

Youth Select Committee

Oral evidence: Work Experience

Friday 6 July 2018

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Members present: Claudia Quinn (Chair), Mun Wu (Vice Chair), Caitlin O'Regan, Daria Eckert, Dominic Jones, George Pearce, Jack Payne, Jason Stewart, Max Parry, Sanah Kashyap, Zara Janahi.

Questions 134-211

Witnesses

I: Professor Sir John Holman, Emeritus Professor of Science Education, University of York and adviser to the Gatsby Foundation on career values, **Dr Julie Moote**, Research Associate, Kings College London, and **Katy Hampshire**, Director of Operations and Programmes, Education and Employers.

II: Clare Walsh, Partnership Engagement, Foxes Academy, **Sarah Yong**, Head of Government, Careers and Enterprise Company, **Anna Howard**, Programme Manager, Inspire Education Business Partnership, and **Eileen Gallagher**, Apprenticeship Development Officer, Westminster City Council.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Dr Julie Moote](#)
- [Education and Employers](#)
- [Careers and Enterprise Company](#)
- [Education Business Partnership](#)
- [Westminster City Council](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Professor Sir John Holman, Dr Julie Moote and Katy Hampshire.

Chair: Good afternoon and welcome to the oral evidence session for the Youth Select Committee.

Again, I thank you for giving your time to help us in our investigation and if the Committee Members would like to introduce themselves, that would be good. Please just say your name and where you are from. I'm Claudia, I'm the Chair and I'm from Liverpool.

Jack Payne: Hi, I'm Jack and I'm from Bristol.

Daria Eckert: Hi, I'm Daria and I'm from Leicestershire.

Jason Stewart: Hi, I'm Jason. I'm from Scotland.

Zara Janahi: I'm Zara, from Northern Ireland.

Dominic Jones: Hi, I'm Dominic and I'm from Barnsley.

Mun Wu: I'm Mun. I'm the Vice-Chair and I'm from Liverpool.

George Pearce: I'm George and I'm from Poole.

Caitlin O'Regan: I'm Caitlin and I'm from Bristol as well.

Max Parry: I'm Max. I'm from Wales.

Sanah Kashyap: I'm Sanah and I'm from Greater Manchester.

Q134 **Chair:** If you hear a bell and it's a quiet one, it's not the fire alarm; it's just the Division bell.

Could the panellists please introduce themselves? We will start with Julie.

Dr Moote: Julie Moote here from the ASPIRES project at UCL. We recently moved from King's College London. It is basically a 10-year project with a particular focus on students' aspirations and their interest in science, but we have some exciting work experience and careers advice information to share as well.

Professor Holman: I am John. I am a chemist by background. I taught chemistry for a long time. I am also an adviser to the Gatsby Foundation on career values.

Katy Hampshire: Hi, I'm Katy. I work for Education and Employers. I am a director of operations and programmes there. Education and Employers do a lot of research into employer encounters in education. They are all at a conference at the moment, so I am representing them.

Q135 **Chair:** Thank you. We will start with the first question, which is for



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anyone. How important is work experience in helping young people to move smoothly into work?

Dr Moote: At the ASPIRES project, we would say it is extremely important. One thing that we asked year 13 students in this survey round was, "What is the biggest challenge facing young people today?" In interviews, the main thing that came out was wellbeing issues, and a lot of that was about stress related to navigating work transitions, getting work experience and setting it up. That was coming from parents as well. It seemed that they really value it as helping them to transition. Arguably, with all the changes that we are seeing today, it has never been so daunting and complex, so having that support for those students is essential.

Katy Hampshire: Based on our research, yes, it is definitely really important. We would clarify what work experience means in terms of whether it is just the traditional two-week placement, which is what I did in year 10, and what that is now. There are lots of different ways that you can get experience of the world of work that are not just that traditional two-week placement. In its broader sense, experience of the world of work is really important. The research that we have done, which is a longitudinal study of people up until when they go into work, has shown that people who have experience of the world of work are 40% less likely to end up NEET—not in education, employment or training. There are wage premiums attached the more encounters you can have with the workplace. You might see that quoted through the Careers and Enterprise Company's strategy and through the careers strategy. That definitely demonstrates that the more encounters you can have with the world of work, whether that is through that two-week placement or careers fairs, career insight talks or job shadowing, the less likely you are to end up not in education, employment or training, so if you get that transition, the more likely you are to have wage premiums.

There are three little things, and then I will let John come in. In terms of the why, you have those educational outcomes. Sometimes they say that having that experience of the world of work helps you to contextualise your own learning and see where that might lead, which leads to some motivational factors in terms of attainment and what you are doing at school. There are employability skills, and I am sure you will all be aware of the fact that if you are going and having that experience of the world of work, you will build up employability skills such as team working, initiative and those things that can develop. It can also be good in terms of career pathways and ruling out what you might not want to do as well as what you might want to do by having those experiences of the world of work.

Professor Holman: It is enormously important, and this is not just a UK thing. The European skills and jobs survey a year or two ago found that of those experienced in the workplace, 9% were unemployed. Of those who had no experience of the workplace, 16% were. That is a very large sample across a very large number of countries. It is quite clear that it is a good thing, if your target is to enter the world of work, which it is for most people.



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I would like to reflect for a moment on what we mean by it. The international study that I did for the Gatsby Foundation identified eight benchmarks for good career guidance. We had two for the subject we are discussing today. One of them we called “Encounters with employers” and the other we called “Experiences of workplaces”. The reason we did that is that we think that you need both breadth and depth. If you go to a country like Germany or the Netherlands, they will give young people a large number of often quite short encounters—it might be something in assembly, or someone coming along to a tutor period—with a large number of different work environments. This builds up a picture, a 360° view, of what the workplace is like. But we believe that you should also give young people a chance to look in depth at one or two workplaces, a small number, so that they can get a more in-depth, over-time experience of what it is like to actually be in the world of work. So when I talk about work experience, I try to make myself talk about encounters with employers as the breadth and experiences of workplaces as the depth.

Q136 Chair: In the light of that, which do you think should be prioritised from a governmental point of view?

Professor Holman: Neither. Both are very important. I really wouldn't try to prioritise one. The work that we did with eight benchmarks shows that you need to do all of them and you can't really pick off any one of them, so I don't think I can answer that question—sorry. I wouldn't prioritise either above the other.

Katy Hampshire: I would probably agree with that. I don't think this needs to be an either/or situation. Encounters with the world of work need to start from much younger than when you are going, potentially, into a workplace experience over more than one or two days. We have been showing that, actually, you need to start thinking about meeting people from the world of work from primary level, just so that you can get an idea of what is out there. Then you can have different experiences through your secondary education, including experiences of the world of work that might get more in-depth the older you get and the further you get along that path.

Professor Holman: I would absolutely agree with that. By the time you are in some sort of work-related study, you have chosen, in a sense, which sector of employment you want to go into, and the in-depth experience of that sector then becomes more important.

Q137 Mun Wu: Which of the work experience-related recommendations made in the Wolf review of vocational education do you think have been the most helpful and why?

Dr Moote: One of the more general recommendations was about quality assurance, so it's putting the onus on Government to really make sure that the work experiences are of good quality and also on the employers to be involved in that quality assurance exercise. We think that is particularly helpful.



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Another one is about terminology. The Wolf review had quite specific terms referring to substantial periods of time, genuine work experiences, and skills that are relevant to the labour market, whereas I think the new careers strategy—it does mention encounters, as John was saying. But there may be some argument about just being a bit more specific about what we mean.

Q138 **Mun Wu:** At the opposite end of the spectrum, which recommendations do you think have been least helpful or effective?

Professor Holman: The one that attracted the headlines was when Alison Wolf said that she thought that the norm, which at that time was a two-week placement in year 10, should be relaxed, if you like to put it that way. Her argument was that if you did your work experience closer to the point at which you were going to actually enter the world of work, that would have advantages. I have mixed feelings about that. I can absolutely see the benefits of an in-depth experience of a particular workplace that you have chosen to go into, and that happening, as Katy said, nearer to the time when you are going to be doing the work. However, in some cases, schools have actually used it—not because they are wicked but because they have many other priorities—to dispense with work experience altogether.

Q139 **Mun Wu:** In the light of that, should compulsory work experience for under-16s be reinstated?

Professor Holman: The Gatsby benchmarks say that there should be a week of work experience before the age of 16 and a week afterwards. That is based on some good evidence from overseas.

Dr Moote: I'll mention one thing from our research that we might be able to draw on. It's possible that removing the statutory duty has been contributing to some of the patterns that we are seeing, particularly patterns of the work experience being on a self-referral basis—students having the confidence to go to teachers or professionals to try to get the support and arrange these placements. Also, students discussing this with their parents are using their parents' social capital to get possibly higher-quality placements more linked to what they want to do.

It is a really personal situation, though. It does depend on certain things. For example, if a student is already working in a part-time job that is relevant to the career that they want to do, and they are getting some valuable experience from that, it might not be they need to have a formal route through school. Other students have communicated to us that at year 10 it is helpful to have that, to get more information about their aspirations and interests; whereas other students at year 10 might not know what they want to do yet. They might not be informed enough to pick a work experience that they want to do in depth that will help inform those decisions. So it is a really difficult landscape to navigate.

Q140 **Zara Janahi:** Is poor-quality work experience better than no work experience at all?



