**Written evidence submitted by the Careers & Enterprise Company (BYC030)**

Introduction:

The Careers & Enterprise Company exists to prepare and inspire young people for their future careers. We note that young people have highlighted ‘work experience and knowing where to find it’ as a priority in the 2017 *Make Your Mark Ballot* and we welcome this enquiry from the Youth Select Committee.[[1]](#footnote-1) We are delighted to respond with this written submission and to assist the Committee in any further way we can.

There is a substantial body of evidence which supports the value of experiences of the workplace. This evidence highlights a number of impacts associated with such experiences including enhanced employability skills, motivation in education, career-decision making and knowledge of the world of work.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Our research tells us that the number of encounters young people are having with employers is increasing. In schools we work with, employer encounters have increased by 50% and on average three new employers are working with these schools. However, our research also shows that at best only 37% of young people are having at least one encounter with an employer per year whilst they are in school or college.[[3]](#footnote-3) Our evidence also shows that only around 60% of young people are having an experience of the workplace in Key Stage 4 and even less during Key Stage 5. We estimate that we need another 500,000 experiences of the workplace to be organised every year to ensure universal coverage. The dial is shifting but there is more to do. Through our Enterprise Adviser Network and our Investment Fund, we have built the infrastructure to facilitate the increased volume of employer engagement going forward that we know young people need. The recent Government Careers Strategy further strengthens provision by setting the expectation for all schools and colleges to have a dedicated Careers Leader so important aspects of careers support such as work experience for young people are given higher priority at leadership level in schools and colleges.

Our approach to supporting young people is underpinned by the Gatsby Benchmarks, an evidence-based framework of eight guidelines on what makes the best careers provision in schools and colleges.[[4]](#footnote-4) Gatsby use the inclusive phrase ‘experiences of the workplace’ (rather than ‘work experience’) in recognition that there are a range of different ways in which young people can gain experiences of the workplace and that it works best for pupils, schools and employers when the approach is flexible.

In undertaking its enquiry, we recommend the Youth Select Committee consider the full range of different ways in which young people can gain experiences of the workplace and engage with employers. Our response will give the Committee more detail on this as well as offering specific insight on work experience as one important way of young people engaging with the workplace. Our submission is structured as follows:

1. **About the Careers & Enterprise Company**
2. **Experiences of Work – The Careers & Enterprise Company view and the current picture in schools**

-Employer encounters and experiences of work

-The current picture in schools

1. **Responding to the Work Experience Enquiry Questions:**

- General

- Young People

- Schools and Businesses

- Other services

1. About the Careers & Enterprise Company

The Careers & Enterprise Company was announced in December 2014 by the Secretary of State for Education to bring education and employment together and to improve the careers system in England. We have worked with schools, colleges, employers and other stakeholders to build a national network of over 2000 schools and businesses working together to inspire and prepare young people (aged 12-18) for the fast-changing world of work.

We work closely with local partners in the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) across the country to support young people by:

1. **building the Enterprise Adviser Network[[5]](#footnote-5)** through co-funding the appointment of Enterprise Co-ordinators in each of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Enterprise Coordinators work with schools and college leadership teams to build careers and employer engagement plans and connect them to an Enterprise Adviser – a senior volunteer from business – to unlock relationships with other local businesses;
2. **investing in proven ideas** by funding established careers and enterprise programmes to scale up their delivery and expand into geographic areas of need;
3. **finding out what works** by conducting and commissioning research; and
4. **supporting careers and enterprise provision with technology** by developing a digital infrastructure to support young people into the world of work and to help schools and colleges to optimise their careers and enterprise provision. For example, by providing *Compass* an online benchmarking tool that helps schools and colleges to evaluate their careers activity against best practice.**[[6]](#footnote-6)**

The Careers & Enterprise Company is an evidence led organisation. All our programmes are informed by the best evidence available.[[7]](#footnote-7) We recently published an evaluation of the Enterprise Adviser Network which found that the network had scaled up quickly and engaged a diverse range of businesses and volunteers, that stakeholders are positive about the network and that it is already having impacts on schools, colleges and the local economy. [[8]](#footnote-8)

