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Understanding the link between
employers and schools and the role of
the National Careers Service

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RESEARCH

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Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick

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Executive summary

The Government's Industrial Strategy (2012) stresses the importance of stimulating business growth and the need to foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship. A strong education and training system is crucial for developing this culture, as well as fundamental to opening up routes for all individuals to succeed in the labour market, thereby playing a full part in civil society. Employers need to be able to recruit the right talent for their businesses, so that they can harness employee potential efficiently. Robust and efficient links between employers and education are essential to deliver on all of these agendas. A recent Government Action Plan (BIS & DfE, 2013) recommends that employers should work with the National Careers Service to facilitate such links. The Service should foster greater exposure of young people to the world of work and facilitate closer involvement between schools and employers, so that young people can be inspired, mentored and coached by employers. The need for greater levels of employer engagement with education, facilitated by the National Careers Service and linked to the Government's 'Inspiration' agenda (HM Government, 2013) was the focus of this research study.

The National Careers Service

The National Careers Service was launched in April, 2012. It was designed to meet the needs of adults and young people by delivering online, telephone and face-to-face services. At the time of this study, face-to-face services were available to adults and to young people who were 18 and registered unemployed, with the substantial responsibility for young people's face-to-face services primarily residing with schools, colleges and local authorities. Given the potentially pivotal role of the National Careers Service in supporting adults and young people in their labour market transitions, the perspectives of employers, educationalists and other relevant stakeholders were examined for this study to find out what works well in the current employer/ education engagement arrangements and to identify areas for improvement.

The study took place from January to July, 2014 when the National Careers Service had undertaken a re-procurement of its Prime Contractor arrangements. Findings therefore provide baseline information in advance of the new contracts being formally implemented from October 2014. Levels of employer/ education engagement were examined, together with the nature of this engagement and how it can be supported, enhanced and expanded. In particular, the role of the National Careers Service was examined to ascertain views on its work to date. These issues were investigated through the different lenses of employers, educational institutions (schools and Further Education colleges) and a range of stakeholders.

Methodology

Survey data were collected from 301 employers and from 98 educational establishments (78 schools and 20 colleges). Whilst the sampling was not representative, data provide vivid indications of patterns and trends illustrative of the types of interactions currently existing between schools and employers. Survey data were supplemented by in-depth interviews with career representatives in 12 schools/colleges selected from the survey sample. Additionally, six case studies were undertaken on schools/colleges from the sub-

sample of 12 to provide detailed examples of good practice (see Appendix 4). Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with seven National Careers Service Prime Contractors and 23 key stakeholder organisations, including one additional National Careers Service Prime Contractor and the National Careers Service helpline and webchat services.

Literature review: key findings

A search of recent academic and grey literature, focusing on employer/ education links provided evidence of practice from a range of organisations, employer bodies and employer-based careers services. The review provided the broad context for the research and was used to inform the design of the research tools used. Literature suggests that the nature of successful employer engagement is based on long-lasting, mutually acceptable and beneficial relationships between schools and businesses. Overall, the literature review shows how employers are working and linking with schools/ colleges in a variety of ways that bring significant benefit, but that these activities need to be incorporated within structures and models that allow for a more substantive up-scaling and coherence of provision at a local and national level (see Appendix 1 for the full review).

Employer engagement with schools and colleges: key findings

Of all employers surveyed, nearly half had previously been engaged with schools/ colleges. Employers who offered apprenticeship or other types of training to young people were more likely to engage with schools/colleges and there is some evidence that larger companies were more likely to engage with schools/colleges than smaller companies. The most frequently mentioned types of engagement were work experience and/or visits from school or college students. Altruistic reasons were the most important for engaging with schools/colleges, with employers thinking that it was a 'good thing to do', and/or that it facilitated local community engagement.

More than half of all engaged employers had undertaken some type of activity in the last half year. Main reasons for a lack of more regular engagement were threefold: lack of time and resources; unwillingness of schools (unable or not interested); and the age restriction preventing employment of staff under the age of 18 years. Approximately half of all engaged employers indicated that these activities had not had any benefit to their business.

Approximately half of all employers surveyed had never engaged with schools or colleges. Nearly all indicated that they were not interested in linking with schools or colleges in the future, because of lack of time and resources; financial reasons, and/or barriers created by health and safety and insurance regulations. Some stated that they could not see any potential benefit to their businesses of this activity.

Employer awareness of the National Careers Service: key findings

Just under half of the employers surveyed were aware of the National Careers Service. Amongst employers who were engaged with schools or colleges, the proportion was slightly higher. About a quarter of the all employers surveyed who were aware of the National Careers Service reported existing, longstanding links or relationships with National Careers Service prime contractors.

Employers who were aware of, and had engaged with, the National Careers Service had used it for: support with recruitment; support with training; access to labour market intelligence; connecting schools and/or colleges with their business; identifying students to undertake work experience; and setting up visits by students or teachers to their business. However, most employers who were aware of the National Careers Service had not actively engaged in these ways.

Employers surveyed were asked about the support they would like from the National Careers Service. Most frequently identified related to training and help with identifying work experience students. (It should be noted that National Careers Service work with employers is set to increase from October 2014 onwards, subject to key performance indicators (KPIs) being agreed with the Skills Funding Agency. The nature and scale of work with employers going forward had, therefore, to be fully determined at the time this research was undertaken).

School and college engagement with employers: key findings

Ninety-eight survey interviews were completed with staff in schools/ colleges with responsibility for employer engagement and/or careers support services (most held both these responsibilities). Nearly a third worked only within careers support services, with a few solely responsible for employer engagement. Half the participating schools were academies (sponsored or converter); and half were schools with a sixth form. Twenty Further Education (FE) colleges also participated in the survey.

Nearly all schools/colleges reported some type of links with employers, or participation in employer-linked external events to support careers advice activities. The nature of the employer engagement varied to a certain extent with the different types of schools. Only four schools/colleges (that is, two Academy schools with a sixth form, one maintained school without a sixth form and one FE college) were not interested in linking with employers.

Employer engagement is not normally provided for all students. Only one third of all schools provided activities for all students irrespective of age. For all other schools, the activities were aimed at Year 10 and Year 11 students. The main reasons for organising employer-linked activities restricted to an age-based selected group of students were to: fit in with subject option choices; provide careers advice and options; and prepare for further education and training. Other reasons related to the statutory requirements in the National Curriculum and/or the potential benefit for particular year groups.

The most frequently reported ways in which schools or colleges were linked with employers were by employers' visits to their premises, followed by students undertaking work experience placements at businesses and externally organised careers fair(s). Different patterns for these types of interaction were evident, according to type of educational institution.

The key impact of employer engagement reported by schools and colleges was raising students' awareness of different industry sectors. Half of all participating schools/colleges reported this impact, followed by raised awareness of the different educational pathways.

School and college awareness of the National Careers Service: key findings

All but one of the schools/ colleges surveyed knew of the existence of the National Careers Service. The most common ways in which schools/colleges used the National Careers Service included (in this order): signposting the National Careers Service website; directing students to the telephone helpline; accessing labour market information; and guided discovery of the National Careers Service website during a timetabled lesson. Main reasons for satisfaction with the National Careers Service related to the website, particularly job profiles. Areas of criticism related to the National Careers Service not being user-friendly for younger children and that “Information needs to be up-to-date”. Aspirational support from the National Careers Service included: database of employers willing to link with schools and colleges; support for links with employers; and packages of employer engagement activities.

National Careers Service Prime Contractors: key findings

National Careers Service links with employers to support the provision of careers guidance for young people at an operational level are limited in scope at present, but should increase in the future, under the new contracts from October 2014. The National Careers Service telephone and website helpline service for young people and adults similarly reported they had limited contacts with employers, though this was also likely to change from October 2014 onwards.

Despite having no specific remit and consequently very little direct contact with schools, the National Careers Service is able to provide some support to help schools and colleges fulfil their new statutory requirements regarding the provision of careers support for their students.

National Careers Service Prime Contractors favoured a brokering model for the future, where a bank of employer contacts for talks, visits, work experience, mock interviews, etc. could be provided to schools and colleges and where they could work with others to support services under the National Careers Service brand further.

Stakeholders’ views on employer engagement: key findings

Three dominant themes emerged from the stakeholder interviews. First, the need for a renewed focus on National Careers Service working links with employers and schools, with a need for greater clarity on its role and remit. Second, a clearer remit regarding leadership and the strategic direction of the National Careers Service, including support for employers and schools to make sense of the careers landscape. Third, the need for new brokerage opportunities between the National Careers Service, employers, schools and colleges was identified. All respondents indicated a strong appetite to work more closely with the National Careers Service at both a strategic and operational level. The majority of Employer Bodies and National Employers highlighted the need for greater cohesion between the National Careers Service and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). [Please note: at the time of writing, the Skills Funding Agency was currently restructuring with a reconfiguration of the National Careers Service promised from October 2014 onwards.]

Key issues for the National Careers Service identified by senior leader stakeholder interviews include the need to:

- Develop a compelling vision and proposition for partnerships between employers, schools and the National Careers Service;
- Optimise the National Careers Service brand;
- Find effective ways to bring more coherence to disjointed and overlapping government-funded work with employers;
- Help schools and colleges to meet their statutory requirements for impartial and independent careers guidance;
- Focus more on the learner journey as well as signposting employers and schools to quality careers services and products;
- Support the delivery of face-to-face careers guidance alongside quality assured provision; and
- Implement the National Careers Council recommendations agreed by Government.

Conclusions and implications: summary

1. There is a plethora of existing employer engagement activity with schools/ colleges that brings significant benefit to learners.

Implication: These activities need to be rationalised and incorporated within better co-ordinated structures and local models that allow for a more substantive up-scaling and coherence of provision at a local and national level.

2. Larger employers involved in some form of training were more likely to engage with education, compared to SMEs.

Implication: Finding ways of incentivising SMEs to work with educational institutions and the National Careers Service is crucial and should be made a policy priority.

3. Barriers to participation of employers with educational institutions were reported as mainly the lack of time and resources needed.

Implication: There is scope to incentivise, stimulate and support employer interest in engaging more fully with schools and colleges, with an important role for the National Careers Service and other allied national initiatives. However, a clear steer is required to indicate the types of support (e.g. 'local hubs') that could and should be provided.

4. The nature and scope of employer engagement varied according to type of educational institution with models of interesting practices evident at a local and national level. However, the majority of activities with employers are organised for learners in the 14-

19 age range, with an increasing emphasis on post-16 learners, particularly with regard to work experience and work shadowing.

Implication: Schools' work with employers is currently underdeveloped for learners aged 11-14 and this should be expanded and extended to reach this group.

5. Employer links not only inspire, inform and advise students about particular occupations and sectors, but also enhance the provision of careers and work-related education in the curriculum.