Katy Hampshire: When I spoke to my research team about this they were quite clear about it, and I said, “Well”—on that “Well,” sometimes work experience or going into the workplace and having that experience of being there can be a bit of a wake-up call about what you do not want to do and the potential importance of education in getting you where you want to go, and thinking about those things. That said, that is not poor-quality work experience. Obviously, the evidence has shown that having good structure, having feedback on it and being prepared for it is much more helpful—you do not want to turn off. Part of one of the reviews we have got says, “What about the opportunity costs? If they have a really poor-quality time, might that disengage them further from education?” That, obviously, is not what we want to do through this. That is shown to happen only in a very small proportion of placements. It does not seem to be a big issue, but we would always go for quality over nothing. Having said that, it is about the whole package—so not just those two weeks, or whatever. We need volume of encounters with the world of work, alongside quality encounters with the world of work.

Q141 **Chair:** Can I just jump in there and ask what recommendations you have to ensure quality?

Katy Hampshire: I had a whole list on that, actually.

Professor Holman: Can I jump in while Katy is finding it? I think it depends what you mean by poor quality. If it was poor quality as in being bullied in the workplace, I think that is worse than not having any. If it is poor quality in that the person’s skills and aptitudes are not well matched to the placement and the things they are being asked to do, I am a bit more equivocal about that, because they might actually, as Katy has said, learn something about what they want to be.

Dr Moote: Yes, I think drawing from our data, as well, we have had instances of students who for example wanted to go into medicine but ended up in their father’s accountancy firm and ended up drawing positives from that, because it helped them develop social skills, and helped them with fine detail, attention to detail skills, that they could then transfer into their medicine interests as well. So it really depends on the student.

Katy Hampshire: I am going to concentrate for a moment on going into your workplace for more than one to two days, rather than the other stuff. Some of the things that were brought out on this are that it is tailored to the young person’s needs and circumstances. Part of that—and it comes in one of your questions later—may be that you have to think about either an employer or somebody else helping out with travel expenses determining where they can go. Another thing is that it should be supported, supervised and mentored. There is something here around the structure and around what preparation a student has before they go into it—that they know that there is some structure to it and then there are feedback links for them to get along the way.



Some other things are: that expectations are managed—that is the big one, as I am sure many of us have gone in and gone, “Oh, I am photocopying, which is not really what I want,” but we need to manage expectations, as sometimes that is part of a job; that you treat the young person as an active member of staff, so they are expected to come in at the same time as the rest of the staff, and are treated in the same way, not as somebody different or to one side; that you celebrate their success, which is part of that feedback loop, so they know when they are doing a good job, and you celebrate the fact that they are doing a good job when they are, and, if not, you provide constructive feedback if they need that; and if possible, that it relates to where they want to go, or the experiences they want to build. But, as we have said, you can have good experience in ones that are not exactly where you want to go eventually.

Both sides need to come into this with a proactive and positive attitude about what it will give to both the employer and to the young person who is developing work experience. Those are a few things.

Q142 Mun Wu: Can I interject and ask you about poor quality work experience and how that could possibly cause someone to disengage for the wrong reasons? Would you say that that was still better than having no experience?

Katy Hampshire: I think I would refer to what Julie talked about. Do you want to expand?

Dr Moote: It’s really tricky. We are not saying that we support poor quality work experience. The ideal is to have good quality, but the majority of students in our sample, at least, are able to get a lot from any experience. In our research we adopt a definition for work-related learning that says you are learning about types of work and you are learning through work. It links to the Wolf review. I think there is something in there as well about how any working or employment opportunity can be a good one.

I would also like to add to Katy’s point about good quality from the student’s perspective. When we ask students what good quality means, it is easier to say what good quality is not. One of the things that seems to come through is that it is not just instant, one-off experiences; it is sustained. It is being supported by a teacher or a professional to help you link that up and match your aspirations. It is not just a tick-box exercise. Students said they got certificates at the end that said, “Well done, you did this”, but they want it to be more meaningful for their aspirations.

Also, they want to be valued by the teaching staff. Students in our year 13 interviews said, “We need to do these work experiences. We are left to organise them and it is often just in the holidays.” If you are telling students that that is the only time and there is no time allocated at school, it might possibly be sending some messages that are not helpful.

Q143 Zara Janahi: I have a question for Julie. Do we have a good enough understanding of what good quality work experience looks like, and what are the main gaps in the evidence that should be addressed?



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Professor Holman: Could you repeat the second part of the question?

Zara Janahi: What are the main gaps in the evidence that should be addressed?

Dr Moote: To start with the second part of the question, I guess a lot of the policy documents are from teaching staff or from Government officials and there is not a lot of the student voice, so we could argue that a potential gap is linking up what good quality looks like to employers, to teachers, to career professionals and to students, and how we match up what students want and what all these other parties want as well.

In terms of what good quality actually looks like, students have flagged issues about awareness to us, of being aware of what opportunities they could have. We had an example of a student who was really interested in psychology from the age of 10, but was referred out of work experience because they did not think there were any opportunities for a 15-year-old to go and work with a psychologist. It is about sitting down with an individual who knows the student and can support them to find potential opportunities.

Q144 **Chair:** You mentioned the need to link up the evidence stream with some young people. Do you think an online hub could be a good way of doing that?

Dr Moote: To link up—

Chair: Yes, to link them up and then manage expectations, for example.

Dr Moote: That wouldn't be my first thought in order to achieve that aim. It is a lot about communication and it might be particularly difficult to communicate some of these issues online. We are finding even in face-to-face interviews with students that it is really tricky to get to the bottom of it. One way we could start is to maybe have policy documents that include a student voice. Instead of a lot of the big Ofsted studies or the Sutton Trust, it will be from school management and not interviews or surveys with students.

One of the online factors that students did mention was a website to have contacts for work experience, so to draw from different parents' contacts to allow a wider access to those particular experiences.

Q145 **Chair:** What does the rest of the panel think about that?

Katy Hampshire: Could you expand a little bit on what you would see that looking like?

Chair: Our last panel was quite enthusiastic about an online hub where you can have increased co-operation between schools and businesses, and that could lead to an increased meritocracy and managing expectations of what work experience could look like, for example. It could have loads of different factors.

Professor Holman: I think for a long time to come there will be no real substitute for in-person, in the place, face-to-face work experience. The world will become increasingly online—it is already becoming increasingly online—but it will never be a completely online world, as we well know.



People are social and they interact with each other. One of the main reasons people go to work is because they like the social interaction. If you talk to people about why they like to go to work, it is that. We will always need the in-person, in-presence element to it. There is a place for preparation pre-work experience. I would draw an analogy with another field I am interested in, which is practical work in science teaching. There is a very strong role for trying out an experiment online and then doing it for real. Getting some sort of preparation or primer for the workplace and then going into the real workplace has a lot of potential about it, and we should look at it further.

In the end, it is learning how you relate to the other human beings who are in your workplace. If you look at what makes people skilful and successful in their jobs, it is often those person-to-person skills.

Katy Hampshire: We run Inspiring the Future and Primary Futures, which connect teachers to employers—not students, but teachers—in order for them to find volunteers from the world of work to come in and do career talks or careers fairs, or to offer workplace visits and stuff. There is already existing stuff online. Are you talking about whether we would like a hub where the students can come in?

Q146 **Chair:** One of the main things mentioned was that it would create easier access. You've mentioned in your research about family and friend placements and that kind of thing.

Katy Hampshire: Yes, absolutely. You want to try to cut through that. If students can have access to that and find their own, that is great. The only thing you might watch—this was also in the research—is that if a student comes at this from their point of view and what they are used to and know, and their social background and so on, they still might self-select into things that might not push them in terms of careers. There is perhaps a need for support around that, whether online or not, and for that career guidance and help, to help them to push and to say, "Actually, no, you could look at a work experience placement with this company over here. You can do that," because they might self-select to not do that otherwise.

Dr Moote: Our research would support that as well. Students who I think had some online questionnaires for choosing work experience were sometimes choosing it by convenience and not having that face-to-face conversation with someone sitting there saying, "Have you thought about this and what it could build for you?"

Q147 **Caitlin O'Regan:** To change the topic a little bit now, I'd like to ask Julie and Katy—probably Julie first, please—to what extent work experience currently helps to improve social mobility.

Dr Moote: From our work, despite the hopes and promises of the potential for careers and work experience to help with social mobility issues, the evidence drawn from our research is possibly suggesting that it is under-realised and failing to reach the students most in need. Often discussed in the literature is the darker side of career education: the fact



that it can reproduce social inequalities and help students just to accept the way the world of work is, instead of challenging it and being drivers of change. That goes back to my point about the self-referral nature of it and the way it is being set up. That is not to say that there is not a great potential that will hopefully be realised soon.

Katy Hampshire: The potential is definitely there. We have research and studies that show people from a less advantaged background who have more encounters with the world of work can go on and go further and all the rest, and the impact that that can have on them. The potential is absolutely there; it is about the way people then have equity of access to that. We were looking at one study of schools in the west midlands, who managed to break that pattern of social reproduction and people self-selecting. When you have a directive approach and somebody can come in and support them and say, "Yes, you can go for a placement here or here, I can get placements in these different areas, and there are plenty of tools and various online things to help that," then it can help to break that pattern, and that can really help. But it is the way in which it is set up and the need for equity of access that would come into it.

