



HM Government

Youth Select Committee Report

Government responses to
recommendations

February 2019

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Introduction

The government welcomes the Committee's inquiry into work experience. Preparing students for adult life is one of the department's top priorities and experience of work and the wider links between education and employers plays an important part in this.

The government published the careers strategy in December 2017. This sets out the steps we are taking to build a world class careers system that will help young people to choose the career that's right for them.

The Careers & Enterprise Company is making excellent progress to deliver the ambitions of the strategy and helping schools and colleges to focus on meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks, with over 3000 now using the Compass tool to diagnose their performance.

We recognise that there is still a way to go and we will work to make sure that experiences of work are accessible to all, as this is at the heart of our focus on social mobility.

Responses to recommendations

1. We recommend that the department reinstate funding for the Enterprise Passport, engaging with The Careers & Enterprise Company to agree a clear and timely plan for its delivery. (Paragraph 20)

Several organisations already offer programmes and resources such as Barclays LifeSkills. This programme provides a range of free, interactive resources to help young people to develop the skills they need and to find out more about the careers that are of interest to them.

We do not believe that reinstating funding for the Enterprise Passport is the best way to help young people to acquire and demonstrate their employability skills.

The government is working with The Careers & Enterprise Company to support schools to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks on employer encounters and to provide young people with opportunities to demonstrate their employability skills. Over 2,000 schools and colleges have been matched with an Enterprise Adviser, a senior business volunteer, to help identify opportunities and make links with other businesses. The Careers & Enterprise Company has also supported 150 programmes through £10m of investment funds, supporting 540,000 young people through high quality employer engagement activities, targeted at areas of most need.

Through our ambitious program of reforming the National Careers Service website, we are encouraging people of all ages to explore their skills and motivations through online Skills Health Checks. We will work with young people to understand how we can improve the resources that they need to make decisions about future careers or learning pathways.

2. We recommend the department dedicate a section of the redesigned National Careers Service website to work experience, pulling together and signposting towards existing high-quality resources and services. We further recommend the department work with young people to co-produce this resource, and that it involves them as ambassadors in promoting the site on an ongoing basis once it is launched. (Paragraph 29)

We intend to undertake further work to understand whether there is value in dedicating a section of the National Careers Service website to work experience and will involve young people in the design and testing of any new resources and services.

In the careers strategy, we said that we would make sure the National Careers Service website contained all information that would help support people of all ages to make choices about their future. As part of this, we agree it is important to involve young people in developing resources on the website to make sure it helps them.

3 A). In light of the public money invested in it, we recommend that the department ensures The Careers & Enterprise Company is held to account for its provision. We also recommend that the department commission a full independent review of The Careers & Enterprise Company's impact in schools and colleges. This should take into account its impact on improving access to work experience for most disadvantaged young people. (Paragraph 38)

The Careers & Enterprise Company is held to account for its government funded provision. We do this through the requirements set out in their grant funding agreement, which is agreed on a yearly basis. This includes detailed targets and performance indicators.

The Careers & Enterprise Company has already commissioned two independent reviews to look at the effectiveness and impact of their provision. Pye Tait conducted an evaluation of the Enterprise Adviser Network after two years of activity and found that the Network was already having an impact, with schools and colleges reporting a 50% increase in employer encounters on average. SQW evaluated the 2015 Careers and Enterprise Fund and found it had engaged 3500 new employers, with programmes reaching 379,000 young people and with demonstrated longer-term impacts. Both reports are available on The Company's website.

We do not feel that an independent review is necessary at this time. The department holds The Careers & Enterprise Company to account for its provision through monthly progress discussions and formal quarterly review meetings. Officials also regularly report on the progress of careers strategy activities to Ministers and The Company often attends these, to discuss their progress and the impact they are having.

The State of the Nation report, which provides the first comprehensive annual assessment of careers education for young people in England, provides further evidence of The Careers & Enterprise Company's impact in schools and colleges. The report finds that schools and colleges serving disadvantaged communities are scoring better against the Gatsby Benchmarks than other areas.

3 B). The department should instruct Ofsted to inspect the quality of Careers and Enterprise Company funded provision, as it does for the National Careers Service. (Paragraph 38)

Quality of careers provision in schools and colleges is already inspected as part of routine Ofsted inspections and this includes any activities that may have been funded through The Careers & Enterprise Company. Ofsted noted earlier this year that careers guidance in school is improving.

The Careers & Enterprise Company supports schools and colleges to improve their careers offer to young people. The providers it contracts with to deliver careers provision are required to undergo a robust selection process and are monitored by The Company on their performance. In addition, The Company commission independent evaluation of its Investment Fund as a whole.

We therefore do not intend to ask Ofsted to directly inspect the quality of The Careers & Enterprise Company funded provision.