Implication: Employer engagement activities in school and colleges should be promoted alongside careers education and access to impartial careers guidance, not as an alternative to impartial guidance. Strong school leadership is essential to drive forward new conversations and actions on the added-value contribution of employers/ employees, teachers and careers development professionals to the whole school delivery plan.

6. School and colleges would welcome support with developing links with employers. They need and want further information and support on employer contacts and the range of activities they can bring to the institution(s) such as mentors, role models, work experience, talks and visits to the workplace.

Implication: This could be through access to a database of employers on the National Careers Service website or a brokerage service provided by the prime or sub-contractors. For the latter to work effectively, however, an exercise to build upon the existing mapping of partnership organisations needs to be undertaken. Additionally, current examples of good practice should be widely disseminated to schools and colleges, for example, the British Chamber of Commerce model designed to expose teachers to the changing nature of the labour market information (LMI) provides an interesting approach to teacher's continuous professional development at a local and regional level.

7. High quality, reliable labour market information (LMI) is in high demand from schools and colleges.

Implication: The National Careers Services is equipped to respond effectively to the needs of schools and colleges and should provide LMI suitable for younger clients. The 'LMI for All' web portal (<http://www.lmiforall.org.uk/>) provides an open source for the data required, but schools and colleges require support to maximise the potential for exploiting this resource. The National Careers Service has a role in providing the support required.

8. Less than half of all the employers surveyed were aware of the National Careers Service.

Implication: Ways of making it easier for employers to connect with schools and colleges to enrich curriculum learning, work experience and career development

opportunities are necessary, communicated through a strong and sustained marketing campaign.

9. The visibility of the National Careers Service is not apparent to employers, particularly in relation to how it is informing and advising young people, parents, teachers and employers.

Implication: An 'Employer-Led Advisory Body' within the Skills Funding Agency could help facilitate the strengthening of strategic partnerships and more flexible utilisation of resources between the National Careers Service, employers and schools.

10. National Careers Service links with employers to support the provision of careers guidance for young people at an operational level in schools and colleges are limited in scope at present, but this is set to increase under the new National Careers Service contracts (October 2014).

Implication: To maximise the benefit of the limited resources available to the National Careers Service, working in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authority Economic Development Units and other agencies should be promoted, avoiding duplication of the work of the local education business partnerships (EBPs) that still operate in some regions.

1. Introduction

Findings from a mixed method research study, led by the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick, are presented. The study was designed to achieve a clearer understanding of links between employers and schools. The role of the National Careers Service in supporting education/employer engagement was a particular focus of the investigation.

Setting the context

A critical success factor for economic growth is employers' ability to recruit the right talent and to develop and use individuals' knowledge and skills effectively. Various documents have emphasised the importance of stronger education/ employer links as a major contributor to achieving this goal. For example, 'Skills for Sustainable Growth' (BIS, 2010a) and 'Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth' (BIS, 2010b) highlight how social mobility depends upon a strong education and skills system. This opens up progression routes, helps individuals become confident and supports individuals' ability to play a full part in civil society. Whilst the Government's Industrial Strategy (BIS, 2012) emphasises the importance of stimulating business growth, as well as fostering a climate of enterprise and entrepreneurship, key actions include the need for education to work more closely with business to help develop the skills that businesses need. In parallel, the Heseltine Review (Heseltine, 2012) assessed local capacity, identifying place and local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) as key drivers of economic growth. Subsequently, LEPs and City Deal initiatives have become established (including business, local authorities and other key stakeholder representation), with LEP 'Skills for Growth' strategies now in place, alongside new Apprenticeship Growth Plans. Additionally, two recent reviews of apprenticeships, by Holt (2012) and Richard (2012), also emphasise the need to empower employers and place them at the heart of maximising the impact of public investments, particularly in the design and delivery of apprenticeships.

The recent OECD (2013) review of skills beyond school highlights the scale of the challenge that lies ahead for Britain to compete effectively in a rapidly developing global economy. For example, technology and globalisation have created a 'hollowed-out' labour market with increasing demand for a more highly skilled and highly educated workforce. Youth employment is also a key priority as more young people face a challenging labour market. The composition of the young unemployed differs markedly from that of previous recessions due to a significant increase in participation in education, with at least three major challenges faced by policy-makers and partner agencies. First, to get a better understanding of changing labour markets, jobs, skills and growth, and offer practical support particularly for those most vulnerable in society. Second, to find appropriate strategies that ensure a clear understanding by young people, parents/guardians (and employers) of the implications of raising the participation age. Third, to explore new ways of improving the 'Youth Guarantee' offer, including the active involvement of employers (OECD, 2013). Greater levels of employer engagement are relevant to all three.

The education landscape is also changing at a rapid pace. Reforms set out in the Academies Act (2010) and subsequent Education Act (2011) made a significant impact on

how schools and colleges in England are organised and run. There now exists a plurality of provision including: state schools, free schools, academies, university technology colleges (UTCs), independent schools and further education colleges (see Appendix 8 for definition of schools). Greater autonomy has been devolved from Government to head teachers and college leaders to run their institutions and teach lessons as they deem appropriate. The statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff (Department for Education, 2014) links strong engagement with employers to the agenda around inspiring young people and lists a variety of the different types of interventions that could be implemented in practice (p.10). A proposed new national curriculum in 2014; new examinations from 2015; and accountability reforms from 2016 onwards will potentially drive forward new partnerships and delivery arrangements, involving employers and other key stakeholders. These major reforms in schools and colleges necessitate diverse forms of employer engagement.

Employment has also changed radically and will continue to change. It is predicted that by 2030 the UK workforce will be: 'multi-generational, older, and more international, with women playing a stronger role. While the highly skilled will push for a better work-life balance, many others will experience increasing insecurity of employment and income. As businesses shrink their workforces to a minimum using flexibly employed external service providers to cover shortfalls, a much smaller group of employees will be able to enjoy long-term contracts' (UKCES, 2014a, p.5). Information technology (IT) will shape what, how and where work is done. It will pervade work environments everywhere. Technologies and disciplines will converge, giving rise to important innovations, such as the open and big data movements. Jobs and organisations will become increasingly fluid as people move from project to project. Globalisation of markets will affect employment patterns, with the rise in importance of the knowledge worker, an increase in the numbers of self-employed people and small businesses, with the erosion of the traditional concept of the job as full-time and permanent. New employment structures will emerge, with networked organisations, sub-contracting of functions and a growth in independent specialists.

Within this changed and changing labour market, particular barriers prevent young people getting work: 'More and better access to the workplace is at the heart of tackling youth unemployment' (UKCES, 2014b). Concerns about poor labour market signalling and skills gap mismatch, particularly for young people, have been outlined in the Ofsted (2013) and National Careers Council reports to Government (2013). The Government's Action Plan, including the Minister for Skills & Enterprise Inspirational Vision (BIS and DfE, 2013), published in response to Ofsted's findings, recommends that employers should work with the National Careers Service to facilitate links between employers and schools. It also highlights the need to foster greater exposure of young people to the world of work and the full range of career pathways. A key message is:

'the National Careers Service should act as a facilitator to bring schools and employers closer together so that young people can be inspired, mentored and coached by employers, and that employers should provide more detailed information to schools and career guidance professionals on labour market intelligence' (p.4).

Following this, the Department for Education issued advice to all providers of post-16 education and training on including meaningful work experience within all 16-19 study programmes in October, 2013.

The need to establish and maintain strong links between education and employment is not new, but achieving this brings challenges. A number of studies have contributed to an understanding of the difficulties faced by employers working with schools and colleges (e.g. CBI/Pearson, 2012; CBI, 2013; Mann and Percy, 2013; Huddleston, Mann and Dawkins, 2012). Lessons learned from previous attempts to establish strong links highlight how employers can help in differing ways to: support students to develop social or personal skills (including career adaptability, resilience and employability skills); support admission processes to university and/or relevant vocational courses; create networks of value for pupils/students during and after leaving school or college; stimulate a culture of expectation and aspiration; and help pupils/students with their career decision-making.

The National Careers Service

The National Careers Service was launched in April 2012. At the time this research was carried out, the Service was being delivered by 13 prime contractors (prime contractors are responsible for the engagement of sub-contractors, ensuring that they deliver the brand values and service) and monitored by the Skills Funding Agency, accountable to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills for its development and performance (SFA, 2013, p.4). It was designed to meet the needs of adults and young people by delivering online, telephone and face-to-face services. Adults can access face-to-face services, with responsibility for young people's face-to-face services primarily residing with schools, colleges and local authorities. There is currently no remit to provide face-to-face guidance to young people below the age of 19 (except to those young people who are 18 and registered unemployed).

A recent National Careers Service annual performance report (SFA, 2013) sets out significant achievements and challenges to date. It also recognises that significantly more needs to be done to strengthen links with employers and local employer networks, including LEPs. Ongoing progress in the form of closer working links between the National Careers Service, Sector Skills Councils, Job Centre Plus, Further Education Colleges and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) is increasingly apparent. Also, new online links to LEP 'Skills for Growth Plans', including labour market information (LMI) and forthcoming Regional Skills Road, indicates that steps are being taken to connect more fully with employers.

Inspiration vision

In September, 2013, the 'Inspiration Vision' statement was published by the Minister for Skills and Enterprise (Matthew Hancock MP) (HM Government, 2013), with an emphasis placed on the importance of employer engagement for effective careers education:

'The best motivation and advice tend to come from people in jobs themselves. I am calling on employers to offer more to schools and colleges, so that we are building the workforce they need for the future. I am also calling on educational institutions to seek more opportunities to help learners enter the world of work' (p.1)

Key messages in this statement emphasise the importance of careers education being about aspiration as much as advice, with those in employment being the best to mentor

and motivate young people. Employers, schools and colleges are exhorted to collaborate more and to work in partnership.

The National Careers Service, working with partner organisations has a crucial role to play in encouraging and supporting more employers to engage with schools and colleges on both the demand and supply-side of learning and work. Clearly, youth transitions from school to work are being redefined and reconceptualised, with employer involvement and labour market information pivotal. Strategies to define and implement appropriate measures can help not only to address the concerns of young people, but also perform an advocacy and brokerage role in new discourses on closing the gaps between the worlds of youth unemployment, under-employment and employment. All of this is occurring within a context where freedom to make local decisions, on the ground, closest to the point of impact is paramount.

The 'Inspiration Vision' statement provides the framework for this research study, echoing government responses to Ofsted (2013) and the National Careers Council (2013).

Methodology

The key aims of the research were to understand:

- How the National Careers Service contractors and the Young People's helpline are working with schools, employers and LEPs;
- How these links can be enhanced;
- What employers require from the National Careers Service and how they currently link with schools and colleges; and
- How the National Careers Service can improve services within the requirements and spirit of the 'Inspiration' agenda.