Professor Holman: The best place in the world—not that I have visited everywhere in the world, but the best place I have visited—for work experience was Finland. Typically, a school would give a bit of work shadowing very early on, maybe year 7, and then they would give a week of work experience at the age of about 15, and then at the age of—let's say—17, another week. A lot of those work experience placements were selected by the students or their families themselves. Finland is a famously equal kind of society, so although we acknowledge the difficulties of selecting your own work placement, it does not inevitably lead to inequality. But if you say to students, and I think we should, "Yes, you can choose your own work placement," that places an absolute responsibility on the school to be the safety net for providing high-quality work placements for those students who are not able to access them themselves.

Q148 **Caitlin O'Regan:** May I ask for clarification? We heard from the example that Julie brought up of the student who wanted to study psychology that where there is a problem with work experience it seems to be systemic, caused by perception and not so much the work experience itself. Are there examples of industries and sectors that have been breaking the systemic problem?

Dr Moote: From our work there is probably limited data to answer that directly. I am not sure this is helpful, but one of our findings is that students very frequently were doing work experience in medicine. Students from a wide range of backgrounds were going into medical experience. There could be something there that is allowing more access for a broader range of students, whereas architecture was discussed as needing a certain level of qualification to even apply for work experience, and a certain level of skills, which might not be helping access.



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Katy Hampshire: To pick up on medicine, we had a look at how work experience helps people to get into university. For medicine and veterinary degrees, it is either essential or desirable from a lot of universities that you have experience in the world of work—either job shadowing or work experience. That might mean that a lot more students who want to go into those careers have access to it.

Dr Moote: There was also a really interesting point about access to work experience. It is not like the students who are working in hospitals are just doing filing or data entry; they are watching surgeries and doing some really interesting, neat stuff. I think at one point we were going to talk about STEM; we have a lot of students who are having trouble getting into research labs to have practical science experience. What is happening and why is access so tricky in some sectors?

Q149 **Caitlin O'Regan:** To turn the perspective around, to look at businesses and their practice in approaching students for work experience, have you seen a sector that has a good way of encouraging students to do work experience? If not, could you give an example of how they could? What kind of practice has your evidence and research shown?

Katy Hampshire: Certain employers may be doing well in certain sectors, but I could not pick one sector over another. Where they are, a lot of employers are looking to change their recruitment practices from what they have traditionally been. I have spoken to a number of employers, including the big four accountancy firms, who used to recruit by going to the Russell Group universities, looking for particular degrees and a 2:1. They are shifting that because they want their workforce to be representative of UK society and the people they serve. Because of that, they are now looking to do more on employer engagement in schools. They are also looking at their apprenticeship programmes. A change may come to how they look at this as part of the whole over the next few years, but I do not have an answer now.

Professor Holman: It is obviously easier for big employers to do it than small employers. A large accountancy firm or a big multinational will have an HR department configured for that: they will have been doing it for years, they will have a system, they will have checked out what works, they will have evaluated it and, inevitably, they have huge advantages. The nature of our economy is such that we have very large numbers of small and medium sized enterprises, which potentially can give brilliant work experience—possibly better than the big multinationals—because a small company with maybe only five to 10 employees can have person-to-person relationships.

The problem for SMEs is that, because they are small and have very little marginal time to do this stuff, they are very focused on just getting by and surviving, and it is really hard for them to do it. It would be a rich field to investigate how, nationally, one could provide a framework that would help SMEs—who couldn't do it on their own—to provide high-quality work experience. It may well be that this is something for the Careers and Enterprise Company to look at.



Caitlin O'Regan: I know that we have already mentioned this before, but I thought we could clarify. Something we discussed in two previous panels is work experience hubs. By hubs we don't mean actual physical areas where people go to simulate work experience; it is more that they are a way of connecting and increasing communication between schools and students, students and corporations, and corporations and schools. Something resembling Barclays LifeSkills, for example, is a way of doing that.

Chair: Caitlin, we shall come back to that later, because we have already touched on it. Is that okay? We shall move on now with George.

Q150 **George Pearce:** My question is for John. Please can you explain the role of career guidance in helping young people to access work experience?

Professor Holman: I would refer to the Gatsby benchmarks, of which there are eight. Two of them relate to experiences of workplaces and encounters with employers, and one of them relates to one-to-one guidance. Benchmark 8 says that young people should have access to someone who can sit down personally with them to give them a career guidance interview. But that's only one of the eight. The philosophy behind these benchmarks is that you need to be doing all eight, and doing them well. In a sense, they kind of support each other.

Through your career guidance interview, you might well get some help with where you would go for work experience, but really when you see career guidance at its best, the whole school takes part in it—it takes a village to rear a child. Everyone is part of it: the classroom teacher is part of it, the form tutor is part of it, and they all play a role together because they understand it's an integrated programme.

When we tried out the career benchmarks in the north-east of England, one of the critical things that we found was that the schools that succeeded best were the ones that had designated career leaders—a person whose job it is to conduct the orchestra on career guidance, with strong backing from the school leadership. That is critical. If you have got that, then the whole system will work together to support one of its parts, which is experience of workplaces.

Q151 **George Pearce:** Does career guidance always need to come from career professionals?

Professor Holman: Schools get a bit hung up on this. The law says that it has to be independent career guidance. In a sense, you might say, "Well, if it's independent, it has got to be someone from outside the school," but that is not necessarily inevitable. Teachers are professionals, and they can understand that they have a conflict of interest when advising someone whether to go to college or to stay in the school, but you have got to trust them to be professional in the way in which they provide advice. So I do not think that they necessarily have to be career professionals, but I do think that they have to have a level of training in providing advice.



Dr Moote: I would definitely latch on to that last point that John made. My answer would be that it doesn't have to be career guidance per se; it is about the level of skill and expertise, and lots of knowledge about individual students. Sometimes the role of the teacher is not discussed or, often, is left out of that integrated part, but it is not the sole responsibility of a teacher.

Q152 **George Pearce:** What does your research suggest about the upsides and downsides of having teaching staff deliver career guidance and arrange work experience?

Dr Moote: Possibly, linking to John's point again, teachers have their own motivations. One thing that has come up in student discussions is that we are all aware of the potential for impartial advice to be given. A lot of it was targeted on A-levels and, specifically, if teachers have targets. It is potentially difficult if that is going to be the case, so a solution might be to educate teachers to help them with labour market knowledge, unconscious bias training or something that might help support students a bit better in that way.

Another downside with the teachers having sole charge of this responsibility possibly comes down to resources. Students were saying that, often, their teachers were just so overloaded that they did a careers session in class that was very generalistic, but when it came to work experience and finding it, they were just plonked with the last one that was available. That is to no fault of the teacher, but if they do not have the resources and support to help with that, it might be an issue.

Q153 **George Pearce:** You mentioned the downsides. What do you think are the upsides?

Dr Moote: Students were very enthusiastic in terms of approaching their teachers. They trust their teachers. Often they are comfortable. Their teachers are potentially the person in the school who knows that student the best and can give them the most effective linked-up, meaningful advice about work experience. The classroom and curriculum domain is potentially a really fertile way to help to develop employability skills, and the teachers are primed to do that.

Q154 **Jack Payne:** John, I would like to ask you about implementing the Gatsby benchmarks. Obviously, you mentioned that two of the benchmarks are directly related to work experience. My question is really about whether you are confident that schools have the resources and support they need to implement the Gatsby benchmarks?

Professor Holman: The Government has said that it expects all schools to be reaching the Gatsby benchmarks by 2020, which is in two years' time, and before then, to have put the name of the person who leads it and their careers plan on the school website by September 2018. I think that is quite a tight timescale.

Our evidence from the two-year pilot in the north-east of England was that when they started—I cannot remember the exact numbers, but let us



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say—the average number of benchmarks being reached across the trial schools was about 1.5 out of eight. After two years, it was nearer to seven out of eight, so it was possible to make pretty rapid progress.

The reason for that is that when you make it specifically clear what the schools need to do, they can focus on that. We also provided them with an auditing tool called Compass to measure where they were. It is possible to make rapid progress.

The schools in the north-east did not have heaps of money poured on them, and, I'm afraid, in the foreseeable future, the schools will not get large amounts of money—we gave them a little bit, but not very much. It boils down to leadership. If you have someone in the school who is leading, who feels the responsibility for it and who is empowered by the head teacher to do it, and if you have some leadership on a local or regional basis—we had someone in the local enterprise partnership who was a leader for it—you can make rapid progress, because it helps schools to reprioritise.

Q155 Jack Payne: Do you see a lack of funding, or lack of resources as a whole, as a problem in the implementation of the Gatsby benchmarks? Can it prevent a school implementing the eight benchmarks?

Professor Holman: More resources will always help. I do not see financial resources as a terminal limiting factor, because we have seen in the north-east that it is possible to make very significant progress without substantial additional funding.

Chair: We really appreciate the evidence, but we are pushed for time, so please keep your answers as brief as possible.

Q156 Jack Payne: My next question is to everyone. Are services such as the Careers and Enterprise Company offering the right support to help schools do it? How might their value to schools be improved?

Dr Moote: We do not have much to add to that from our data—John, you might have more. The only thing we would say is that students are reminiscing about a time when their siblings and older peers had more involved work experience, and that might have been when there was more of a Government funding structure, but we do not have any direct data to help.

Professor Holman: Sorry, I will not talk for too long. The Careers and Enterprise Company was initially set up to focus just on the employment side—benchmarks 5 and 6, effectively. To do that, they set up a network of enterprise advisers who are from the world of employment and can work one-to-one with schools. That network is building. It is still not in every school by any means, but potentially, when it is in place—there is a deadline for doing it—that will be the means by which schools can solve the conundrum of how they put each young person with an employer who can give them work experience.