4. We recommend the department update the statutory guidance to schools and colleges to include a “right to be offered” a substantive work placement at Key Stage 4. We also recommend it work with a representative sample of schools to track the activities that students fulfil in respect of Benchmarks 5 and 6 with reference to pupil characteristics (such as ethnicity, gender, disability and socioeconomic background) and type of experience. The department should publish this data and use it to produce an annual “health check” on young people’s parity of access to work experience. (Paragraph 46)

We recognise the role that work-related learning plays in enhancing student's employability skills. We want all young people, irrespective of their background, to have access to a full range of employer-related activities.

Careers statutory guidance makes it clear that schools should offer experiences of work and other employer-based encounters as part of their careers strategy for year 8-13 pupils and are free to decide how this is delivered. The Gatsby Benchmarks also require that secondary schools offer every young person at least seven encounters with employers throughout their education.

As part of technical education, young people are provided with several opportunities to experience the world of work before they turn 16, including through work placements.

The department is working with The Careers & Enterprise Company to remove the barriers that students face in accessing experiences with work places and employers. This includes providing additional support to young people through the Opportunity Areas programme. The Company has also mapped ‘need’ geographically, through their ‘Cold Spots’ analysis, to target activity in these areas and has issued guidance to help employers to provide workplace experiences, including for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

We are pleased that The Careers & Enterprise Company’s State of the Nation report shows that a growing number of schools and colleges are engaging with Benchmarks 5 and 6 but agree that we could do more to monitor progress, with respect to pupil characteristics. We will consider whether we can collect additional data from schools and colleges, whilst minimising any additional workload burden, through the Compass and Tracker tools.

5. We recommend that the department amend its guidance on Career Leaders to require them to hold a professional qualification, be registered with the appropriate professional body, and fulfil any associated Continuing Professional Development requirements (Paragraph 50)

We agree that Careers Leaders should have the appropriate training to deliver their role effectively and to that end we have committed £5.5m to fund over 1300 training bursaries. The Careers & Enterprise Company has selected 14 high-quality providers to deliver this training and many of these offer courses which could lead to an accredited qualification. We think it is right to offer schools and colleges a choice of which training course is most appropriate to meet their needs, as many Careers Leaders already hold a professional qualification as a teacher or careers adviser.

We agree with the Committee that strong leadership is critical in developing strong careers programmes. Careers Leaders play an important role in providing effective careers provision, as they are accountable for implementing their school or college’s careers programme in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

We have also worked with The Company to provide a range of free resources to all schools and colleges, to support their Careers Leader’s professional development. At this early stage in the new role we are not minded to introduce a separate professional qualification but will continue to monitor and evaluate the programme to inform future policy decisions.

6. The department should conduct research on the links between work experience and choosing technical education at 16+, with a view

to diverting funding into schools to support work experience provision. The department should set out plans and timescales for this research in response to our report. (Paragraph 53)

We welcome the Committee's recommendation. Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace. We know from our existing research that this helps students to make informed choices about their future at post-16 and beyond.¹

We will continue to look carefully at how we can improve our evidence base around the links between work experience and choosing technical education at post-16 through our 2019 programme of research.

The roll out of T Levels and industry placements will also help us to further understand how work placements can influence students' choices more generally.

7. The department should, as soon as possible alongside its existing research, produce guidance for primary schools to deliver careers education and exposure to employers. (Paragraph 57)

We welcome the Committee's recommendation. A lot of good work is already happening in primary schools. For example, Ernst & Young Foundation is jointly funding a Career Benchmarks Primary Pilot for primary schools. The pilot, led by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, will translate the existing Gatsby benchmarks, developed originally for secondary schools, for use in a primary context. The pilot will begin in January 2019 with 70 primary schools in the North East. The learning from this pilot will be shared widely.

We are also aware of several innovative programmes such as Primary Futures and Young Enterprise's fiver challenge, which offer primary school children opportunities to learn about the wider world of work.

The careers strategy highlights the importance of inspiring children about the opportunities ahead from an early age. We are working with The Careers & Enterprise Company to evaluate new approaches to understand what careers activities work well in primary schools.

The Careers & Enterprise Company will soon publish research on 'What Works' in careers-related learning in primary school. This evidence will inform a new primary 'toolkit' of resources and information. The toolkit will provide opportunities for primary schools to work with employers so that they can offer encounters of the world of work to pupils and support schools to embed careers activities in their curriculum.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/user-insight-research-into-post-16-choices>

Along with a primary investment fund to support existing careers programmes, this work will enable us to support primary schools to deliver careers-related learning for children and exposure to the world of work.

8. We recommend that alongside its work on improving careers advice in secondary and primary schools, the department commissions research on “what works” in engaging parents at both secondary and primary level. (Paragraph 61)

We agree that parents and carers from all backgrounds should be equipped to support their children with careers advice and work experience. The careers strategy recognises the importance of engaging parents effectively and supporting them to guide their children’s decision-making.

We acknowledge that parents need accurate and up-to-date information and to know which sources they can trust. That is why the careers strategy includes a commitment to recontract LMI for All and to put all government careers information in one place on the National Careers Service website.