The methodology designed to meet these aims involved interlocking elements, comprising a brief scoping exercise, literature and data reviews, surveys of employers as well as schools and colleges, in-depth interviews with twelve schools/colleges together with National Careers Service prime contractors and case studies of six schools/colleges. Twenty three structured, in-depth interviews were also conducted with stakeholders, comprising senior leaders from education, business, and the National Careers Council (NCC). Brief summaries of the methodological approach for each of these elements follows, with signposting to relevant appendices providing more detailed accounts

Literature Review

A literature review was undertaken using an adapted systematic review methodology for a comprehensive analysis of both academic and grey literature sources, including online sources. Items and materials were examined using abstracts and/or summaries, applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. For the full literature review, please see Appendix 1.

Employer survey

Data from 301 companies of different sizes and from varied sectors were collected for the employer survey. Employers were selected, as far as possible, from the same regions as the schools covered in the Ofsted (2013) survey, to allow response comparisons with schools/colleges. Data were used to construct a sample of employers that was representative of the population of employers in England (See Appendix 2 for details of the survey methodology).

Education survey

For the schools/ colleges survey, data were collected from 78 schools and 20 colleges (please see Appendix 2 for details of the survey methodology). The school survey sample was selected to reflect the areas and types of school surveyed by Ofsted. This was supplemented with 12 in-depth interviews, with schools/colleges selected from the larger sample and 6 case studies of good practice.

School and college in-depth interviews and case studies

The in-depth interviews were undertaken to achieve deeper insights into work with employers and to collect views on how such work might be developed further and facilitated by the National Careers Service. A purposive sampling methodology was used for these interviews. From the 12 schools and colleges contacted for the in-depth interviews, six were then selected for in-depth case studies. Each of these six schools was visited by a member of the research team who interviewed a range of school staff, students, employers and the National Careers Service provider. From these fieldwork visits, case studies on good practice between schools, colleges and National Careers Service were captured (see Appendix 4).

National Careers Service prime contractors

Interviews were undertaken with seven representatives of prime contractors for the National Careers Service. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the National Careers Service's current work on facilitating links between schools and colleges and employers, and to collect views on how such work might be developed in the future. An eighth Prime Contractor was interviewed as part of the stakeholder interviews (see below).

In addition, two interviews were conducted, one each with representatives of the National Careers Service young people and adults helpline and webchat services.

Stakeholder interviews

Twenty three structured interviews were conducted with senior leaders from education, business and the National Careers Council (NCC) either face-to-face or by telephone. These were to gain a deeper insight into how working links between employers, schools and the National Careers Service were unfolding from a leadership and senior management perspective.

Structure of the report

An explication of the policy context for this study in the introduction is followed by an in-depth literature review (section 2). The results of the employers' survey are presented in

section 3, with those of the education survey and in-depth interviews following in section 4. Views captured from National Careers Service contractors can be found in section 5, with senior leader stakeholder perspectives presented in section 6. Finally, the results and findings from the different strands are synthesised in section 7, with an overall summary of findings.

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2. Literature review

A search of recent academic and grey literature, focusing on employer/education links, yielded evidence of practice from a range of organisations, employer bodies and employer based careers services. The full literature review, which can be found in Appendix 1, provides the broader context for the research and was used to inform the design of the research tools used.

Introduction

A literature review was undertaken using an adapted systematic review methodology for a comprehensive analysis of both academic and grey literature sources, including online sources. Items and materials were examined using abstracts and/or summaries, applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. The methodology allowed the most relevant material to be retained for further scrutiny, whilst permitting the retention of a broader literature. The main purpose was to identify existing employer/ education links. In addition, sources of good practice were investigated. This literature review can be accessed in full in Appendix 1.

Key findings

The finding provides strong insight to education and employer engagement relationships and activities. For example, Burge et al. (2012) conclude that:

‘there is some agreement in the UK literature that ‘successful’ employer engagement is characterised by: long-lasting, mutually acceptable and beneficial relationships between schools and businesses’ (p. 25).

The advantages for pupils may include:

- Insight into the world of work;
- Increased knowledge of certain industries;
- Enhanced or more realistic career aspirations;
- ‘Insider advice’ from employees; improved work-readiness; and
- Improved transitions to work or other forms of education.

There may also be benefits in relation to motivation, engagement, self-esteem and the expansion of personal networks.

A survey by KPMG (2010) found that many head-teachers agreed with a statement that employers’ involvement in pupil learning has ‘a positive impact on attainment’ (p.7).

Surveys of teaching staff also reveal that teachers believe that work experience and placements can improve pupil motivation with a consequent improvement in attainment (Mann 2012).

The review of Burge et al. (2012) points out that the literature is rich with examples of positive perceptions of the impact of employer involvement, but very little hard evidence on positive effects on pupil attainment.

The benefits for employer-school involvement for the employers themselves appear clear according to Mann et al. (2010) in their review for the Education and Employers Taskforce. The benefits appeared to be three-fold.

- People like working for employers who support communities, engagement with schools positively enhances recruitment and retention. Additionally, work experience could often be seen as 'the best possible interview' (p. 9) and as a way of saving on the costs of recruitment.
- Employers, working with schools and colleges can help build awareness and a positive reputation within a community.
- Employees can develop skills and competencies, including supporting the learning and development of others, which are of value to their employer and are often featured in organisational competency frameworks.

Research findings also indicate that a higher level of employer contacts for older school pupils does, on average, give them advantages in early adulthood in relation to employment outcomes and earnings over their broadly matched peers without such engagement with employers (Mann & Percy, 2013; Percy & Mann, 2014). Contacts with employers can be influential in helping young people build their understanding of the labour market (Mann and Caplin 2012; Deloitte 2010).

The Sims et al. (2013) evaluation of the Work Experience Placement Trials identified that:

'the principal factors contributing to successful work experience placements were: effective coordination, good matching of students to placements, ensuring students were well-prepared for placements and flexibility in timing of placements' (p. 10).

The Wolf review of vocational education (2011) highlighted the importance of work experience for helping young people to develop the skills required for employment in a major review of vocational education:

'Helping young people to obtain genuine work experience – and, therefore, what the CBI calls 'employability skills' – should be one of the highest priorities for 16-18 education policy in the next few years' (p. 130).

The government's response to the review was to introduce from September 2013:

'a requirement for all 16-19 year olds to undertake work experience was included in study programme principles' (DfE, 2013a, p. 10).

Summary of findings

Overall, employers are working and linking with schools and colleges in a variety of ways, but these activities need to be incorporated within structures and models that allow for a more substantive up-scaling and coherence of provision at a local and national level.

3. Employer engagement with schools and colleges

This section presents findings on the nature of employer contact with schools/colleges, their rationale for engagement and the frequency of those contacts. Reasons for non-engagement are explored with those employers without any record of contact with education. Future engagement plans are examined, together with employers' perceptions of the National Careers Service.

Employers' survey

In total, 301 business representatives (that is, from 301 separate employing organisations) were surveyed, mostly located in London and the South East of England, reflecting national trends. Findings are based on a weighted version of the survey (based on IDBR data – see Appendix 2 for details of the survey methodology). The majority belonged to the transport, retail or distribution sectors, followed by the manufacturing and then professional activities. More than half of the employers had been trading for more than ten years; with only a few trading for one year or less. Three quarters of all employers did not offer any training for young people. However, a fifth of all employers offered apprenticeships and 10 per cent offered traineeships for young people. Only a few employers were directly involved with Government funded initiatives such as 'first for skills' or Workforce Development Programme (WDP).

The survey sample included a mix of both employers who already had established links with education and those who did not. Of all employers surveyed, less than half had previously been engaged with schools/colleges, serving 16-18 year olds. Employers who offered apprenticeship or other types of training to young people were more likely to engage with schools/colleges (two thirds of them were engaged at schools). From the sample, there is some evidence that larger companies were more likely to engage with schools/colleges than smaller companies. A breakdown of employers who engaged with schools/colleges, and those who did not, can be found in Appendix 7 (Table A3).

This section first describes the ways in which employers linked with schools/colleges, reasons for engagement and the frequency of contacts. Second, it examines reasons for non-engagement. Third, it explores future plans for engagement. Finally, employers' perceptions of the National Careers Service are examined.

Engagement with schools and colleges

Employer engagement with schools/colleges mainly took place on employer premises (Table 3.1, below). The most frequently mentioned types of engagement were work experiences and/or visits from school or college students. Mentoring support was mentioned by 15 per cent of all employers.

Table 3.1 Types of Engagement with Schools and Colleges (multiple responses)

Types of Engagement with Schools and Colleges (multiple responses)	%
Have had students from local school(s)/college(s) undertake work experience placements at your business	32%
Have had students from local school(s)/college(s) visit your business	23%
Have provided 1:1 mentoring support (either face to face or online) to students who are interested in entering your business or sector	15%
Supporting activities to help students with making applications, writing CVs and preparing for interviews	9%
Have provided local school(s)/college(s) with materials (e.g. ICT and/o paper resources) about careers in your business or sector	8%
Have been into local school(s)/college(s) to talk to students about careers in your business or sector	7%
Have sponsored or supported an enterprise activity, project, or event in a local school, or college serving 16-18 year olds	7%
Have participated in a careers fair organised by a third party	6%
Have participated in other careers events organised by third parties (please specify)	6%
Have been into local school(s)/college(s) to talk to staff (including teachers, senior leaders, and governors) about careers in your organisation	5%
Have been into local school(s)/college(s) to talk to students about Apprenticeship or Traineeship opportunities in your business	4%
Have advised local school(s)/college(s) on how best to develop students' employability skills	3%
Have been into local school(s)/college(s) to work with students on 'insight into management' activities	2%
Have signed up to an online matching service that connects employer/employees to local schools and/or colleges	1%
Other	1%

Source: Employers' survey, weighted, engaged employers only (n=131)

On average, engaged employers reported that they had linked with three regional schools/colleges. It should be noted that this average excludes two employers who may be considered 'outliers' (one in London and one in Yorkshire) who reported contact with 500

regional schools/colleges. One of these businesses stated that one of their objectives is to engage with schools/colleges, so it is likely that the number with which they engaged is high for that reason. The other response is probably an error. Engaged employers were asked how their business became involved with education (Table 3.2, below). About a third actively approached a member of educational staff, and over a quarter had been approached directly. Other options included personal contacts through friends, family or customers.