I am very positive about the potential of the Careers and Enterprise Company. They are well run, they have achieved a lot in a short amount of time and I think they can do it.

Q157 **Jack Payne:** Can you point to any other organisations that have implemented work experience in schools?

Professor Holman: Education and Employers?

Katy Hampshire: Briefly on that and what John is saying, what the Careers and Enterprise Company has got in terms of the enterprise adviser network—enterprise advisers are volunteers. They are all coming into this with the right intentions. Some of them will have more time than others to support specific schools, and that is where the enterprise co-ordinator role is very much needed, working in conjunction with the LEP. If they are able to do what they are set up to do, which is to strategically support a school with what is already out there—there are lots of local and national programmes already out there doing fantastic work—this will work well. The only danger you sometimes have is if you have a well-meaning enterprise adviser who is a volunteer who starts to duplicate and do it themselves, rather than accessing what is out there. That is a big network to manage. It has got the power; it now needs to let it happen. He is right: inspiring the future and staff are issues that can help do that.

Q158 **Dominic Jones:** How important is work experience provision in filling labour market skills gaps, for example in STEM careers? This is directed at John, but anyone can answer.

Professor Holman: Very important. I think the issue to look at is the supply. The Wellcome Trust's tracker survey of years 10 to 13 found that only 13.3% of 4,000 young people had STEM work experience. Some 27% wanted STEM work experience, but could not get it. I think the big challenge is in raising the supply of work experience. The direct answer to your question is that I think it is very important.

Q159 **Dominic Jones:** Do you feel that the current provision in schools is up to delivering this?

Professor Holman: Clearly not, from the data that I just gave you. The supply is not high enough. Chair, I do not know whether we will have a chance to talk about this, but it would be useful just to reflect on the supply of work experience, because in a sense that is critical. It determines everything else, including quality.

Q160 **Dominic Jones:** Does anyone else have anything to say?

Dr Moote: Just to add to that, for STEM in particular, our research suggests it is about having students being aware of what STEM opportunities they could potentially have for work experience. When they did have that experience, it was incredibly valuable. It helped them to see real science happen. One student said that in the classroom, he was not effective with practicals and often made mistakes, but that watching a post-doc make mistakes in a real science lab was really motivating for him.



Q161 **Dominic Jones:** Do you have any recommendations to improve this situation at all? Do you feel that the schools are up to solving the skills gap? Do you have any recommendations to solve this?

Professor Holman: I think that the whole question of the supply of work experience and how you match it to demand is something that needs to be looked at generically, because it would include measures that fixed the STEM shortage. Just to reflect on that, how can we get more SMEs involved in the supply of work experience? A lot of STEM goes on in quite small companies. How can we get more flexibility into the work experience slot? Often work experience tends to bunch at particular times of the year because of the requirements of the exam timetable. Under the old system, everyone was wanting work experience in year 10 in the summer term. Clearly that is not perfect for matching supply to demand, so we need more flexibility.

Chair: That cuts into Sanah's question. If I can ask Sanah to ask that, you can then add to what you said.

Q162 **Sanah Kashyap:** Julie, your research highlights low participation in work experience throughout secondary education. What is your analysis of the balance of supply and demand in this pattern? Is it due to the schools not putting students forward and helping them find placements, or is it because businesses are not wanting to take them? Professor, you can feel free to add anything afterwards if you would like to.

Dr Moote: The important thing to remember is that with my research we do not have any direct data about employers. We have not talked to them specifically about demand, but what we can say is that there is definitely a voice from students and their parents that they are not being put forward enough for good quality work experience. We also noted that in our 120 interviews, there was not one incident of work experience being rejected by an employer. We can read from that that they are absolutely taking them on if they are being connected with the students. That is pretty much all we can say about that.

Professor Holman: I think I have said what I wanted to say.

Katy Hampshire: This is about the connection between the two. Employers generally will do this if asked in the right way, and they do not feel that there are too many burdens—health and safety, et cetera—which has been worked on, to make that a bit more flexible. So there is a requirement for it to be flexible, and there is a requirement to enable the connection to happen.

Q163 **Daria Eckert:** Can you tell us about some of the key barriers for some young people accessing work experience, based on, for example, their ethnicity or disabilities?

Dr Moote: We can extrapolate from our career education analyses, and one thing that came out of that was, again, back to the self-referral system: there are certain groups of students who might not have the confidence to be aware of what they need in terms of the help, but



actually go to the appropriate person to get that help and support. We know from the literature that students' confidence levels, from particular backgrounds of students, can be an issue. Also, from our qualitative data, we had students from south Asian backgrounds more often reporting that they were more comfortable talking to their parents and families about their aspirations and work experience opportunities than going to a teacher or a career professional. It could be that that itself is a limiting factor for opportunities—that they are not as broad as they could be if they were reaching out to that support in school.

Katy Hampshire: The one that came out in our report was the gender split in terms of the sorts of roles that different genders are going for, and how that played out; but what I would refer to is everything that you need to do to influence that on the way to it. So this is about helping young girls and boys to think about what they could do from a young age; and by the time they are looking for work experience placements you get less of the sort of social bounds around this is what a girl is going for, and this is what a boy is going for. That is the general trend—it is not everybody, at all. That is the one that came out most for us.

Professor Holman: There is just one other aspect of this that I wanted to add, and that is pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. There are obvious challenges there for pupils of that sort, but I think it is important that expectations are set possibly higher than one might think. In the pilot in the north-east of England we had a pupil referral unit for kids having real trouble in schools. They had been sent up to this special unit. They took part in the pilot and they insisted they wanted to do it for exactly the same benchmarks: "No special allowances; we are going to do it this way." There were some wonderful stories about what happened when they sent out children who had had really challenging problems in school, to proper work placements—just getting them a placement where the employer would say, "Right, we will give them a chance." The response is often very impressive.

Q164 **Daria Eckert:** Do any of you have explicit recommendations about how to address any of the issues you mentioned?

Dr Moote: One thing about gender, that kind of links to the next question. There is a related piece of work that Professor Archer did for the Equal Opportunities Commission, and it found that work experiences were quite gendered in stereotypical roles and, of two of the recommendations, one was to have more than just one work experience, and I think the second was to make sure that at least half of the work experience opportunities you have are not in stereotypical areas. From our ASPIRES work, as well, we find that females are getting less support, less work experience, and even females that are in traditionally male occupations or aspirations are getting less support within those. For example, 40% of female students aspiring to a trade were getting careers advice, and 65% of the males in that aspiration were getting advice, so this is about ensuring equal access.

Q165 **Chair:** We were going to ask if there is a difference between mixed and single-sex schools in their provision of work-related learning and if you



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think there is a need to expand on research on gender imbalance.

Dr Moote: From our data we don't have anything at the moment, particularly because, although we have 300 schools, the single-sex sample size is not quite enough to have any definitive quants for that. Sorry, what was the second part of your question?

Q166 **Chair:** We were going to ask whether you think there should be extended research on gender imbalance in work-related learning.

Dr Moote: Absolutely—without a doubt.

Katy Hampshire: It is just the SEND stuff, because with that there is something here on the employer side that is not just related to young people getting experience of the world of work. Employers need to be continually helped in how they support people with adjustments and in getting work, staying in work and thriving in work, and understanding what funding and benefits for that they can access from the Government. There is quite a lot of work that needs to happen there, which will also support this. People with those backgrounds have sometimes been excluded from different bits of work experience, but there is a lot to be done there.

Professor Holman: I—

Chair: Could we just move on to the next question? Sorry, we are really pushed for time.

Q167 **Max Parry:** Is it easier for young people in cities to get good quality placements than for those in rural locations?

Dr Moote: We do not know 100% from our data, but we do have responses from students saying that their work placements are very much determined by the local opportunities. For example, for one set of students it was all about a hospital because that was, to them, the only one they were aware of. We also have responses from parents saying that the potential for schools to tap into the local markets is not being realised. A set were based in Essex, I think, so there were pharmaceutical companies and there was research technology in local cities, and they just did not feel the school was doing enough to help students to be aware what labour market there is around them and how they can use that for work experience.

Q168 **Max Parry:** Katy, do you have anything to add to that?

Katy Hampshire: Not much; I think I concur with most of that. The only other thing, which I said earlier, was the bit about supporting funding for travel costs and things like that, if that is helpful.

Q169 **Max Parry:** Would that be a recommendation?

Katy Hampshire: Yes. I am not sure what they already have for that, but yes.

Q170 **Max Parry:** How does location interact with other factors that might



affect work experience access, such as ethnicity or disability?

Dr Moote: It absolutely does interact. There are lots of factors still unstudied that could potentially also be confounding. We do not assume in our research that we have acknowledged all of them, and we also appreciate that they can be mitigated by each of those. Similarly, the work we have, particularly with urban students, shows good-quality work experience with those students can be quite transformative and help them to have valuable social capital that they did not have previously—contacts with employers or references for their CVs—to develop skills and to have a chance to present themselves in school in a different way from how they would have been seen before.

Katy Hampshire: The only thing I would add here is something we have talked about throughout: one size does not fit all, and this is not just about a one or two-week placement in work. It is about thinking about different ways in which they can access job shadowing, such as shorter placements or one time per week over a term. There might be different ways that we can break down some of those barriers.

Dr Moote: And not job shadowing with their parents. There is definitely a voice from students saying, “We know what our parents do. Please don’t make us do that. That’s not effective.”