The Government’s *Careers Strategy*, published in December 2017, identifies The Careers & Enterprise Company as the national strategic body responsible for coordinating employers, schools, colleges, funders and providers to provide high impact careers and enterprise support to young people.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**2**. Experiences of Work – The Careers & Enterprise Company’s view and the current picture in schools

**Employer encounters and experiences of work**

The Careers and Enterprise Company endorse the Gatsby Benchmarks and believes that they set out a strong evidence-based framework for the kind of careers programmes that all young people should expect. We are working with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, the Department for Education and other key stakeholders to implement the Gatsby Benchmarks in schools and colleges across England in light of the Careers Strategy.

Benchmarks five and six relate to young people engaging with employers and workplaces:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Benchmark | Description | What achieving this looks like |
| Benchmark 5:  **Encounters with Employers and Employees** | Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes | Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter (where a student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace) with an employer. |
| Benchmark 6:  **Experiences of workplaces** | Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/ or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. | By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.  By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have. |

**The current picture in schools**

We collected data from schools during the last academic year to explore how well they were doing in delivering the Gatsby Benchmarks and to shine a light on the challenge that lies ahead.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The research showed that there has been some progress against the benchmarks since the last comparable survey in 2014. 37% of schools are fully meeting benchmark 5, and 57% of schools are partially meeting it. On benchmark 6, 39% are fully meeting it and 30% are partially meeting it. [[11]](#footnote-11)

Further breakdown of the data for benchmark 6 reveals that over half of these schools offer an experience of the workplace by the age of 16 and a third are offering an experience of the workplace between the ages of 16 and 18.

3. Responding to the Work Experience Enquiry Questions:

**GENERAL**

**Question 1: What does “good quality work experience” look like? What do young people and businesses expect to get from it?**

Gatsby Benchmark six (Experiences of workplaces) offers a clear expectation of the frequency of work experience that young people should expect to receive. Although the benchmark isn’t specific on exactly how long these experiences should be, The Careers & Enterprise Company believe a total of ten days would be good practice. So, before a young person is 16 they should have, in total, spent at least two weeks in a workplace and then an additional two weeks once they are in the sixth form or at college.

For some students a two-week placement with an employer may be the most appropriate provision but for others the experiences might be made up of several different activities for example, visiting a factory for a day in year 7, two days of shadowing a working friend or relative (e.g. ‘take your daughter to work day’) in year 8 or 9, two days of volunteering and one week of work experience in an office in key stage 4. We have then conducted further analysis to allow us to translate school provision into the number of young people who are receiving (and not receiving) experiences of the workplace.3 This analysis reveals that only around 60% of young people are having an experience of the workplace in Key Stage 4 and even less during Key Stage 5. We estimate that we need another 500,000 experiences of the workplace to be organised every year to ensure universal coverage.

Experiences of the workplace can come in a variety of forms which we outline below. There is value in giving young people access to all of these different types of experiences of the workplace and in thinking about which opportunities are right for which students. It is also important to try and offer a combination of different experiences in different workplaces to help young people to explore a range of possibilities.

We have identified eight main forms of experience of the workplace.

1. Viewing the school or college as a workplace
2. Workplace visits
3. Work shadowing
4. Short-term work experience (e.g. a one week or two week placement)
5. Extended work experience (e.g. a regular Wednesday afternoon placement over a whole year).
6. Internships and holiday placements
7. Volunteering and social action
8. Paid part-time work

Last year we commissioned some research as part of our ‘What Works?’ series on ‘work experience, job shadowing and workplace visits’. This drew together all available evidence on the effectiveness of these three activities and highlighted lessons for good practice. It concluded there are six key lessons which should be taken into account when organising any experiences of the workplace:2