Table 3.2 How did employer become involved with activities (multiple responses)

How did employer become involved with activities (multiple responses)	
Directly approached a member of staff at the school or college themselves	31%
Were directly contacted by a member of staff at the school or college	29%
Through students/parents/colleagues	14%
Had existing longstanding links/relationship the school/college	13%
Directly approached another organisation themselves	3%
Were directly contacted by another organisation	3%
Through the school's or college's Board of Governors	2%
Other	15%

Source: Employers' survey, weighted, engaged employers only (n=131)

Altruistic reasons were quoted as the most important for engaging with schools (Table 3.3, below). Most employers thought it was a 'good thing to do' or they wanted to engage more with the local community. However, some employers wanted to raise awareness of career opportunities with their business. This reason was particularly high amongst those presumably looking to grow their businesses. It is perhaps unsurprising that larger employers were more likely to undertake engagement activities, because they wanted to raise awareness of Apprenticeships or Traineeships with their business. Other reasons included 'bringing in new skills to the company' or to 'give young people a chance'.

Table 3.3 Reasons for deciding to undertake activities by size of employer (multiple responses)

Reasons	Number of employees				Total
	0	1-4	5-9	10 or more	
Thought it was a good thing to do generally	23%	52%	48%	26%	40%
Wanted to engage more with the local community	19%	37%	39%	47%	37%
Wanted to raise awareness of careers at their business	50%	15%	24%	37%	27%
Wanted to raise awareness of Apprenticeships or Traineeships at their business	0%	9%	13%	24%	11%
Knew someone at the school who asked them to provide support	0%	3%	3%	6%	3%
Other	42%	23%	10%	14%	22%

Source: Employers' survey, weighted, engaged employers only (n=131)

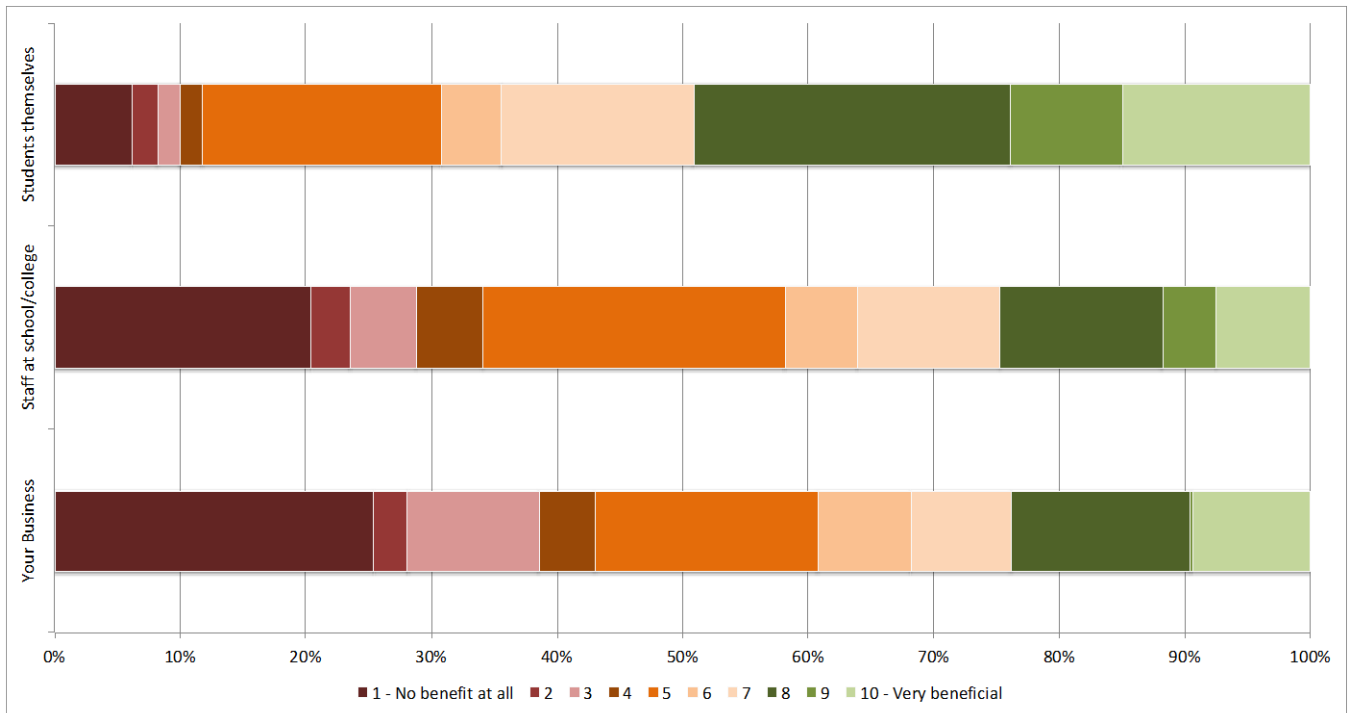
More than half of all engaged employers had undertaken some type of activity in the last half year. Twelve per cent indicated that they had undertaken engagement activities between 7-12 months ago and a quarter reported activities longer than one year ago (but less than two years ago). Engagement with schools/colleges was reported by employers in a range of up to 50 years, with an average of five years (median). Twenty-two engaged employers reported monthly activity (up to seven times each month), but most reported less frequent activity. Three quarters of all engaged employers linked with schools only once or twice each year. Main reasons were: lack of time and resources; unwillingness of schools (unable or not interested); and the age restriction preventing employment of staff under the age of 18 years.

Employers were additionally asked (Figure 3.1, below) to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 the benefit of their work with education to their own business; the staff at the school or college; and the students themselves. Less than half of all engaged employers stated that these activities had not had any significant benefit to their business (i.e. they rated the benefit for their business between 1-4 on this scale). The benefits stated by those who said that their company were (in this order)

- An increased awareness of the company or a newly built company reputation;
- Help with recruitment; and
- Other impacts, such as cheap labour, good advertising/PR, staffs' developed peoples' skills.

A third of all companies did not think that staff at the college or school had benefited from these activities (i.e. benefits were rated as 1-4 on this scale). According to the survey, employers thought that students' themselves got the most benefit out of the links with them, with only 11 per cent reporting that they thought students had not benefited from these activities.

Figure 3.1 Benefits to the students themselves, staff at the school/college and the business



Source: Employers' survey, weighted, engaged employers only (n=131)

Of those who said that there was some form of benefit for schools/colleges and their students, the following were reported: +

- Raised awareness amongst students of different sectors;
- Helped improve careers advice and guidance;
- Inspired students to enter their sector or business;
- Helped students feel more confident in making their choices for their next steps;
- Raised awareness amongst school staff of different sectors;

- Helped increase students' employability skills/knowledge;
- Other (mainly work experiences or help to get into university);
- Raised awareness amongst students of different pathways available including Apprenticeships, Traineeships, enterprise etc.; and
- Increased numbers of students are entering employment on leaving.

Lack of engagement with schools and colleges

More than half of all employers had never engaged with schools or colleges. Nearly all indicated that they were not interested in linking with schools or colleges serving 16-18 year olds. Of those who were not interested in engaging with schools and colleges: a third cited a lack of time and resources as the main reason for this; a fifth could not see the benefits of this activity; 15 per cent said financial reasons had prevented them from engaging; and 10 per cent cited the barriers created by health and safety and insurance regulations.

Thirteen employers indicated that they would have been interested in engaging with schools and colleges but had not done so. When asked why, five reported of lack of time and resources. Other reasons given:

'Special training needed';

'It's a new business - so need a bit of time to get stable and established - but are interested but not just yet';

'Not a sustainable business at the moment'.

One company noted that they had not been asked; and another stated:

'It's not much of a career option [...] students don't want to train to be a cleaner'.

Future plans

All employers surveyed were asked if they had any specific plans to link with schools/colleges in the future (Table 3.4, below). The types of engagement events that most employers were planning were the same as the most frequently undertaken, (see Table 3.1, above), that is, work experience and student visits to businesses.

Table 3.4 Plans to engage with schools or colleges (row percentages)

	Plan to do this	Would like to	Do not want to
Going into local school(s)/college(s) to talk to students about careers in your business or sector	7%	27%	66%
Going into local school(s)/college(s) to talk to staff (including teachers, senior leaders, and governors) about careers in your business or sector to develop their knowledge to support students	6%	28%	66%
Providing local school(s)/college(s) with materials (e.g. ICT and/or paper resources) about careers in your business or sector	6%	20%	74%
Providing 1:1 mentoring support (either face to face or online) to students who are interested in entering your business or sector	5%	28%	68%
Supporting activities to help students with making applications, writing CVs and preparing for interviews	7%	23%	70%
Going into local school(s)/college(s) to talk to students about Apprenticeship or Traineeships opportunities in your business	4%	20%	76%
Having students from local school(s)/college(s) undertake work experience placements at your business	15%	30%	55%
Having students from local school(s)/college(s) visit your business	12%	27%	61%
Advising local school(s)/college(s) on how best to develop students' employability skills	4%	21%	75%
Going into local school(s)/college(s) to work with students on 'insight into management' activities	5%	11%	84%
Participating in a careers fair organised by a third party	6%	20%	73%
Participating in other careers events organised by third parties	3%	20%	77%
Sponsoring or supporting an enterprise activity, project, or event in a local school, or college serving	6%	18%	77%

	Plan to do this	Would like to	Do not want to
16-18 year olds			
Signing up to a matching service that puts your company in touch with schools and/or colleges	5%	22%	74%
Other	0%	2%	98%

Source: Employers' survey, weighted (n = 301)

It is interesting to compare these findings for the whole sample with those for employers who did not engage in schools or colleges. Work experience was amongst the limited ways these employers would like to engage with schools or colleges. Also, a fairly high proportion was interested in going into schools/colleges to speak about careers in their business or sector.

The least popular planned engagement activities amongst those who had not previously engaged with schools and colleges were:

- Sponsoring or supporting an enterprise activity, project or event;
- Signing up to a matching service that puts their company in touch with schools and/or colleges;
- Talking to students or staff at the local school or college about careers in your business or sector and/or about Apprenticeship or Traineeships opportunities; and
- Having students undertake work experience placements or visit the business.

Perceptions of the National Careers Service

Less than half of all the employers surveyed were aware of the National Careers Service. However, amongst those who were engaged with schools or colleges, the proportion was slightly higher (Table 3.5, overleaf).

Table 3.5 Employers' awareness of National Careers Service by engagement with schools or colleges

		Engagement with Schools or Colleges		All employers
		Not engaged	Engaged with schools or colleges	
Awareness of National Careers Service	Yes	41%	54%	47%
	No	59%	46%	54%
Total		100%	100%	100%

Source: Employers' survey, weighted (n = 301)

The highest proportion, over one third of employers, who were aware of the National Careers Service, had become aware through a third party: an organisation (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, the Local Authority); the media; schools or colleges; friends; their own children; or relatives.