Katy Hampshire: I never understood what my dad did.

Q171 **Chair:** Thank you very much for your evidence. We will just tie up a few loose ends. You have all mentioned making young people feel involved in order to improve their quality of work experience. Do you think that volunteering placements could be a way of doing that?

Professor Holman: Could you say that again?

Chair: If you had a volunteering placement, such as in a social action charity where people were taking a more active role, rather than simply shadowing people in a business, do you think that could help improve the quality of work experience?

Dr Moote: That is an interesting point. It comes down to the definition of work experience, because in my head that example would be beautiful work experience—I might want to work in a charity when I graduate—but at the moment that is not seen as work experience in some schools and by some teachers. Opening it up would be hugely beneficial.

Katy Hampshire: I used to work on the International Citizens Service programme, ICS, for anyone who knows that. I am all for young people volunteering and getting involved in community action. The things that will come through from that are some of the employability skills we talked about. Those can absolutely and validly be gained through those areas. There are also things about the social networks and people you meet that can easily come through volunteering placements that might not be in an area you eventually want to work in, so I would certainly promote it.



Dr Moote: This is about terminology, too. I think students are saying, “I have a part-time job, so I don’t want to—well, we had a student who actually said, “I don’t want to work for free.” We may need to change the language a bit. I am not sure that “volunteering” exactly encompasses it. We need something that says it is not just work experience; it is your career experience.

Q172 **Chair:** Given that you said that the skills you can gain in volunteering and on work placements are quite similar, do you think there needs to be something to address the perception that they are not the same thing?

Dr Moote: Absolutely. Is it the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award that involves a certain number of hours of volunteering? Yes, if we are going to do anything like that, it needs to be clarified, for sure.

Katy Hampshire: The National Citizen Service or NCS—I don’t know whether this is something that any of you have been able to go for—has done quite a lot to pull out what the key things are that you are learning from it, and you can then represent that on your CV or in interviews. So work is happening in this area. It is a question of amplifying that more, including to businesses. Businesses need to understand what you are getting from those things and you need to be able to explain that in a way that they know and that makes sense of transferable skills and so on.

Professor Holman: Many schools have a set of expectations of the work experience placement, and if that set of expectations is the same, whether it relates to an employment place or a volunteering place, and if the expectations are set out clearly as to when you arrive, what you wear and all those sorts of things, that brings the two up level to each other. I think it is a great idea.

Chair: Thank you all very much for your evidence.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Clare Walsh, Sarah Yong, Anna Howard and Eileen Gallagher.

Q173 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to this oral evidence session of the Youth Select Committee. I would like to say a big thank you to our witnesses for taking time out of their schedules to be here today. Although some members of the Committee are missing, we will go around and introduce ourselves, just with our name and where we are from. I am Claudia, the Chair, and I am from Liverpool.

Jack Payne: I am Jack and I am from Bristol.

Daria Eckert: I am Daria and I am from Leicestershire.

Zara Janahi: I am Zara and I am from Northern Ireland.

Dominic Jones: I am Dominic and I am from Barnsley.

Mun Wu: I am Mun, the Vice-Chair, and I am from Liverpool.



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George Pearce: I am George and I am from Poole.

Sanah Kashyap: I am Sanah and I am from Greater Manchester.

Chair: We will get the others to introduce themselves when they are back. Just note that if you hear a bell that is quite quiet, it is not the fire bell; it is a voting bell. Could the panellists please introduce themselves, starting with Clare?

Clare Walsh: Good afternoon. My name is Clare and I am from Foxes Academy. You met one of our students this morning. We are a hospitality and catering training hotel for young people with learning disabilities.

Sarah Yong: Hi. I am Sarah Yong and I am from the Careers & Enterprise Company. We are the national strategic body responsible for inspiring and preparing young people for the world of work.

Anna Howard: Hi. My name is Anna and I work for Inspire, the education business partnership for Hackney, Camden and Islington. We are also a charity.

Eileen Gallagher: Hello. My name is Eileen and I work for Westminster City Council. My remit is apprenticeship development, creating opportunities in businesses for young people.

Q174 **Chair:** Thank you. We will start with the first question, which is open to everyone. Can you summarise for the Committee what you think work experience is or should be?

Anna Howard: I can kick us off, if you like. At Inspire, given what we do, we think that work experience is so much more than just a placement with a company. Although that is really important, there are so many other forms of contact with employers that are really crucial to help young people understand the world of work and get that all-important experience. For example, employers could run workplace visits, or we might take employers into schools to run employability sessions or careers carousels, so young people can learn so much more about different careers and build on their transferrable skills and soft skills as well.

It is about getting that realistic experience and a preview into what the real world of work looks like—things such as workplace culture, working hours, and the concept of holidays. I remember a few people have said to me, “I didn’t realise you only got 20 days of holiday”—or however much it is—“once you finish school. There are no more long summers.” All these different factors play into it as well as that placement and having a chance to do some genuine work and shadow other people.

Clare Walsh: I agree with Anna. You will appreciate that the barriers to work for the young people we train—people with learning disabilities—are far higher. We see it as a living CV. It is a path to paid employment, because employers need to see what those young people are capable of. We need to bust the myth about people with learning disabilities, because



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they do have something of value to bring to the workplace. For us, it is critical for them.

Eileen Gallagher: I agree. Actually, we try to focus on employer encounters—multiple encounters with employers through different methods and workplace visits, or perhaps a career pathway discussion. Ultimately, that may lead to a work experience opportunity, which is then perhaps more meaningful because they have had an opportunity to think about what they want to do.

Work experience provides a couple of really important opportunities for young people to understand business protocols—companies' values, how they operate and how they present themselves and their branding. Work experience can be a really good opportunity to focus on all those skills that you need to absorb. But I feel that the encounters, in whatever format, are really important as well.

Sarah Yong: I agree with colleagues, and particularly with Eileen's point about it being really good to have multiple encounters with employers and workplaces and really get that variety in. In terms of what you class as work experience, it might be useful to refer to the Gatsby definition, which we endorse. It describes experience of workplaces as work visits, work shadowing and a bit of immerse time within a workplace as well.

All of those things count, but it is really about what the important features are to make that experience of the workplace really high quality and useful. There are four things I would pull out on that. The first is good matching: what you want to do as a young person and how that placement is relevant to the types of things you are thinking about. There is good preparation, thinking about and having help to think about what you want to get out of that placement, the types of things you might want to learn more about, the questions you might want to ask and what might be expected of you.

Then there is the placement itself. It should be well structured and should not just be about doing one thing the whole week. It should be something that tries to give you a real insight into what it might be like to be an employee at that place. Finally, there should be feedback and reflection as well—a chance for that young person to think about what they got out of the placement and what they learnt. That bit is really important to do with employers as well.

Q175 **Chair:** As a follow up, given the broad definition of work experience with talks and placements and that kind of thing, from a governmental point of view, which is the most important? Which do you think should be prioritised?

Sarah Yong: Our view is that you should have more than one encounter; you should have several encounters with employers at workplaces. The helpful way to think about it is to have very varied experiences. You would not want it to be a one-size-fits-all, one-shot, one week of work experience. Perhaps you would want to go on a workplace visit. You might



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do two days somewhere. In another year you might have a fuller week somewhere else. You could do things like that, because it is really about getting that different variety of experiences to give you more of an idea and learn more.

Q176 **Chair:** I want to pick up on what you said about a one-size-fits-all approach. Clare, do you think there is a particular approach that works best for the pupils at your school?

Clare Walsh: Yes, obviously the young people at our school encounter many barriers, but they can be removed. It is really about job matching inclusive employers. Also, the job needs to be real for those young people. There is no point giving them a job that will not be real when they are employed. They need to see how they can perform, so we try to address that. Young people like Tom who spoke this morning can't apply online or necessarily present their CV in the same way, so we make DVDs of them demonstrating their skills—their vocational skills and also their soft skills—and we give those to employers so that they can see what the young people are like.

They need access to the employers' own training programmes and travel training. You can have the most wonderful job or work experience placement, but if you can't get there and travel independently, you can't access work, so I think that is really important for our young people. We need to bust the myth about workplace adjustments. When we talk to employers, sometimes they think, "Oh my goodness, I'll have to widen the doors or change my workplace," but it is not about that. It is about simple visual aids. You saw Tom this morning with his cards. He is very able to explain what he does. So we can make very simple adjustments.

Anna Howard: Just to add to that, on what you both said about tailoring and effective matching and really focusing on the individual needs of the young person, people like us or third parties can really impart that support for employers to break the barriers down. We talked earlier about this. Inspire has worked with a special educational needs school for the first time this year, and its work experience programme has been really successful. The school didn't take the approach of, "Right, you've got one week." When coming to us, the school didn't take the approach that it was going to just spend one week with an employer and that was it. It really focused on preparing them and getting us in to do sessions, and we are doing more for next year. Then the young people went to the employer for two hours a week over a more extended period of time. That works so much better and we were able to support the employers and work with the school really closely, so that helped it to be much more effective.

Eileen Gallagher: I think the work experience element is really about thinking about it, preparing, and thinking about the outcomes that you expect. That should not only just be for the young person, but for the school and how that feeds into its wider careers guidance, and it is also for the employers, so there is a real partnership developed around it.

Q177 **Daria Eckert:** On a slightly different note, what effect have the



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recommendations made in the Wolf review of vocational education had on the provision of work experience in schools and colleges?