1. **High quality and diverse.** Education providers should be committed to ensuring access to diverse and high-quality experiences of the workplace.
2. **Timing and length**. Flexibility in the timing and length of experiences of the workplace can help to gain the support of employers.
3. **Matching**. Students should be matched to experiences that are aligned with their career ambitions.
4. **Preparation**. Adequately preparing students for work experience contributes towards positive outcomes for both participants and employers. Employers can be dissatisfied and have negative experiences if young people are sent to them without any knowledge of what to expect or how to behave.
5. **Structure**. Students see placements to be of limited value if they are ‘low-status’ roles incorporating repetitive tasks with no scope for wider career exploration and skill development. Schools, colleges and brokerage services should consult with employers to ensure work placements have a clear and varied structure, and to identify meaningful activities that students can be involved in and learn from.
6. **Feedback and debriefing**. Employers should provide feedback to students. Debriefing sessions should also be held following placements in order to encourage students to reflect on what they have learnt. Student feedback should be collected in order to support the continuous improvement of placements.

**Question 2: How important is good quality work experience to a successful industrial strategy?**

The Government’s Industrial Strategy has the ambition to unleash ‘growth and prosperity for all’ and it identifies that a fundamental reshape of careers and enterprise support needed.[[12]](#footnote-12) Key to achieving this is the focus on giving young people encounters with employers and experiences of workplaces. This brings the world of work to life, inspires young people and help them form reasonable hypotheses about their future, which they can then test. This is what The Careers & Enterprise Company exists to do.

Specifically, giving young people encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace are important for a successful Industrial Strategy in the following ways:

* **Increasing the feedback loop between education and employment.** Regular connections between education and employment help to ensure stronger alignment between the skills and knowledge developed in the education system and that which is required by employers.
* **Helping to address sector-specific skills gaps** **(including in STEM).** More exposure to employers in priority and growth sectors supports young people to consider careers in these areas and understand the skills and knowledge that they will need to be successful within them.
* **Encouraging more people to pursue technical routes.** More exposure to employers, employees (apprentices in particular) and workplaces gives young people more information about apprenticeships and other technical routes, allowing them to realistically explore these routes as viable and attractive options.
* **Encouraging employers to think strategically and responsibly about the role they can play** **in supporting the workforce of the future.** As well as helping young people themselves prepare for the world of work, time spent with young people focusses employers on the importance of ensuring workplaces are ‘youth friendly’ in terms of access routes and recruitment methods.
* **Increases the efficiency of the labour market.** Experiences of workplaces bring young people into direct contact with employers. This can support the development of their professional networks and lead to offers of employment in either the short or long term. For employers such relationships can reduce the costs and delays associated with recruitment and increase the likelihood of finding hires with the right organisational fit.

**Question 3:** **What evidence is there that work experience boosts social mobility?**

The Government’s recent Careers Strategy clearly states that there is a compelling case for increasing the opportunities for young people to meet employers. It quotes well known research from the Education and Employers Taskforce that a young person who has four or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training and can earn up to 22% more during their career.[[13]](#footnote-13)

A number of studies have linked work experience to better personal outcomes. [[14]](#footnote-14) However, the quality of work experience is key to the experience being positive and young people from low socio-economic and disadvantaged backgrounds can lose out here. Without intermediary bodies and impartial brokerage, the danger is that instead of increasing social mobility, work experience placements managed by schools, parents and pupils themselves can serve to reinforce social inequality.

In a study of experiences of the workplaces offered by a number of schools with different socio-economic catchment areas, Hatcher and Le Gallais reported the following findings.[[15]](#footnote-15)

* Pupils from schools in less advantaged areas were more likely to undertake work experience placements that were of limited educational value and comprised of menial tasks.
* Pupils from more advantaged schools were more likely to undertake responsible tasks, to engage in activities such as job shadowing, and receive professional mentoring.
* The types of workplaces pupils access through work experience were associated with their social class, e.g. pupils from more economically advantaged schools were more likely to access placements in workplaces where professional or managerial roles predominated like in law, medicine or finance (it was common for these pupils to have parents already working in the professions)*.*

A member of the Careers & Enterprise Company’s Headteacher Advisory Group summarises the issue of a young person’s social capital well.

Getting high quality placements is the challenge. Too often well-connected parents access excellent places whilst the less well connected find themselves in a warehouse.