A quarter of employers who were aware of the National Careers Service reported existing, longstanding links or relationships with National Careers Service contractors, with a few having been contacted directly by the National Careers Service, mainly by telephone. Those who were aware of the National Careers Service and had actively engaged with it had used it for the following reasons:

- For support with recruitment;
- For support with training;
- To access labour market intelligence;
- To help their businesses connect with schools and/or colleges;
- To help identify students to undertake work experience; and
- To set up visits by students or teachers to their business.

However, nearly all of the employers who were aware of the National Careers Service had not actively engaged with them.

Two thirds of employers who were aware of the National Careers Service stated that they were unable to evaluate their relationship with them. When asked why, most said that they did not have any contact or an established relationship with the service (consistent with the finding that ninety per cent of all employers said that they had never engaged with the service. Of those who felt able to evaluate their relationship with them, a quarter stated that their relationship with the National Careers Service was not at all satisfactory (i.e.

rated it one on a 1-10 scale), with a further 43 per cent unable to decide (i.e. rated it five on a 1-10 scale).

During the course of the survey interview, the main purpose of the National Careers Service was explained to employers who were unaware of its existence. All employers were then asked about the support they would like to see from the National Careers Service. Of employers who were aware of the service, a third did not want any support from them to link with schools or colleges, compared with 38 per cent of employers who were not aware of the National Careers Service. The support most frequently identified by both groups of employers as desirable related to training and help with identifying work experience students (Table 3.6, below).

Table 3.6 Support employers would like to see from the National Careers Service, by awareness of the National Careers Service

Support employers would like to see from the National Careers Service	Aware of National Careers Service	Not aware/Don't Know
Support with recruitment	42%	37%
Support with training	53%	46%
Support to access labour market intelligence	30%	27%
Help for your business to connect with schools and/or colleges	41%	37%
Help to identify students to undertake work experience	45%	42%
Help to set up visits by students or teachers to your business	31%	31%
Other	8%	8%
Don't know	4%	3%

Source: Employers' survey, weighted (n = 301)

Summary of findings

- Just under half employers surveyed had engaged with schools and colleges. The most frequently mentioned types of engagement were work experiences and/or visits from school and college students, with mentoring support also highlighted.
- Altruistic reasons were quoted as the most important for employers engaging with schools or colleges.
- Employers thought that the students' themselves got the most benefit out of the links with them, rather than their businesses, or teaching/college staff.
- More than half of all employers surveyed had never engaged with schools and colleges. Lack of time and other resources were reasons most frequently cited for lack of engagement.

- Less than half of all the employers surveyed were aware of the National Careers Service. Of those who were aware of the National Careers Service had become aware through a third party: an organisation (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, the Local Authority); the media; schools or colleges; friends; their own children; or relatives). However, nearly all of employers who were aware of the National Careers Service had not actively engaged with them.
- Those who were aware of, and had used the National Careers Service, had done so for: support with recruitment; support with training; access labour market intelligence; help with connecting their businesses with schools and/or colleges; identifying students to undertake work experience; and to set up visits by students or teachers.

4. School and college engagement with employers

Empirical evidence is presented on careers provision in schools and colleges and how this both complements and enhances employer engagement. Findings from the schools and college survey are presented first, followed by insights from 12 in-depth interviews. Plans for future developments are described, together with the current and potential role of the National Careers Service.

Schools and college survey

Seventy-eight schools participated in the survey, together with 20 colleges. The original target for school participation was 60. This was exceeded to secure a slightly better spread of school type and specific local areas to strengthen the analysis. In total, ninety-eight interviews were therefore completed with staff in schools or colleges who have responsibility for employer engagement and/or careers support services. Within this sample, most held both of these responsibilities, with only a third working within careers support services only. Only in four schools, staff reported that they were solely responsible for employer engagement.

Half of all participating schools were academies (sponsored or converter) and half were schools with a sixth form. For brief descriptions of the types of schools participating in the study, please see Appendix 8. Twenty per cent were Further Education (FE) colleges. A quarter of all schools had less than 800 students; a third had between 801 and 1,400 students; and 17 per cent had more than 1,400 student enrolments. The remainder did not provide any information about the size of their school. In half of all schools participating, less than a quarter of all students qualified for free school meals.

Findings from the schools and college survey

Employer links

Nearly all schools and colleges reported some type of links with employers, or participation in employer-linked external events to support careers advice activities. However, it should be noted that for some types of schools, only a small sample was realised (i.e. there are only four Academy sponsored schools without a sixth form and ten Academy sponsored converter schools without a sixth form). This is especially important when results are considered according to the different categories of schools.

The nature of schools' or colleges' engagement with employers varies to a certain extent with the different types of schools: all academy schools with a 6th form reported links with employers or participation in employer-led external events, with more than three quarters of all FE colleges also reporting such links (though with a tenth of interviewees from FE colleges not knowing whether they had links). A few Academies without a 6th form stated that they were either not linked with any employers or had participated in employer-linked

external events. All maintained schools without a 6th form and nearly all maintained schools with a 6th form had links with employers.

Only two Academy schools with a sixth form, one maintained school without a sixth form and one FE colleges indicated that they were not interested in linking with employers.

A discussion of links with employers and/or different forms of employer-involved activities follows. Table 4.1 (below) shows the year groups for which schools organised activities by the type of school/college. Employer engagement is not normally provided for all students; only one third of all schools provided activities for all students irrespective of age. In all other schools, the activities were aimed at Year 10 and Year 11 students. Clearly, schools without a sixth form concentrated on younger students. Further Education colleges organised most activities for all year groups.

Table 4.1 Year groups for which schools organise employer-linked activities (multiple responses) by type of school/college (column percentages)

	Academy sponsored school		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE college	All schools
	With sixth form	Without sixth form	With sixth form	Without sixth form	With sixth form	Without sixth form		
Year 7	0%	0%	9%	22%	17%	13%	0%	9%
Year 8	17%	33%	26%	33%	25%	38%	0%	23%
Year 9	42%	33%	57%	67%	33%	50%	0%	40%
Year 10	58%	100%	78%	89%	83%	75%	0%	63%
Year 11	58%	67%	78%	89%	92%	69%	0%	62%
Year 12	67%	0%	78%	11%	75%	6%	0%	40%
Year 13	42%	0%	78%	11%	67%	6%	0%	36%
16-18	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	2%
19+	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	2%
For all students	33%	0%	17%	11%	8%	19%	88%	30%

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events, n= 92)

The main reasons for schools choosing to organise employer-linked activities restricted to an age-based selected group of students were to:

- Fit in with their subject option choices;
- Provide careers advice and options; and
- Prepare for further education and training.

Other reasons given relate to the statutory requirements in the National Curriculum and/or the potential benefit for these year groups.

Schools linked activities with employers were mainly associated with the following parts of the curriculum:

- Careers education and guidance
- Work-related learning
- Specific subject areas
- Other.

Links with employers to enhance and complement careers support

The most frequently reported ways in which schools or colleges were linked with employers were by employers' visits to their premises, followed by students undertaking work experience placements at businesses and externally organised careers fair(s) (Table 4.4, below). However, there was notable variation in the ways that different types of schools/colleges linked with employers to support careers advice activities (see Appendix 7, Table A1). For example, all sponsored Academies and colleges reported that their students had been to employers' businesses for work experience placements; however, this was only the case in two thirds of Converter Academies without a sixth form. Similar differences existed for students' visits to employers' businesses and other ways in which employers were linked with schools/colleges, including: school-internal career fairs, university taster sessions, or the Young Enterprise Scheme.

Table 4.4 Ways in which school/colleges are linked with employers to support careers activities (multiple responses)

Ways in which school/colleges are linked with employers to support careers activities (multiple responses)	
Employers have been into school/college to talk to students about careers in their business or sector	97%
Employers have had students from school/college undertake work experience placements at their business	92%
Students from the school have attended externally organised careers fair(s)	92%
Employers have had students from school/college visit their business	88%
Employers have been into school/college to talk to students about Apprenticeship or Traineeship opportunities in their business	86%
Employers have provided school/college with materials (e.g. ICT and/or paper resources) about careers in their business or sector	85%
Students from the school have attended other externally organised careers events	76%
Employers have supported activities to help students making applications, writing CVs and preparing for interviews	72%
Employers have sponsored or supported an enterprise activity, project, or event at the school/college	66%
Employers have advised school/college on how best to develop students' employability skills	64%
Employers have provided 1:1 mentoring support (either face to face or online) to students who are interested in entering their business or sector	48%
Have signed up to a an online matching service that connects employer/employees to local schools and/or colleges	42%
Employers have been into school/college to talk to staff (including teachers, senior leaders, and governors) about careers in their business or sector to develop their knowledge to support students	35%
Employers have been into school/college to work with students on 'insight into management' activities	29%
Other	17%

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events) (n=92)

Most schools and colleges linked activities with employers to the careers education and guidance part of the curriculum, followed by specific subject-related areas (Table 4.5,

below). In an open answer, 'other' schools mainly referred to the subjects to which the activities were linked.

Table 4.5 Part of the curriculum to which activities were linked

	Academy sponsored		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE College	All schools or colleges
	With sixth form	without sixth form	With sixth form	without sixth form	With sixth form	Without sixth form		
Careers education and guidance	75%	100%	96%	89%	83%	88%	65%	84%
Work-related learning	42%	100%	78%	56%	75%	81%	59%	69%
Specific subject areas	50%	100%	83%	78%	58%	88%	65%	73%
Other	17%	0%	17%	11%	8%	19%	6%	13%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	18%	3%

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events) (n=92)

Industry sectors with which many schools/colleges reported links were: health; construction; education; and ICT. Responses in the 'other' category included charity work or specific employers' career fairs. Schools/colleges were asked in detail how many links they had with employers in the specific sectors. Many interviewees were not able to answer this question, which is why the maximum of numbers of contacts is given in Table 4.2, below, rather than an average mean.

On average, schools reported contacts with approximately 14 employers in all sectors (median). The average number of contacts excludes schools who answered this question with 'Don't know. This figure will thus underestimate the real amount of contacts with employers). The highest numbers of contacts were reported in the Education sector, in Retail, in the Professional, Scientific & Technical, and in Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and other services.

Table 4.2 Industry sectors with which education links were reported

	Percentages of schools reporting of links	Number of contacts (Median)
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	35%	2
Production	47%	4
Construction	73%	3
Motor trades	55%	5
Wholesale	24%	2
Retail	54%	6
Transport & storage (inc. postal)	25%	2
Accommodation & food services	63%	4
Information & communication	67%	4
Finance & insurance	66%	4
Property	25%	1
Professional, scientific & technical	65%	6
Business administration and support services	58%	5
Public administration and defence	62%	3
Education	67%	11
Health	75%	3
Arts, entertainment, recreation and other services	64%	6
Other	21%	4

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events) (n=92)

Most schools indicated that they managed the activities with employers themselves, with a quarter reporting that employers had managed these activities and another quarter reporting third party brokerage. Only 11 schools/colleges were able to specify how much these activities cost per year; the answers ranged between 'Zero' and '£140,000'.