Sarah Yong: I should say that I am not an absolute expert on the Wolf review. I suppose I see the Wolf review as a bit of a snapshot in time. My understanding of it was that it was more about looking at vocational routes than a review of what good careers provision looks like in the round. I think that was in 2011. If you fast forward to 2014, that is when you have the big piece of work from Gatsby. That is the first time that you have international best practice and evidence brought into one place—the first time we have a real picture of what “good” looks like, and a means to get there.

What is really important is that the careers strategy has endorsed that, and that direction, as the way to go. Up until the careers strategy, you could say that the direction given to schools was perhaps less clear. Some schools kept their work experience for key stage 4, and others focused it on key stage 5, but it was not entirely clear what the right thing to do was. What is really good now is that it is crystal clear—it is in the strategy. Gatsby says that you should have at least one encounter for every year that you are at secondary school, so from year 7, and at least two experiences of a workplace, which is a much bigger, more holistic ambition. Now, schools have that clear direction that that is where we are looking to get to.

Anna Howard: I was not working for Inspire in 2011, but I have it on good faith from my colleagues that the Wolf review did not really have an impact on the uptake of key stage 4 work experience through Inspire.

At Inspire, there has always been a differentiation between the key stage 4 work experience provision being more general, or generic, across a broad range of sectors, and being about giving young people in year 10 their first experience of the world of work, and key stage 5, where it is not necessarily about prioritising it more but really tailoring it to their interests, the subjects they are studying and what they want to do in the future. For us, the demand for work experience has remained relatively consistent.

It is interesting, now that we have the careers strategy, that this is the first year in quite a while that we have seen a real difference in what schools are doing. For example, one school that I was at earlier this week has decided to remove the one-week placements for key stage 4 and go back to having a rotation around different employers and different encounters with multiple employers each term, and building that into a more holistic programme. That is not something we saw at the time; it has taken a while for that to come through.

Eileen Gallagher: After the statutory removal in 2012, some schools continued to deliver it. For me, that meant that some young people got a better opportunity than others. In fairness and transparency, it would be interesting to map those that retained it and what it led to. Gatsby and the



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careers guidance makes it a much more level playing field: we are required to support all young people to have encounters with employers.

Q178 **Daria Eckert:** Similarly, do you all believe that schools are consistently delivering the activities and programmes that the Department for Education has asked for?

Anna Howard: That's a good question. It changes year on year, which in itself shows that perhaps they are not. To echo what Eileen and Sarah have said, that would be more possible now we have the Gatsby benchmarks and the careers strategy. There is clearly still work to be done. In my view, and that of colleagues I have spoken to, schools are very stretched and that is part of the wider issue, but there is a bit more direction now, so that should help schools to consistently deliver those experiences that will help young people.

Sarah Yong: It might be helpful to refer to a piece of research we did at the end of last year, which was called our "State of the Nation" report. We surveyed schools that were using our Compass tool, which is the measurement tool that we built with Gatsby, so schools can measure how well they are doing on each of those eight Gatsby benchmarks. That was only the first year that we did it, but I can tell you that for benchmark 5, which is about giving young people those different encounters with employers, 37% of schools were fully meeting it and 57% were partially meeting it—they were well on their way, but did not fully meet it. On benchmark 6, which is about experiences of workplaces, 39% of those schools were fully meeting that benchmark and 30% were, again, partially meeting it—so going some way to meet it.

That data showed that there had been progress against the benchmarks, but clearly the percentages show that there is quite a long way to go. The place we are at at the moment is that we have a way to measure and a way for schools to see how they are doing. Going forwards, it will be really important for them to look at how they meet the ambition in the career strategy.

Chair: If I could just interject for one moment, we have a lot of questions to get through. The evidence is really valuable, but I would just ask that you keep your responses as brief as possible.

Q179 **Daria Eckert:** Would you support reintroducing compulsory work experience at key stage 4?

Eileen Gallagher: My concern with it being compulsory is that it becomes one-size-fits-all and you lose the breadth and variety of it. It makes me a little bit nervous.

Anna Howard: What I would say is that, although the advantage of it being compulsory—a statutory requirement—is that it gives an equal opportunity to all the young people at schools, there is the danger in how it is interpreted that it becomes one-size-fits-all and, even worse than that, a tick-box exercise. It depends what definition or which aspect of work experience you are focusing on. It would be fantastic if some



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element of work-related learning was compulsory at key stage 4, but not necessarily your traditional one or two-week placement.

Sarah Yong: Our position on that is quite neutral. The key question to ask, which Government probably need to ask, is whether doing that would help to serve what has been outlined in the strategy, which is one encounter each year and two workplace encounters by the time a young person leaves school. Would it help schools to achieve that, because we know that the evidence is that that is good, or would it, as my colleagues have pointed out, take away from that? That is the question for Government to look at.

Q180 **Dominic Jones:** Sarah, under the Department for Education's plans, the Careers and Enterprise Company will assume primary responsibility for helping schools to develop links with employers. However, in 2016 Ofsted highlighted low awareness of the company's work among businesses. What are you doing to improve that?

Sarah Yong: Okay. Just on Ofsted, the really good news is that in 2018, for the first time, it confirmed that good careers education is improving. That is the first time that that has happened, so that gives us a bit of confidence. Was your question about what we are going to do or what we have been doing to date?

Q181 **Dominic Jones:** Both—what has been done since, and what you are going to do in the future.

Sarah Yong: Sure. When we were set up, just three and a half years ago, our remit was on making those links with schools and employers. There are four key things that we have done. The first is that we have built the enterprise adviser network. That is the network of our enterprise co-ordinators all around the country and our senior volunteers from businesses who are working with individual schools. That is one thing that brings employers and schools together.

The second thing is our investment fund. That is where we look and find the best programmes around the country that are doing the best things. We put funding in those to scale them up, and we direct those areas of need.

The third thing is we put some focus on what works and on research, because with our network and our programmes out there we want to make sure that we are doing the most effective things. We constantly look at that.

The final thing is that we have built some digital infrastructure. I referred to our Compass tool. That is our way of helping schools to get that focus on doing what we need to do with the Gatsby benchmarks.

In terms of what we want to do going forward, I would say that we are kind of in the foothills. We have the infrastructure in place and have made a really good start and some great progress. Of course, our ambition is much higher than that. The careers strategy has asked us to do more,



which we are really pleased about. First, we want to scale up our network, with all schools being offered an enterprise adviser and to be in the network by 2020. We have offered that to just over half at the moment, so we are making good progress. Secondly, we want to drive up those encounters. I mentioned the minimum as being to experience the workplace once a year for every year that someone is in secondary school. We also want to help to train the Careers leaders positions in schools and to generally expand our role to help schools to progress against all those Gatsby benchmarks, as well as with the employer encounters.

Q182 Dominic Jones: You talked about the digital infrastructure. Do you think that is the best way forward and the best thing to do? What strengths does your company see in that model?

Sarah Yong: Do you mean our Compass tool generally?

Dominic Jones: Yes, and the hub for co-operation and interaction between employers, schools and young people.

Chair: Sorry, Dominic; we will address that later.

Dominic Jones: Ok, no worries.

Q183 Max Parry: Sarah, how do you see CEC's role in developing links between schools and employers differing from that of education business partnerships?

Sarah Yong: I suppose the unique thing about us is that we have the network, which goes all across the country. It is a kind of web of infrastructure, which I think is quite unique. One feature of it is having just over 2,000 senior businesspeople who volunteer, which is unique because you have that person who comes in and works with the leadership of that school and really helps them with the strategic direction on how to form their careers strategy for the young people in their school. That is one of the key differences.

Anna Howard: As someone from an education business partnership, the flip side of that is that we are very borough-focused. Although Inspire works across three boroughs, there are many EBPs that work in only one. We are much more about building employer relationships with local employers and helping schools to develop links with the employers in their vicinity. Some will obviously be a little bit further afield, especially as we expand—as well as having central London on our doorstep—but there is much more of a focus on boroughs and on understanding the labour market in that local area.

Max Parry: Eileen, do you have anything to add?

Eileen Gallagher: I am actually an enterprise adviser, so I am partnered with a Westminster secondary school and I meet regularly with the careers lead there. We have used the Compass tool. There is a very easy, straightforward framework to actually think about where we are and what we can do to move forward. I am fairly fortunate that I sit within the



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business and enterprise team and engage with employers every day for my job, because I can then actually support the school with industry experts. To me, that seems a really good model for partnership working and benefits the entire school.

Q184 **Max Parry:** Sarah, what should be done between now and 2020 to ensure that schools not covered by the CEC enterprise adviser network do not miss out on good-quality provision?

Sarah Yong: First, we want to get all those schools in the network, and we are working quite rapidly towards that. Secondly, it is helpful that the Government have been very clear that schools should have a named careers leader in place. That will be a game changer. John Holman outlined before just how important that role is, with one person focused on achieving the Gatsby benchmarks. Schools not yet in the network can still use our Compass tool and still have access to the programmes that we fund, and their having a careers leader will obviously make that even better. Lots of our resources are in place for schools that our network has not quite reached yet.

Q185 **Caitlin O'Regan:** I will come to Anna first, but then Clare. We have heard from Sarah that some schools are struggling to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks. What are the main barriers now to schools developing closer links with employers? Since we are pushed for time, I am looking for two distinct perspectives, not a comparison, unless it is very strong.

