vocational and apprenticeship pathways for those seeking practical entry points.

Within studios, we hope to expand our skills-sharing communities and leadership development opportunities to support a connected, confident and future-ready workforce.

We plan to strengthen connections with partners beyond the region too, learning from and collaborating with other clusters to strengthen our collective impact.

Together, these priorities will help us build a diverse, resilient and inclusive games industry.



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