Table 4.3 Ways in which school/college become involved with employer, by type of school

	Academy sponsored		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE College	All schools or colleges
	With sixth form	Without sixth form	With sixth form	Without sixth form	With sixth form	Without sixth form		
Had existing longstanding links/relationship with the employer	58%	67%	52%	67%	50%	38%	82%	58%
Through the school/college Board of Governors	33%	67%	4%	11%	8%	0%	6%	11%
Were directly contacted by an employer	25%	100%	43%	33%	33%	44%	41%	40%
Were directly contacted by another third party organisation	0%	0%	4%	11%	0%	13%	0%	4%
Directly approached an employer themselves	33%	67%	43%	33%	50%	44%	29%	40%
Directly approached another third party organisation themselves	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	19%	6%	5%
Networking e.g. at careers fairs or business forums	25%	0%	9%	22%	8%	0%	24%	13%
Historical links	8%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Other	17%	0%	22%	22%	33%	19%	6%	18%

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events) (n =92)

Routes to employer engagement varied. More than half of all schools/colleges reported longstanding links or relationships with individual employers (Table 4.3, above); with 40 per cent directly contacted by an employer and 40 per cent directly approaching employers themselves. Third parties that were used to facilitate education/employer links included: Connexions, Changing Education, Positive Steps or Aim Higher. Other types of employer involvement were through the Inspiring Careers website (<http://www.inspiringcareers.in/>) or through students or alumni. The method of involvement varied according to the type of school. The school/college Board of Governors was an established pathway for sponsored

Academies, whilst for most of the other types of schools this was less relevant. Networking (for example, at careers fairs or business forums) was another important method of getting involved, especially for some of the Academies and for the Further Education colleges.

The main reasons that schools/colleges had decided to get involved in these types of activities were as follows. They:

- thought it would generally be of benefit to students;
- wanted to raise awareness of specific careers;
- wanted to raise awareness of specific learning pathways (e.g. Apprenticeships and Traineeships); and/or
- wanted to improve employability/work-life skills.

Three quarters of all schools/colleges reported that they had undertaken employer-related activities in the last month and another quarter, these types of activities had been undertaken within the previous six months. The range of periods of employer involvement extended from one year to 30 years, with an average length of seven years (median).

Impact of employer engagement

The key impact of employer engagement reported by schools and colleges was raising of students' awareness of different industry sectors (Table 4.6, below). Half of all participating schools/colleges reported this impact, followed by raised awareness of the different educational pathways. Further Education colleges were more likely to report an increase in students' employability skills. Other reported impacts included a reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs); an increase in students' confidence and understanding; and an improvement in students' performance because of increased understanding of possibilities for progression.

Table 4.6 How activities have impacted on schools/colleges and its students by type of school

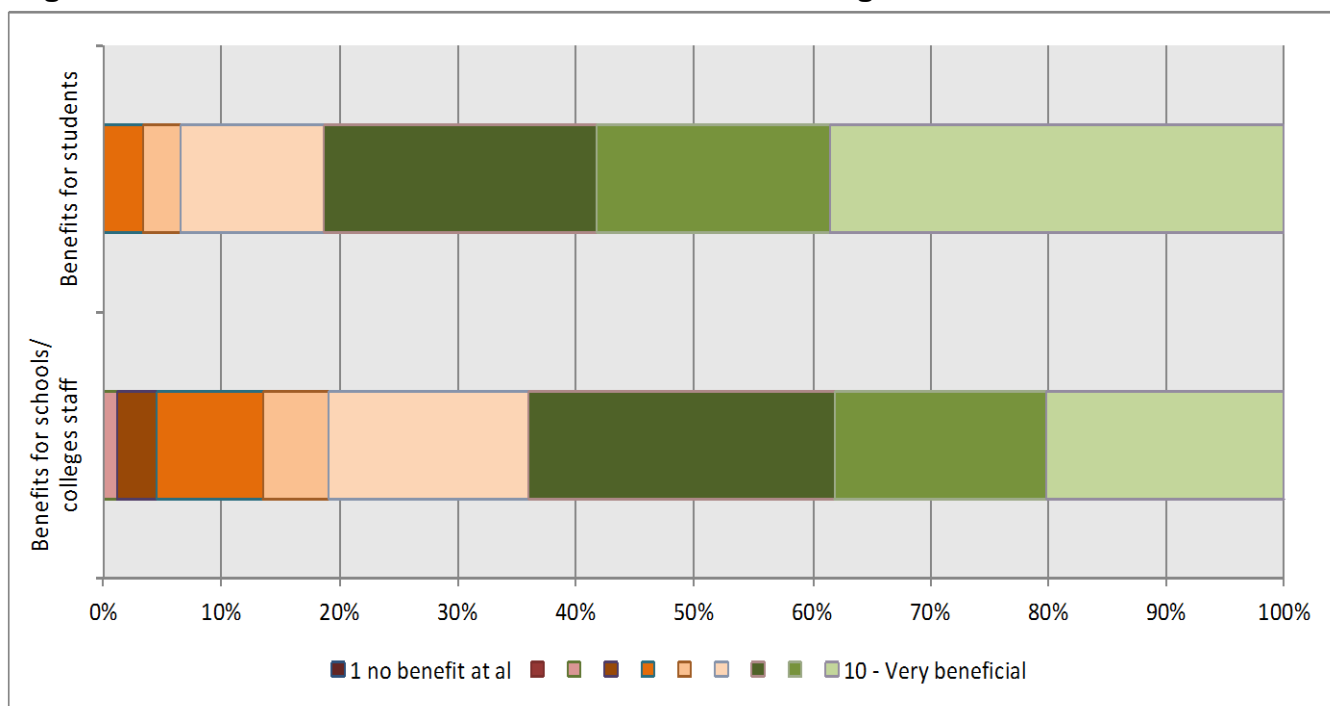
	Academy sponsored		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE college	All Schools and colleges
	Sixth form	No sixth form	Sixth form	No sixth form	Sixth form	No sixth form		
Raised awareness amongst students of different sectors	25%	100%	39%	78%	50%	56%	53%	50%
Raised awareness amongst staff of different sectors	0%	0%	0%	11%	25%	0%	12%	7%
Inspired students to enter a particular sector or business	17%	0%	17%	22%	33%	38%	29%	25%
Helped increase students' employability skills/knowledge	33%	33%	35%	33%	17%	38%	59%	37%
Helped improve careers advice and guidance	50%	33%	17%	44%	17%	25%	29%	28%
Increased numbers of students are entering employment on leaving	0%	0%	9%	22%	8%	6%	18%	10%
Raised awareness amongst students of different pathways available including Apprenticeships, Traineeships, enterprise etc.	17%	0%	52%	44%	50%	38%	35%	39%
Helped students feel more confident in making their choices for their next steps	50%	33%	48%	33%	50%	25%	59%	45%

	Academy sponsored		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE college	All Schools and colleges
Raised the profile of the school/college with local community	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	19%	6%	5%
Other	33%	33%	22%	0%	17%	25%	24%	22%

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events) (n=92)

Schools/colleges rated the benefits to students and staff on a scale of 1-10, where '1' is no benefit at all and '10' is very beneficial (Figure 4.1). None of the schools or colleges rated the benefit to either students or staff as less than '3'. Even though most schools and colleges indicated how activities had benefited staff; the main benefits accrued to students, with more than half of all schools rating the benefit to students with a '9' or a '10' and another quarter rating it '8'.

Figure 4.1 Benefits to students and on school and colleges staff



Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events) (n=92)

Schools and colleges identified other ways in which their work with employers to support careers advice had benefitted their institution, its students and employers. Main responses related to how:

- Activities led to direct employment;
- Students obtained work experiences;
- It helps employers understand the educational system; and

- It raised the profile of school/college.

Schools/colleges were asked in what ways they had previously been interested in working with employers (see Table 4.7, below). Schools and colleges that had not yet engaged with employers were interested in the following types of activities.

Table 4.7 Activities not undertaken

Activity	%
Having employers into school/college to work with students on 'insight into management' activities	41%
Having employers into school/college to talk to staff (including teachers, senior leaders, and governors) about careers in their business or sector to develop their knowledge to support students	36%
Having employers provide 1:1 mentoring support (either face to face or online) to students who are interested in entering their business or sector	34%
Signing up to an online matching service that connects employer/employees to local schools and/or colleges	32%
Having employers sponsor or support an enterprise activity, project, or event at the school/college	26%
Having employers support activities to help students with making applications, writing CVs and preparing for interviews	25%
Employers advising school/college on how best to develop students' employability skills	25%
Having employers into school/college to talk to students about Apprenticeship or Traineeship opportunities in their business	15%
Having employers provide school/college with materials (e.g. ICT and/or paper resources) about careers in their business or sector	13%
Having students from the school attend other externally organised careers events	13%
Employers having students from school/college undertake work experience placements at their business	11%
Employers having students from school/college visit their business	9%
Having students from the school attend externally organised careers fairs	8%
Having employers into school/college to talk to students about careers in their business or sector	6%

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (whole sample) (n=98)

The main reasons for not undertaking specific activities were:

- Lack of time and resources;
- No interest from employers;
- Financial reasons;
- Not sure how to link with employers;
- Fitting it into the curriculum; and
- Location.

Future plans

More than half of all schools had plans to undertake the following activities:

- Work experience placements at employers' business;
- Students visiting externally organised and other careers fair(s);
- Employers visiting schools/colleges to talk about careers in their business or sector;
- Employers talking to students about Apprenticeship or Traineeship opportunities in their business;
- Students visiting employers' business; and
- Employers supporting activities to help students making applications.

Schools were also asked which activities they would not want to undertake. Nearly a fifth of all schools stated that they were not interested in having employers talk to staff about careers in their business, and, approximately the same proportion was not interested in employers working with students on 'insights to management' activities (see Appendix 7, Figure A2).

Perceptions of the National Careers Service

Most schools surveyed reported that they provided their careers support services in-house. Alternatives were mentioned by approximately a quarter of all schools/colleges. There is some evidence that maintained schools were more likely to buy in careers services from a local authority and that Academy converters were more likely to use a careers guidance company.