Anna Howard: We have already talked about one of the main barriers for schools being the time that they have, as well as not necessarily having a dedicated careers adviser. A lot of the careers advisers that we work with have that responsibility as a bolt-on to a job they are already doing. They have a very limited amount of time to co-ordinate careers advice and work experience programmes. From the schools side, that is a clear barrier. From the employer's side, particularly from the perspective of working at Foxes Academy, there are a lot of misconceptions from employers, about not understanding what a young person might need and perhaps not necessarily having a CSR policy. Corporate responsibility is coming to the fore, but not necessarily every organisation has a policy like that. Work experience, or just connecting with schools and young people, does not fit in for employers.

Clare Walsh: I will start by telling you the national statistic for young people with learning disabilities: employment is a rather disappointing 5.8%. Of the young people graduating from Foxes between 2015 and 2017, so three years of the cohort, 73% are in employment. There is a real fear, but it can be overcome. We do that by showcasing the young person's skills. We have employer dinners, but before they are allowed to leave the dinner, they have to pledge a work experience placement. We do it on a regional basis; we have 60 employers from all over the south-west, under the Disability Confident banner. As I mentioned, we have DVDs, like video CVs, to overcome the lack of understanding of what that young person can do.



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Evidence of what I am saying is that we have a national partnership with Hilton hotels. We use a work trial, where that young person will go in for two weeks in the summer or in the holiday, with accurate job matching beforehand to make sure that they can display their skills. Every young person who has gone into the Hilton hotel schemes over the past three years is still in paid employment with Hilton hotels. They cannot all work full time because of benefits and, obviously, for some of them it is not suitable, but they can work up to 16 hours a week.

Recently, we have been approached by two other national employers, YO! Sushi and Premier Inn, to set up similar schemes. I think that the barriers can be overcome by just sharing good practice and case studies with other employers and getting them all talking in the room. There will be a massive skills gap in the hospitality industry—half a million people will be required. The young people we work with can provide some of that. But we are a tiny academy in the whole country, but there is lots of good stuff that we can all share. That is why it is important that we give this evidence today.

Q186 Chair: Would you recommend your model to Government to employ on a more national scale?

Clare Walsh: I would, but that very much depends on funding. From day one when those young people come to us, it is all about work. That is all the output is, and they all want to work. They are like all of you; they want a career and to achieve their potential.

Q187 Caitlin O'Regan: Anna, has this active application method, as I might call it, been trialled in a mainstream school?

Anna Howard: Bringing employers together and getting them to celebrate successes? I would say no. As I mentioned, for the careers advisers it is just one part of their job and there might be other people in the school who are running other sessions. At Inspire, as part of our employer engagement, like Clare said, the key thing is celebrating the successes, championing the benefits of work experience and having a young person's perspective.

Clare Walsh: One of the challenges we spoke about earlier, if it is okay to mention it, is we have a dedicated transition team and a work manager who spends all his time building partnerships and relationships just in Minehead, which is small and has a population of 10,000. We have more than 50 work providers, because that is what that person's job is. But in many schools, it is just a bolt-on—a couple of hours every week. I think that probably is not in the best interests of our young people in this country.

Anna Howard: That's when schools turn to EBPs and organisations like that. That's where we come in. Our work is really important. Even in our education business partnership, we have to find 4,500 placements a year, and finding employers to meet that demand across different sectors is a big challenge. We do as much as we can to celebrate the benefits of work experience and keep expanding those networks.



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Q188 Jack Payne: My question is to Sarah. You referred to the Gatsby benchmarks. Benchmarks 5 and 6 directly relate to work experience. My question is about resources. Can we be confident that schools have the resources they need to meet the Gatsby benchmarks for work experience?

Sarah Yong: That is a really good question. It is something we think about quite a lot. We know that the co-ordination and brokerage stuff is really important. You have a school at the centre, and we try to bring in the enterprise adviser network-funded programmes, digital tools and other resources. You rightly point out that, to make that happen well and to take advantage of all those things, you need that resource in schools. As John Holman pointed out in an earlier session, the key to that is the careers leader position. That has been proven time and time again. We know that when schools have progressed really well against the benchmarks, or have fully met them, it doesn't matter where they are in the country or whether they are in a more affluent area. The one key thing seems to be the careers leader position. It is really good that the Government has provided funding for some of that training for careers leaders. That is really going to help.

Q189 Jack Payne: Can you see a lack of funding or resources preventing schools from achieving the eight benchmarks?

Sarah Yong: I don't think big finance is a barrier to that. The success factors seem to be leadership and the will to prioritise that in a school. We have seen that, when schools have that, that has been the key thing. Of course schools always want more money, but that is the key thing, rather than throwing money at it.

Q190 Jack Payne: Will the benchmarks have the desired effect of improving access to work-related experiences in schools?

Sarah Yong: We endorse the benchmarks. We hope so. The reason for that is that the benchmarks give schools a focus. It is very clear what you need to do to get to what "good" looks like. The real value of having them is that you have got something to aim for, and then a school can concentrate on that.

Anna Howard: To add to that, the Gatsby benchmarks are really helpful but, in my recent experience, schools lack awareness of them, even if there is someone in a leadership or a careers position who is aware of them. I recently did a briefing for tutors. We started talking about Gatsby, and so few of them in the room had heard of them. It could in part be down to the funding for the careers lead, who can champion it across the whole school. That may help, but there is a lack of awareness at the moment.

Q191 Jack Payne: You pinpointed that leadership in schools is needed to ensure the eight benchmarks. Is there anything else that you can pinpoint that needs to be done to ensure the eight benchmarks in schools?

Sarah Yong: From a schools perspective, leadership and will are key. That is the first thing. The second thing is the work with the Careers and Enterprise Company. If you are a careers leader, you are looking to pursue achieving those benchmarks, so you can work with us, our network and our resources. We are there to help you get there. It about is those two things within a school, but also what we have built around schools.

Q192 **Sanah Kashyap:** Sarah, one of the ideas we are interested in is whether an online hub to help young people in England find out about and access work experience would be useful. Is that something that CEC would host, or could host?

Sarah Yong: That is a really interesting question. I come from quite a neutral place on online hubs. The question we would need to look at is how effective they will be and how they will work. I am not an expert in digital platforms, but I think when it is an online platform there are a lot of things to consider. There is the safeguarding issue, there is how the information is laid out and there is user testing and destination stuff. There are all sorts of things.

First, we would want to know what the evidence behind that looks like, and my understanding at the moment is that there is quite an absence of evidence around online platforms. We would want to know more about that. Secondly, we are not currently funded to do things such as that, so that would be a question for Government. What might be helpful is a piece of work we did, called "Moments of Choice", which looked a little at how young people like to receive information. There were two key things. One was that they would like it to be personal and from a trusted source, and the other was a sense of sometimes feeling a bit overwhelmed by lots of online sites, because there are quite a few. Again, when you are thinking about online tools, how you address those things is something to bear in mind.

Q193 **Sanah Kashyap:** What are the rest of the panel's views on the idea of a hub? Do you think a hub would be helpful?

Clare Walsh: I think it would be for our young people, but obviously it would need to be made user friendly. There is good software, Widgit software, that you can use to make it visual. We have tried visiting the jobcentre with our young people, but their staff are not trained to help people with learning disabilities, so we would support a hub. We are aware of a job matching agency called Evenbreak, which already exists for people with disabilities, so that might be something you could look at to see how it is working. Again, I reiterate what Sarah said about safeguarding, because we are dealing with vulnerable young people, so that would need to be thought about carefully.

Q194 **Sanah Kashyap:** Does anyone else have anything to add about their views on a hub and whether it would be useful?

Eileen Gallagher: I did read the "Moments of Choice" publication. Young people like the push and pull of a system. As a parent, safeguarding is something that is also of concern to me. You need it to be quite local. If



you are talking about work experience, it has to be realistic and achievable for the young person. I am not an IT expert, so I don't know how you would make sure that the opportunities it presented were actually suitable for you, depending on where you live and what your interests are. There is a lot behind the scenes and I do not understand how it works. I am not saying it is not a good idea in principle; it is just about how it is meaningful for young people. Otherwise, it will just add to that noise that is already out there.

Anna Howard: I echo that. In principle it is a great idea; we are a digital generation now, so having an app, even, for work experience might be great for young people today, but it depends on the content and resources that are on there. You already have so many different websites—Barclays LifeSkills is a great one for resources. Do you envision it being more of a jobs board—or work experience board, I suppose?

Q195 **Sanah Kashyap:** We've touched on it now, but the next question was what you would expect such a hub to usefully contain. What is your expectation or what would you like that hub to have?

Anna Howard: I think the danger in it being a jobs board is that, if we are thinking about it being accessible for all, that is quite difficult. It might be young people who are perhaps from a more advantaged background who are able and willing to access it. But if it is the sort of hub that would have more resources or information, or where you could log in and say, "Right, I want to find out about the day in the life of an engineer or a chef," or something like that, that could be really quite useful, coupled with advice from careers advisers and having that information and support within the schools as well. As I'm sure you're aware, young people, do want to take more ownership of it. A lot of the feedback we get from our work experience programmes is about, "How would Inspire make it better for you?", and young people say, "We want to physically choose our placements and get a say in exactly which placement we get." Having a hub, in that sense, to teach them more and for them to learn more about work experience would be good.

Clare Walsh: I think employer testimonials would be good—to share successful outcomes and encourage other employers for young people with learning disabilities, of course—and also step-by-step guides for parents, because the barriers for parents of young people with learning disabilities are far higher, and they need support from their parents. We found that working with parents has really good results as well, because you're using a whole network of people to support these young people, so it's good.