Providing assistance for students when finding placements for work experience is critical. Mediating bodies are influential in ensuring equal access to work experience for all young people. The Careers & Enterprise Company does this through the Enterprise Adviser Network and the Investment Fund which both provide intermediary services designed to connect schools to a wider range of employers and increase their capacity to find all students structured, meaningful experiences of the workplace irrespective of their socioeconomic background.

In addition, it may also be useful for the Committee to know that The Careers & Enterprise Company have also mobilised 60 Cornerstone Employers in the Government’s Opportunity Areas.[[16]](#footnote-16) Cornerstone employers lead the charge within business communities, investing time and resource to benefit schools and young people. By engaging and recruiting further businesses to make commitments, Cornerstone Employers create sustainability and act as an ambassador and champions for social mobility.

**YOUNG PEOPLE:**

**Question 4: How do differences between young people (e.g. geographic location, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, disability) affect the work experience opportunities those people have?**

There are numerous factors which affect access to and uptake of work experience opportunities. However, the link between a students’ social characteristics (e.g. gender, social class and ethnicity) and their ability to access work experience opportunities requires further study.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Our analysis suggests that geography is a very important determinant in the allocation of life chances and we have developed approaches to target our work and investment across England through our Cold Spots analysis.[[18]](#footnote-18) The cold spot model uses a range of indicators from education and the labour market to determine areas of greatest need.

Our *What Works?* research series has brought together evidence on transition programmes for young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Only sixty-three per cent of work experience coordinators surveyed in the 2017 DfE report stated that their school or college offered work-related activities to students with SEND. The research highlights the difficulties young people find regarding work experience:[[19]](#footnote-19)

* Young people with SEND report feeling excluded from such activities which they see as being primarily for students who are most able and closest to the labour market
* Whilst schools might offer some enhanced support for young people described as having SEND to facilitate work experience, there is not an overarching strategy to enhance access for them
* Employers themselves may create barriers as they are often unable or unwilling to make the necessary adjustments to support these young people; this is compounded by employers often perceiving disabilities as a risk

**Question 5: How could resources to help young people find out about and access work experience be improved?**

The Enterprise Adviser Network is providing support by connecting employers to schools and colleges. In addition, the Careers Strategy outlines that all schools should have a named Careers leader. The establishment of this position universally in schools and the continued growth of the Network are key.

**SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES**

**Question 6: Should compulsory work experience for under-16s be reinstated? What is the right age for work experience within compulsory education: 14-16 or 16-18?**

The right outcome to focus on is giving young people quality careers support in the round that prepares them for the world of work.

A member of our Head teacher advisory group further illustrates this:

I am a firm believer that two weeks in a random business for 14-16-year-old is of limited benefit for the majority of young people. Firstly, many young people are not clear around areas of work they will go into so a slot in just one place is not a great insight. But the main concern is how you get quality placements for all young people and not just those who know someone who has a good job. There are also many limitations on what children at 15 can do in many workplaces which also means the experience can be of limited benefit.

As previously explained, we endorse the Gatsby Benchmarks as the internationally regarded evidence-based framework. Under this framework, the focus is to give young people multiple exposures and engagement with employers from a young age and in every year, they are at secondary school. On experience of workplaces specifically, this should happen at both pre-16 (key stage 4) and pre-18 (key stage 5), be of high quality and situated in a broader programme of careers education.

**Question 7: How could schools and colleges be better supported to help their students access quality work experience?**

The growing Enterprise Adviser Network is providing the support and infrastructure to do this by connecting employers to schools and colleges and continued investment in this is key. Having a Careers Leader in schools is also vital and it is a really positive step forward that the Government’s Careers Strategy outlines that every school and college should identify a Careers Leader by September 2018. Finally, the introduction of 20 Careers Hubs as also outlined in the Careers Strategy will also be important as a mechanism for cooperation and practice exchange between schools.