Table 4.8 Arrangements to secure access to independent and impartial careers service by type of school/colleges

	Academy sponsored		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE colleges	Total
	Sixth form	No sixth form	Sixth form	No sixth form	Sixth form	No sixth form		
Provided in-house	92%	100%	70%	60%	69%	81%	100%	81%
Buy in a service from a local authority	17%	25%	22%	20%	38%	50%	15%	27%
Commission an individual careers adviser (sole trader)	8%	0%	13%	0%	38%	13%	0%	11%
Commission a careers adviser from a careers guidance company	8%	0%	52%	20%	38%	13%	15%	26%
Other	8%	0%	17%	40%	23%	0%	5%	13%

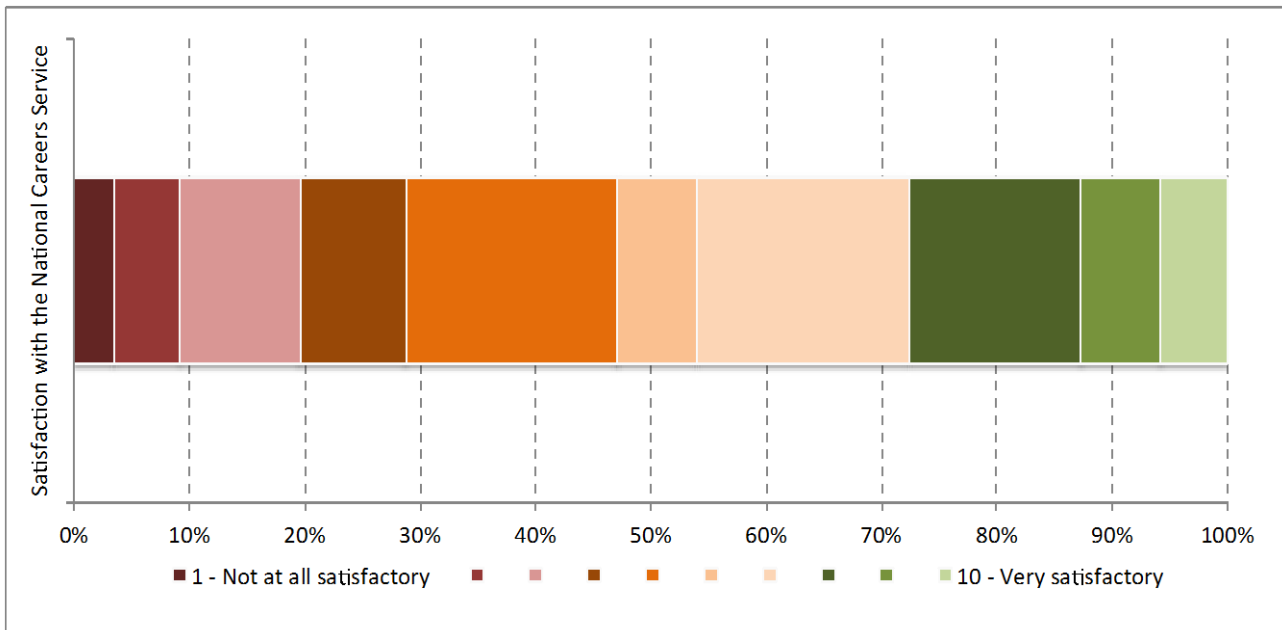
Source: Schools/colleges' survey (whole sample) (n=98)

All but one of the surveyed schools/colleges were aware of the existence of the National Careers Service. Three indicated that whilst they were aware of the National Careers Service, they did not use it.

Ways in which schools/colleges used the National Careers Service included:

- Students are directed to National Careers Service website;
- Students are directed to the telephone helpline;
- Used by school to access Labour Market Intelligence/Information (LMI); and
- Students are guided through the National Careers Service website during a timetabled lesson.

On a scale of 1- 10, more respondents were satisfied with the National Careers Service than not (Figure 4.2). Forty-five engaged schools and colleges who felt able to comment rated their satisfaction with the National Careers Service as 7 or higher, whilst one third were discontent and rated the National Careers Service within a range of '1' to '4'. Not all, however, felt able to comment on this question.

Figure 4.2 Satisfaction with the National Careers Service

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (whole sample) (n = 98)

Main reasons for satisfaction with the National Careers Service related to the website (considered 'good and useful') and that "Job profiles are good". Areas of criticism related to the National Careers Service not being user-friendly for younger children and that "Information needs to be up-to-date". Some criticised the general lack of support whilst others preferred face-to-face support. Some stated that they had just not used the service much.

Aspirational support from the National Careers Service identified that would help strengthen links with employers, schools and colleges, included:

- Database of employers willing to link with schools and colleges;
- Supporting links with employers; and
- Packages of employer engagement activities.

Other support which schools/colleges would find useful from the National Careers Service also identified in the survey included:

- Make it more user-friendly for younger students;
- One-to-one guidance interviews for students;
- Directory of individuals and organisations providing careers support services; and
- Dissemination of general case studies of good practice for careers advice and guidance.

Summary of findings from the school/college survey

- Nearly all schools and colleges surveyed reported some type of links with employers, or participation in employer-linked external events to support careers advice activities.
- The nature of schools' or colleges' engagement with employers varies to a certain extent with the different types of schools.
- Employer engagement is not normally provided for all students; only one third of all schools provided activities for all students irrespective of age. In all other schools, the activities were aimed at Year 10 and Year 11 students. Further Education colleges organised most activities for all year groups.
- The most frequently reported ways in which schools or colleges were linked with employers were by employers' visits to their premises, followed by students undertaking work experience placements at businesses and externally organised careers fair(s). However, there was notable variation in the ways that different types of schools/colleges linked with employers to support careers advice activities.
- Most schools and colleges linked activities with employers to the careers education and guidance part of the curriculum, followed by specific subject-related areas.
- On average, schools reported contacts with approximately 14 employers in all sectors (median).
- Most schools indicated that they managed the activities with employers themselves, with only a few able to specify how much this cost on an annual basis.
- Routes to employer engagement varied. More than half of all schools/colleges reported longstanding links or relationships with individual employers. The method of involvement varied according to the type of school.
- The key impact of employer engagement reported by schools and colleges was the raising of students' awareness of different industry sectors. Other benefits identified were: led to direct employment for students; students obtained work experiences; helps employers understand the educational system; and raised the profile of school/college.
- The main reasons for not engaging with employers related to a lack of time and resources.
- Most schools surveyed (81 per cent) reported that they provided their careers support services in-house. There is some evidence that maintained schools were more likely to buy in careers services from a local authority and that Academy converters were more likely to use a careers guidance company.

- The majority of schools/colleges were aware of the existence of the National Careers Service. Three indicated that whilst they were aware of the National Careers Service, they did not use it. The types of usage included: the website; the telephone helpline; and labour market information. Just under half of schools/colleges guidance students through the National Careers Service website during a timetabled lesson.
- More respondents were satisfied with the National Careers Service than not, with main reasons for satisfaction relating to the website and job profiles. Aspirational support from the National Careers Service identified that would help strengthen links with employers, schools and colleges, included: a database of employers willing to link with schools and colleges; supporting links with employers; and packages of employer engagement activities

In-depth interviews

From the overall sample of 98 participating schools and colleges in the survey, a sub-sample of 12 was selected for in-depth interviews (see Appendix 3 for the interview schedule). These 12 were selected to represent educational institutions that had reported a reasonably high volume of employer engagement, in terms of both range of their activities with employers and the range of year groups of students involved. Care was also taken to ensure a balance of types of school and college, and a geographical spread. The sub-sample comprised:

- Two sponsored academies (one with a sixth form and one without);
- Four converter academies (three with a sixth form and one without);
- Four local authority maintained schools (one with a sixth form and three without);
- A sixth form college; a general further education college.

The schools and colleges were geographically spread across the following regions of England: North East; North West; Yorkshire & Humber; West Midlands; East Midlands; East of England; London; South East. The schools varied in size from 500 students to 2,300. Both colleges had approximately 1,250 students aged 16-19. Two of the schools were single-sex (one boys' school and one girls' school); all others were mixed.

The six case studies presented in Appendix 4 were identified from the 12 in-depth interviews. Those case studies which illustrate particularly good practice with regard to some of the themes in the commentary that follows are listed at the beginning of the relevant sections.

Findings from the in-depth interviews

Twelve schools and colleges were selected for the in-depth interviews because their responses to the initial survey demonstrated a commitment to employer engagement. From this sub-sample, 6 case studies of good practice are presented in Appendix 4.

Provision of careers support

Examples of schools and colleges include: Evelyn Grace Academy; Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College; Stopsley High School; Swanshurst School; Thomas Knyvett College

Interviews revealed that all of the schools and colleges in the sub-sample also had a commitment to ensuring that their students had access to impartial careers guidance. Half of the sample of schools secured access to impartial careers guidance for their students by commissioning services from external providers of careers guidance: from the local authority; a matrix-accredited private company; or, in one case, a local FE college. The most common form of support that these schools bought in was one-to-one guidance interviews for Year 11 students, but the contracts also included other support such as presentations to Year 9 students and their parents, contributions for careers education lessons, workshops for sixth form students and in-service training for school staff.

The approach to providing access to impartial careers guidance in the other half of the sample of schools, and both colleges, was to employ a qualified careers adviser: in most cases someone holding the Qualification in Careers Guidance (QCG); in others an adviser with an NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance, but working towards the new Level 6 Diploma in Careers Guidance and Development. One of the schools that bought in services from the local authority reported that because the number of days purchased was not sufficient to meet all the needs, the non-teaching careers co-ordinator is working towards achieving the Level 6 Diploma so that he too can provide careers guidance interviews for students. In all the establishments where careers guidance interviews were provided by advisers employed by the school or college, the advisers claimed to be impartial and working to a professional code of ethics. One of the colleges had achieved matrix accreditation and several of the establishments had achieved a CEIAG quality award. All of the schools and colleges with 'in-house' careers advisers said that they further ensured impartiality by inviting a wide range of employers and other providers in to speak to students.

It became clear that schools and colleges committed to links with employers did not view such activities as a replacement for impartial advice: instead, they viewed the work with employers as enhancing their careers support and access to impartial guidance.

All the schools and colleges provided careers education within the curriculum, either for all students in all year groups or for all students except in Year 7. The models of delivery varied across the 12 establishments, but all viewed careers education as a valuable part of the curriculum.

All but one of the schools, and both colleges, made use of the National Careers Service. Most commonly the website and telephone advice line were signposted to students through the school's or college's own website, poster displays or on the action plans given to students at the end of careers guidance interviews. The most commonly used resources were the job profiles and the sections on labour market information (LMI). Two of the schools used the CV-writing section of the website with students. Careers staff themselves found the LMI resources very useful. There was a general opinion that the National Careers Service website was written with adult users in mind and schools reported that it was used more by post-16 students than younger people: other sites were considered to be more appealing and user friendly for pre-16 students.

Links with employers to enhance and complement careers provision

Examples of schools and colleges included: Evelyn Grace Academy; Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College; Richard Taunton Sixth Form College; Stopsley High School; Swanshurst School; Thomas Knyvett College.