We also agree that engagement with parents should begin at primary school. The Primary Fund will test new programmes and expand ones that work, including in the area of involving parents.

Research shows that the preferred way parents would like to receive information on their child’s future job / careers options is through their child’s school². Parents also want information to be available online, in an easy to use format. In September 2018, we introduced a new requirement for schools to publish information about their careers programme on their website, including material aimed at parents.

At a national level, we are making a lot of information available to communicate with parents about our reformed apprenticeships and new technical options as they become available. As part of this work, we commissioned research to explore how best to engage and inform parents or carers on careers guidance issues related to technical education. We will carefully consider the lessons from this work, and the wider domestic and international evidence base, to develop practical tips for engaging parents or carers with careers guidance. We will also consider whether further research is required.

9. We recommend BEIS and DfE co-convene a joint stakeholder group on work experience and industrial strategy. This should include representatives from local government, LEPs, business, education, and young people themselves. Its purpose should be to consider how

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-and-their-parents-or-carers-omnibus-wave-1-survey>

businesses in key sectors that do not currently offer work experience - especially small businesses - can be encouraged to do so. We also recommend that DfE ask The Careers & Enterprise Company to develop a framework and toolkit for SMEs to help them deliver high quality placements and to consider how this might best be promoted to them alongside existing resources. (Paragraph 74)

We agree that more can be done to build on work so far to encourage businesses of all sizes and across all sectors to offer young people experiences of the workplace. This includes increasing awareness of the benefits of offering different types of work experience and providing support to overcome perceived barriers.

The department works jointly with a wide range of stakeholders, including BEIS, to deliver the industrial strategy commitments. This department is also working with MHCLG, to make sure that local industrial strategies produced by Local Enterprise Partnerships consider how to engage business in careers education locally. The Careers & Enterprise Company partner with LEPs to deliver the Enterprise Adviser Network which ensures further integration.

The Careers & Enterprise Company continues to build strong relationships with SMEs and engages with a large number of small and micro businesses through their Enterprise Adviser Network. 58% of Enterprise Advisers are from SMEs (including self-employed and micro business) and all schools and colleges will be offered an Enterprise Adviser by 2020. SMEs are also well-represented in the Cornerstone Employers Group, where organisations commit to join a leadership group of local businesses to support schools and colleges in their area to increase the number of encounters and workplace experiences offered to local young people.

In addition, The Careers & Enterprise Company is working to encourage and support more employers to engage with education and have made key resources available through their website, such as employer guides, What Works research and their Provider Directory which are also promoted through the Network. They are also developing a campaign to launch in the new year specifically directed at SME businesses to encourage engagement with education in their areas.

The department has also been developing resources to support employers to offer effective work placements. This includes producing guidance around the range of work-related opportunities delivered as part of government programmes and support for employers providing T Level industry placements, so that we have a sufficient supply of high quality placements.

10. We recommend the department extend eligibility for travel bursary funding to young people aged under the age of 16. The department must also publicise the fund and ensure that information on eligibility and how to apply is communicated clearly to young

people and those supporting them. As a first step, it should commit to communicating this via schools, colleges and to young people directly via the redesigned National Careers Service website. (Paragraph 75)

We acknowledge that young people should be aware of the funding that is available and the information they need to apply. We will explore the best way to disseminate this information to young people and consider whether the National Careers Service website should present this information.

For children who are of compulsory school age, there is no statutory duty for schools to provide funding for travel to work experience. Local authorities are responsible for funding home to school transport for eligible children.

There is support in place for those aged 16 to 19. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students to overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education. Whereas the fund can be used to support travel costs for this age group, this is not its sole purpose. The fund is intended to support a wide range of costs that are creating a financial barrier to participation in post-16 education and training, in addition to travel, such as essential equipment or books.

11. We recommend the department develop a national benchmarking scheme for quality work experience, with a focus on in-sector comparisons and continual improvement. It should set out timescales for doing so in response to our report. We further recommend that, once implemented, government ensures all central departments are signed up to the scheme and publishes an annual report on their progress in meeting the benchmarks. (Paragraph 79)

We are considering what constitutes a ‘meaningful’ industry placement as part of the roll out of T Levels and have published online guidance for industry placement providers around this.

We agree that work experience should be of a high quality and have taken steps to raise the standards of placements for young people. The Gatsby Benchmarks provide a clear framework for schools and colleges to work to for all aspects of careers provision, including experiences of the workplace (Benchmark 6).

We also plan to develop a quality assurance framework for T Level industry placements and part of this will explore the role that Ofsted, the IFA and ESFA will take in the enforcement of quality assurance.

We are also aware that employers have done a lot of good work in this area. Organisations such as Youth Employment UK have produced quality kitemarks for work experience and we do not think it is appropriate to develop our own. Instead, we are focusing on providing employers with clear guidance. This includes creating a suite of

resources which will provide employers with support and guidance for delivering work-related learning.



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