**Question 8: Are services to help schools and colleges develop relationships with businesses working well? How could they be improved?**

The first evaluation of the Enterprise Adviser Network (published at the end of last year) showed positive findings on how the Network is working to help schools and colleges develop relationships with businesses.[[20]](#footnote-20) Our research tells us that the number of encounters young people are having with employers is increasing. In schools we work with, employer encounters have increased by 50% and on average three new employers are working with these schools. Overall, the report found that the Network is: helping schools and colleges to identify gaps in careers and enterprise provision, and develop, refine or enhance their strategic plans and objectives;

* improving the quality, variety and increasing the number of employer encounters;
* encouraging schools to start providing employer encounters for students at a younger age;
* encouraging integration of careers and enterprise in the curriculum and increasing teacher confidence about making links between their subject and the world of work;
* facilitating access to Labour Market Information (LMI) and helping schools and colleges to understand what opportunities are available locally;
* broadening career horizons and raising motivations, confidence and aspirations for young people, better preparing them for the world of work;
* increasing awareness and understanding of apprenticeships;
* giving employers exposure to the local talent pool by meeting with students and facilitating workplace experiences; and ƒ creating valuable networking opportunities for employers

**Question 9: How could barriers to businesses (including small businesses) offering work experience be overcome?**

Flexibility is key to ensuring every business, no matter its size, can help to bring the workplace alive for young people whether that be through work visits, work shadowing/work experience or enrichment activities like speaking in schools, mentoring and taking part in enterprise schemes. Taking this approach has been key to The Careers & Enterprise Company’s success in getting so many businesses on board (including many small businesses) to engage with young people.

For example, a small business may be unable to host a young person for the ‘traditional’ one or two week placement because of the supervision time burden and even if they can have the young person in they may be very worried they cannot give the young person a quality and meaningful experience. A solution could be that the business does a more project based work experience where they could host a couple of students for a day where a project can be set that they work on a few weeks away from the business before coming back in for a day to present their work and receive feedback. This allows students to develop key employability skills. Offering these students support via email or a conference call would also further develop their business skills and allow them to remain connected to the business.

Below are the typical perceived barriers often cited by businesses that our Network hears and the information and support we give to encourage them to work with us and young people:

***“There’s too much red-tape/paperwork involved”***

If businesses would like to offer placements but are put off by the Health and Safety and safeguarding requirements, then they can often work with a local partner who will help with this. Organisations such as EBP NW in Lancashire are commissioned by schools to offer work experience and will sort out all the required paperwork on behalf of the business and provide support throughout the placement to answer questions and support both the employer and student.[[21]](#footnote-21) The Careers & Enterprise Company also have a Provider Directory which allows businesses to see some of the work experience providers in their local area.[[22]](#footnote-22)

***“I’m happy for my business to offer workplace experiences but I don’t know any young people to offer it too”***

This is where our Network is helpful because our Enterprise Coordinators connect businesses directly with schools and can assist with what type of workplace experience activities will work for the business, schools and specific pupils. The Careers & Enterprise Company have produced a guide with the CBI on how to engage with the Enterprise Advisor Network and Schools.[[23]](#footnote-23) In addition, from September all schools will have a named Careers Leader on their website,[[24]](#footnote-24) so it will be much easier for local businesses to connect in with schools.

***“In theory I’m able to offer a young person a longer one-to-two week work experience placement but I’m put off because I don’t know what to do with them once they are here”***

For the experience to be meaningful for the young person and the business, planning the time is key. For example, this could include putting aside tasks for the young person, thinking about meetings where the young person can shadow a member of staff or preparing a more project based approach. An employer we have worked with gave the following example:

“*If you make a product, the young person could design a new product and over the course of the week work with different individuals in your business e.g. marketing, finance, digital to work out if it was viable, before presenting back to staff at the end of the week. The variety of skills a young person can learn about are huge, it’s more likely to memorable and meaningful and it also shares responsibility amongst a few staff which can be easier for the business to manage”*

There are also some very good resources from organisations like CIPD and BITC on our Employer Advisory Group to guide businesses in putting together meaningful workplace experiences for young people.[[25]](#footnote-25) [[26]](#footnote-26)

***“I’m worried the work experience student doesn’t enjoy their placement with my business?”***

A valuable part of work experience is helping young people discover what they don’t want to do, just as much as helping them discover what they do want to do. The key is for it to be meaningful. The organisation can give value to the young person by discussing the transferable skills they have developed and what elements of their time they liked more and how this could perhaps fit with another part of the business or with another type of career.