Q196 **Chair:** Anna, you mentioned an app, which I thought was quite an interesting idea. It would be interesting if the other members of the panel like could shed some light on that.

Anna Howard: I am by no means a technical or digital expert, but the more we go into schools now and talk about social media—I mean, I only realised about six months ago that most young people in key stage 4 do

not use Facebook any more. It's all about Instagram and Snapchat. Everything is so fast-paced digitally now, and it feels like there's an app for everything. If you would like to have some sort of online hub, even if it was mobile-friendly, just an app would be more instantaneous.

Often we have schools saying, "Not every classroom has a computer room," or, "If you're not studying IT, you're not going to get to a computer, and they don't have their phones out," but if you can access that on a phone at home, then fantastic.

Q197 **Chair:** This is open to everyone: do you think that an app might make the online hub more accessible to people?

Clare Walsh: Yes. It certainly would make it accessible to people with learning disabilities, who all use their phones all the time.

Q198 **George Pearce:** My first question is aimed at Clare. What are the advantages of specialist work experience provisions for young people with learning disabilities in mainstream schools?

Clare Walsh: We are a specialist provision, where training is 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Everything is about work experience from day one and we're industry-specific. As I mentioned, the hospitality industry is a very good industry for young people with learning disabilities to be employed in. I think that's what makes us separate; it's very holistic to each person. They have an individual plan.

Q199 **George Pearce:** Thank you very much. My next question is for the whole panel. What are the main barriers to gaining work experience that your learners would be likely to encounter in mainstream schools? Who'd like to go first?

Sarah Yong: Sorry, but do you mind repeating the question?

Q200 **George Pearce:** Not at all. What are the main barriers to gaining experience that your learners would be likely to encounter in mainstream schools?

Chair: Sorry, that's to Clare.

Clare Walsh: If they were in a mainstream school environment? I just don't think they'd have the level of support. I work in a specialist provision, so I'm speaking from that platform, but I don't think they'd have the specialist, focused support that they need to lead them on that path, really.

Anna Howard: If I go back to the school I mentioned earlier that we hosted work experience with this year—the specialist provision school—the great thing about that was they had the tutors there who would accompany them on their placement for the first one, two, three weeks, or every week if they needed it. In a mainstream school, you just don't have that capacity or time or level of support.

Q201 **Chair:** In the light of that, what aspects of your model do you think could be applicable to mainstream schools?



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Clare Walsh: I definitely think the national partnerships with employers work really well. Again, however, I have to speak from the industry perspective; I only know from the hospitality industry that there is going to be a jobs skills shortage. Employers are increasingly looking to be more inclusive and diverse in taking young people on.

Front-loaded support is useful, but that doesn't have to be someone going into the workplace. Often, it's just someone being available on the phone for the first couple of weeks. You really don't see that person blossom until week two of a work experience placement, and then you really start to see the benefit to them and to the employer. Those are probably the lessons I would pass on, if I were able to.

Q202 **George Pearce:** Is it possible for mainstream schools to overcome those barriers?

Clare Walsh: In the current financial climate? I do not think they have got industry-specific links on a national basis to overcome those barriers. But that is why we are all here today to share best practice, and we can all learn from that.

Q203 **Mun Wu:** Clare, what role does work experience play for young disabled people in addressing their worries or misconceptions about their future career prospects?

Clare Walsh: I will be really quick. It breaks down barriers. It is good for the employer, not just for the young person, as we see teams really come together and cultures change. I can give you testimonials from employers about that. It helps social mobility and independent living, and of course employment statistics. I would say those are the top three things.

Q204 **Mun Wu:** In addition to that, do you think that, as a result of the placements, the employers that Foxes works with are more confident about employing disabled people?

Clare Walsh: Absolutely. Once they have experienced working with a young person, they take on more and more and their confidence grows. For example, the Hilton scheme is doubling this year, because they know how it works, they feel comfortable and they want to include those people in their business. Definitely.

Q205 **Jason Stewart:** How can schools best ensure that work experience placements translate into improved career opportunities for their students?

Anna Howard: We have mentioned it already, but the preparation beforehand is really key—getting young people to think, "What do I want to get out of this work experience placement? What do I want to find out? What can I expect?" It is also about making sure they are familiar with the employer they are going to see, having an interview if necessary.

It is also important for schools to manage their expectations. I forgot to mention this earlier, but one of the challenges we have is that we take three placement choices from young people, and we always try to match a



student to one of those, but if it is not their first choice, the school has to play a role in helping a young person to still see what transferable skills they can get out of that. Then, after a work experience placement, that debrief and feedback and evaluation is so important, so they can consolidate their learning. Some of our schools ask the young people to do a presentation in their tutor groups, which is a great idea. They might not think the same, but actually it is getting them to think, "What did I do this week? What have I developed?" and maybe even having an action plan going forward and staying in contact with the employer if necessary.

Clare Walsh: I think the work has to be realistic, with accurate job matching to suit that young person's needs.

Eileen Gallagher: As well as debriefing with the young person, it is important to follow up with the employer, because there could be so many more opportunities that are lost because the work experience is seen as finished and as something in isolation. Lots of employers with CSR initiatives want to do mentoring, and it could be a really nice introduction for a more sustainable opportunity for that young person.

Q206 **Jason Stewart:** Is it always easy for schools to identify good and poor-quality placements? Would anything in particular help them in this respect?

Sarah Yong: What is helpful, first of all, is schools being aware of what a good placement looks like. I think we have all talked a bit about that: preparation, a good structured work placement and evaluation afterwards. If you have that in mind, that is really going to help.

The other thing is, again—I know I sound a bit like a broken record—if you focus on it in your leadership and you have someone senior responsible for it, and you are working with us, the network and other partners, you are naturally more connected to lots of different employers, and you know them better; you will know them quite well. That will allow you to better identify lots of work experience placements, get a real idea of quality placements and have those conversations about what makes a good placement. It is a combination of those things.

Anna Howard: As an education business partnership, we can help schools with that as well. As a baseline, we go in and visit any new employer and carry out a risk assessment. At a basic level, that is helping to identify some of the quality.

Q207 **Chair:** Thank you for your evidence. We will spend a few minutes tying up any loose ends. First, could an online resource or an app work without being attached to schools?

Sarah Yong: Who would use it? Do you mean directly—

Chair: Yes, so if it was available to young people but it was not talked about in schools, could it still be effective? Or do you need schools to push it?



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Sarah Yong: The evidence says that brokerage is really important, because it shows that information from trusted sources is the most effective. Without that brokerage, you lose that with a direct young-person-to-technological-platform thing. That would be a risk, and you would have to look at how you were going to overcome that, if you were going to look at it.

Clare Walsh: The only comment I would add to that is that employers are commercial and schools are in the public sector, and I feel there needs to be partnership between the two in some way. Coming from one side, what are we trying to achieve? We are trying to achieve employment, so I think employers would need to be involved in it.

Q208 **Chair:** For clarity, the hub would be a collation of what already exists from employers, including their work experience opportunities.

Clare Walsh: Good.

Q209 **Chair:** My second question is: how can we prevent models that focus on local businesses reinforcing disparity in access to work experience due to geographical barriers?

Anna Howard: That is probably well directed at me. I am just digesting your question. Do you mean how do we discourage or avoid employers just focusing on taking people in a local area?

Chair: For example, if you live in a rural area and there are not many local businesses around, you will have far fewer opportunities than someone who lives in London.

Anna Howard: Yes, that is true, and it is something that Clare and I were talking about.

Clare Walsh: We live in quite a rural, socially deprived area and, as I said, we have more than 50 work experience providers. I think it is probably about resource and sharing good practice. We bring all our employers together, so they have a dinner once a year where they can network and share experience. It is not impossible to achieve.

Q210 **Chair:** Can I also ask for general recommendations about improving the quality or access to work experience?

Anna Howard: More funding for schools to really drive the careers strategy forward and give them that dedicated resource to really drive work experience and to work with other third parties, like ourselves at Inspire. That is the main one for me.

Eileen Gallagher: I would say the dedicated resource, and showcasing what really good practice actually looks like, so highlighting employers that actually have exemplary programmes helps other businesses to understand what "good" looks like, so it begins to move that up. I do not know whether we need to have a kite award, but as a local authority, we have our own awards for business. Initiatives built around supporting



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careers with young people is a stand-alone award, which may be sufficient.

Q211 **Chair:** Would you recommend that at a governmental level?

Eileen Gallagher: Yes, I think so. Certainly, the commercial sector likes that kind of recognition, because it is always quite healthy if other competitors want to be seen in that way.

Sarah Yong: I would just say three things, in terms of improving the quality of work experience and getting more placements, which I think is what everyone wants. The first thing: I go back to just prioritising that in schools as a focus. The second thing: in doing that, working with us and the partners that we bring together. I think the third thing is actually having a bit of a drive with employers to offer more experiences. We have done a bit of work which mapped the gap—so that one a year I was talking about, and the two separate experiences in the workplaces: to get to that ambition, which is a minimum, we have done a piece of work that says we need 4 million employer encounters and 1 million experiences of workplaces. That is what we need employers to come forward and do. We are actually looking at designing a bit of a campaign around that, and I think that will be something that, as we think more about it, we welcome conversations with you going forward as well.

Clare Walsh: Just sharing good practice, really, and sharing the outcomes—the economic and moral benefits to it as well.

Chair: Thank you very much for all your evidence. You have been very helpful.