**Question 10: What does good practice in offering, advertising and recruiting for work experience look like, and how can businesses be encouraged to follow it?**

Practices need to be ‘youth friendly’, meaning businesses need to put themselves in the shoes of young people and consider where and how young people will receive and look for information about work experience. This will primarily be through their school but could also be through any established local careers support provider programmes who may have well known web/digital platforms where details about work experience can be advertised or communicated to young people such as *Wannabe[[27]](#footnote-27)* in Buckinghamshire. The Enterprise Adviser Network is set up to connect employers into schools to do this as well as with local providers. It is also important to ensure language and phrasing is understandable and relatable enough to young people. Organisations like CIPD and BITC provide good resources to help guide businesses in doing this well.

One of our Cornerstone Employers, the Adecco Group describe how they put themselves in the shoes of young people in their approach to work experience:

“Probably the most important first step is to ensure that the employees being offered work experience are engaged, if they don’t know why they are doing it and can’t see the benefits then it is highly likely that the experience won’t be a positive one.”

“Understanding what the candidates are looking for is key. The Adecco Group set out to offer 1000 days of work experience across the UK in 2018, and we are extremely proud to say we have surpassed the target less than half way through the year. This success has come in part through our learnings; we held a focus group so we could understand what students felt when they were onsite in our branches and central operations. We found that they want to remove the ‘fear factor’ so being as transparent as you can be about what work experience will look like in your organisation is crucial. Small steps like introducing the candidate to the team they will be working with beforehand, giving them a virtual tour of the environment they will be working in, showing them what be their key duties will be in their role and what success looks like will all go a long way towards providing a mutually successful work experience programme. This is what they want from a work experience placement.”

In order to deliver the level of work experience that is required we believe that employers need to:

* view employer engagement as a key responsibility;
* encourage senior employees to become Enterprise Advisers;
* provide one encounter every year for every seven employees;
* offer at least one work experience opportunity every year for every 25 employees; and
* take a leadership role locally to galvanise business engagement with education (e.g., consider becoming a Careers and Enterprise Cornerstone Employer).

Correspondingly secondary schools and colleges to need to:

* ensure that they have identified a Careers Leader;
* have a careers plan in place which sets out how employer engagement fits into a wider careers programme;
* commit to delivering at least seven employer encounters and two work experience placements for every student; and
* learn from one another, and especially from those schools that are already providing high levels of employer engagement, about how employer engagement can best be delivered. [[28]](#footnote-28)

**Question 11: Does work experience benefit businesses? What are the motivations for businesses to offer work experience?**

We know from our evaluation research that employers involved in our Enterprise Adviser Network report a range of benefits from engaging with young people: the opportunity to shape future talent; exposure to the local talent pool; opportunities to raise the profile of their organisation and sector; the opportunity to network with other businesses; and the opportunity to develop their own skills through working with schools and young people. They also cite the importance of altruism and the sense of being able to give something back. Some reported that they have reorganised the way in which they provide experiences of the workplace. For example, by providing students with insights to multiple departments and job roles. They say that this has boosted the number of students interested in working at the organisation in the future and improved work readiness. [[29]](#footnote-29)

Enterprise Advisers also told us they value the opportunity to showcase their industries and increase understanding of the breadth of career pathways. This is of particular value in sectors with skills shortages. For example, several Enterprise Advisors working in the construction sector say one of their reasons for joining the Network is to raise awareness of the range of professional roles available in the industry. There are also examples of Enterprise Advisers in the engineering sector who experienced an increase in the number of applicants to their apprenticeships. There is also some evidence showing that Enterprise Advisers have become more involved with the local community. For example, one Enterprise Adviser in the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership region has joined the Skills Board for the local district.[[30]](#footnote-30)

With regards to work experience specifically, organisations tend to cite the following benefits and motivations:

* ***Contributing to a pipeline of diverse talent****:* A common fact stated when interviewing business about their skills needs, is that young people don’t have the experience that employers are looking for when hiring. Providing real life exposure to workplaces enables young people to understand the skills and attributes business are looking for and to start to develop these. If a business attracts early talent, it’s a way to start developing a local pipeline of diverse talent which is important
* ***Local marketing****:* Offering work experience to young people can not only help with attracting new talent but can also attract potential customers. Giving a young person a great opportunity which they will talk about with their parents, friends and teachers is a valuable piece of local marketing.
* ***Gaining new perspectives:*** Young people bring a fresh pair of eyes into a business and can often provide a new perspective on a process or product that may have existed for years.
* ***Staff development:*** Mentoring a young person on work experience is a great development opportunity, it can work particularly well for entry level talent into the business getting their first experience of managing people. For example, getting Graduates to help manage the work experience students is both good for developing the Graduates skills and provides a relatable role model for the work experience student.

**The Adecco Group describe the above well:**

“The Adecco Group believes businesses benefit tremendously from hosting work experience placements, it supports the learning of the talent of the future. We are committed to reducing youth unemployment and providing real life experiences that sets them apart when they come to future employment, it also helps to create a ‘work ready’ pool of talent. In addition, there is a benefit to the organisation, now more than ever work experience provides ‘reverse learning’; employers are learning from young people as they offer alternative ways to tackle workplace challenges.”

**OTHER SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS**

**Question 12: What role should the Government have in ensuring young people have access to quality work experience?**

Through establishing the Careers & Enterprise Company and investing in us, the Government is making it easier for schools and employers to work together. Through the new Careers Strategy, the Government have backed the Gatsby Benchmarks as the evidence-based framework for careers support that prepares young people for the fast-changing world of work. As described earlier, benchmarks five and six relate to employer engagement, including experience of the workplace.

The progress we have made by growing our Enterprise Adviser Network across England and in scaling up our Investment in programmes to support young people is having an impact. In schools we work with, employer encounters have increased by 50% and on average three new employers are working with these schools. Continued investment in our activities will enable the volume of employer exposure (including experience of work places) to keep growing.

**Question 13: Should the Government invest in resources to help young people find work experience independently? What would these resources ideally look like?**

The current focus for Government is on helping school and colleges connect to businesses. The Careers & Enterprise Company is the organisation responsible for enabling these connections to be formed. As previously described, an interaction may come in the form of a traditional 1-2-week work experience placement, but high-quality experiences of workplace may also come through multiple, structured experiences that allow young people to explore a range of possibilities throughout their education. Our research suggests that schools often struggle to manage connections with employers and manage work experience without the involvement of a third-party brokerage organisation. The existence of a delivery organisation that sits between employers and schools, charged with bringing the two together is therefore critical. To facilitate this, we fund a range of delivery partners to facilitate workplace visits with multiple employers. However, at present our funding is targeted to the areas that are most in need rather than provided universally.

***The risk of overwhelming young people by making them the sole decision maker***

We know there is a plethora of digital platforms currently available regarding work experience placements both nationally and they vary in their quality and sophistication. We have not done any detailed analysis of digital work experience platforms. However, our research report, *Moments of Choice*,[[31]](#footnote-31) commissioned with the Behavioural Insights Team, found that the already difficult process of careers decision-making was made more difficult by the confusing and complex information available to young people. There are more than 50 websites offering careers information. This information overload leads many young people to disengage with the process of career decision-making altogether. We believe this might have a strong bearing on the appeal and impact of any platform designed to connect young people to work experience opportunities.

**Question 14: How could private and third sector organisations be better supported and encouraged to help young people access quality work experience?**

Our Enterprise Adviser Network supports schools and colleges to connect to employers and providers (third and private sector). Our Investment Fund helps to scale up the best provider organisations round the country to work with schools and young people via our Network. The continued growth of the Network provides the national infrastructure to integrate these organisations in a strategic way.

June 2018

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