The schools and colleges who participated in the in-depth interviews organised a range of activities involving employers. None of the establishments in the sample organised only one type of activity. The most frequently reported activities were talks from employers, visits to employers' workplaces, careers fairs, work experience, mock interviews with employers, workshops on CV writing and application skills, business mentoring, employability workshops and enterprise projects. The majority of these were organised by the careers co-ordinator or work-related learning co-ordinator (usually these roles were combined into a single post), but sometimes employer talks and workplace visits were organised by subject departments, particularly in the colleges.

These links with employers were seen as contributing to the careers support in the school or college in two distinct ways:

- With some activities the focus was on inspiring, informing and advising students about particular jobs and career areas. Examples of such activities include talks from employers, visits to workplaces and careers fairs.
- For other activities, such as work experience, mock interviews, employability workshops and enterprise activities, the focus was less on specific jobs and more on developing students' understanding of the world of work, their application skills and their employability skills.

Some employer links, therefore, support schools' and colleges' provision of careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG), while others support the provision of careers education in the curriculum. Mentoring programmes, linking business mentors with particular students, represent another example of an activity that is concerned primarily with helping students understand and develop the skills and qualities required for employability. The most frequently organised activity – employers giving talks to students – is often concerned with particular jobs, but can sometimes focus more on the wider issues of understanding the world of work and the skills and qualities needed to succeed in the workplace.

Links with employers tended to be organised mainly for students in key stage 4 and post-16 students. There were fewer examples of such activities in the 11-14 age range, although where they did occur they were often more innovative. In the girls' school, for example, all students in Year 9 interviewed three different women about their careers; in one of the other schools the careers co-ordinator organised a day with a 'speed-dating' type of activity, where Year 9 students interviewed several different people about their jobs.

Work experience

Examples of schools and colleges include: Richard Taunton Sixth Form College; Stopsley High School; Swanshurst School; Thomas Knyvett College

All of the schools and colleges interviewed organised work experience for students, but the pattern of provision is changing. In the recent past all of the schools organised one week, or two week, placements for all students in Year 10, with an emphasis on helping students to gain insights into the world of work and to develop their employability skills. In the two colleges and the schools that had sixth forms, work experience was organised for post-16 students on vocational courses and for those A level students who needed recent and relevant work experience to support their post-18 applications to, for example, teaching or medicine. In some schools and the colleges, other post-16 students were encouraged to participate in work experience.

Over the last two or three years approximately half of the schools have dropped work experience for all Year 10 students, and now organise placements only for those students in key stage 4 who are taking vocational courses or alternative curriculum programmes. The same schools are also placing a greater emphasis on providing work experience for Year 12 students, with explicit links to the students' courses of study and career aspirations. The other schools are continuing to provide work experience for all students in Year 10. One school arranged work shadowing for a group of Year 11 students who were interested in apprenticeships, where the students each shadowed an apprentice for a day.

Parents

Examples of schools and colleges include: Stopsley High School

There were few examples of schools or colleges organising activities where employers engaged directly with students' parents. One school that organised a careers fair encouraged parents to attend with their sons and daughters. The engineering department in a technology college organised an event involving all the engineering firms in the area, to which students and parents were invited. One school had worked in partnership with the Institute of Physics as part of a project to raise aspirations in physics. It had held two events at which employers and universities talked to parents and students about career opportunities in physics. Another school organised a special apprenticeships information evening for students and their parents: the careers co-ordinator reported that this had had a significant impact on parents' understanding of the opportunities available and helped to overcome misconceptions about modern apprenticeships.

Use of external organisations

Almost all of the establishments made use of the services of national external organisations that support employer links. The most frequently mentioned were the STEM ambassadors and the Inspiring the Future website. Many of the schools reported that the latter was a good source of employer contacts for talks to students, although two schools had not found it helpful. Fewer schools had used Speakers for Schools, with one indicating that this organisation was too demanding in terms of the hospitality expected from the school. Other national organisations that the schools and colleges used included Young Enterprise, Young Consumer, a Leonardo project for work experience in Eastern Europe and the Engineering Development Trust's Year in Industry. The Barclays Life Skills programme was seen as a good source of materials for careers education lessons.

The vast majority of employer links described were organised by the schools and colleges themselves. The only exception was work experience in some areas, where the school paid for a placement finding and checking service from the local Education Business

Partnership (EBP). Since the removal of Government funding for EBPs, such organisations no longer exist in all areas of the country. However, even in some areas where the EBP is still active, the schools choose to make their own arrangements, citing costs as the main reason. In some areas the schools and colleges only use the EBP for health and safety assessments for high-risk placement or for placements that are only available through the EBP (for example, NHS placements). Where schools used an external agency the typical cost per year was a few thousand pounds.

Value added by employer links

All the schools and colleges reported that links with employers added value to their careers support by broadening students' understanding of the range of opportunities available. The direct contact with employers helped the students to appreciate the application in the world of work of knowledge and skills learned in schools and helped to make their learning more relevant. Contact with local employers also encouraged networking, which could potentially lead to job opportunities.

The schools and colleges collected feedback on the activities from both students and employers, and occasionally parents, but they all recognised that they could do more to evaluate the impact of the employer links. One school asked the students what action they intended to take as a result of participating in the activity. Two others reported that the increase in employer links had had a direct impact on raising aspirations and achievement. This claim was supported as follows: more students were now applying for apprenticeships and higher level courses; post-16, academic performance had improved; and the number of students who were NEET had fallen.

Most of the schools and colleges reported that the amount of employer engagement activities had increased over the past two years, but they did not attribute this to the change in provision of careers guidance for young people. They cited factors such as the school placing more emphasis on preparing students for work, the appointment of a new careers co-ordinator and students now considering a wider range of pathways other than just higher education. Two establishments said that the level of employer links had remained broadly the same but that the nature of the activities had changed in order to increase the number of students who had contact with an employer. One school reported that the level of activity had fallen because employers were finding it more difficult to come out to schools due to staffing pressures in their businesses.

Future developments

Examples of schools and colleges include: Evelyn Grace Academy; Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College; Richard Taunton Sixth Form College; Swanshurst School

All establishments reported that they intended to develop their links with employers further. Many planned to review their use of work experience and to place more emphasis on placements for post-16 students. One school also planned to introduce practice job interviews with employers for its sixth form students, an increasing number of whom were not going on to higher education. Two schools intended to develop more employer links with students in key stage 3. Other planned developments included promoting apprenticeships, setting up entrepreneurial activities, involving the subject departments, working with employers from a wider range of sectors and working with more local employers.

When asked about the barriers to effective employer engagement, the schools and colleges mentioned the limited amount of staff time to organise the activities and the limited access to students in curriculum time because of the pressure on academic results. They also thought that some employers were reluctant to get involved at a time when they were not recruiting young people or because of the perceived demands of DBS and health and safety checks. Schools and colleges also mentioned that employers have only a limited amount of time that they can offer to these activities and there is a concern that if the amount of employer links with schools and colleges increases, the demand for employer time might outstrip supply.

Suggestions made by the schools and colleges for facilitating employer links included:

- Increasing the level of staffing for this work in the school or college;
- Giving employer links greater priority;
- Guidelines to schools and colleges on effective employer engagement;
- A national campaign to promote the benefits of school-business links; incentives to small and medium sized businesses to get involved;
- Having an external organisation to broker links, to ease the burden of administration and
- A forum for sharing contacts and good practice.

Perceptions of the National Careers Service

At the end of the interviews with each of the schools and colleges the role of an external organisation in facilitating employer links was explored in more detail and views were invited about how this might work in practice if the National Careers Service were to take on the role.

Most of the establishments thought that it would be useful to have an external facilitating organisation, although at least one school questioned whether it was in fact necessary since schools could organise the activities themselves. The main role of the external organisation would be to broker links between schools and colleges and employers but views differed quite markedly on how this would work in practice.

Several establishments would just want access to a database of contacts, which was regularly updated, giving a range of employers who were willing to work with schools and colleges and listing the types of activity that they could offer. Other schools and colleges interviewed wanted a more enhanced level of support, whereby they could submit requests and the external organisation would set up the activity. One school went further and expressed a wish to have representatives from the organisation in school on the day itself, managing the activity. Clearly the costs of the service provided would increase over these three different levels of support, yet all the schools and colleges expected it to be free of charge.

A useful analogy here might be the different ways in which people book holidays today: some use the internet to research what is available; others visit a travel agency with a particular request; and others go on an escorted tour. It is possible to conceive of a model with the National Careers Service funded by central Government to provide the database of contacts and possible activities with other organisational and administrative support purchased by the school or college to meet their particular needs.

Other benefits of having a facilitating organisation that were identified by the schools and colleges included promoting the benefits of links to both employers and to schools and colleges, and providing a network to share contacts and practice. One concern expressed by some schools was whether the National Careers Service, as currently structured, would be able to provide a sufficiently localised service.

In-depth interviews: key findings

- Employer engagement activities in school and colleges should be promoted *alongside* careers education and access to impartial careers guidance, not as *an alternative* to impartial guidance.
- School and colleges would welcome support with developing links with employers. At one level this could be through access to a database of employers on the NCS website; at another it could be through a brokerage service provided by the prime or sub-contractors. For the latter to work effectively, however, would firstly require a mapping of existing education-business partnership organisations to avoid duplication and confusion, and secondly an increase in the resources available for this activity.

5. National Careers Service

The role that the National Careers Service currently plays in supporting and facilitating education/employer links was explored through interviews with seven National Careers Service prime contractors. Findings, reported in this section, relate to current and possible future developments from the perspective of service contractors.

Introduction

The National Careers Service has a crucial role to play in encouraging and supporting more employers to engage with schools and colleges on both the demand and supply-side of learning and work. The 'Inspiration Vision Statement' (HM Government, 2013) makes this a key priority. From October 2014 onwards, the National Careers Service will operate within a new regime, therefore the findings below are designed to inform the new arrangements.

For the period during which this research was undertaken the National Careers Service was delivered through thirteen prime contractors (SFA, 2013, p.3). Structured interviews were conducted with a sample of seven of the thirteen prime contractors for the National Careers Service, focusing on the type of support the National Careers Service provides schools and colleges. The purpose of these interviews was to explore the National Careers Service's current work on facilitating links between schools and colleges and employers and to collect views on how such work might be developed in the future. An interview schedule of seven questions was used for all seven interviews (see Appendix 5). An eighth prime contractor (Prospects Ltd., London) was also interviewed as part of the stakeholder interviews (see section 6).

Additionally, representatives of two separate National Careers Service telephone helpline services were interviewed.

The thirteen National Careers Serviced regional prime contractors sub-contract the work across their region (or sub-region), to several different providers. The sample of seven National Careers Service prime contractors participating in this study was determined by the regions, or sub-regions, of England in which these establishments were located (SFA, 2014). The findings reported here are based on interviews with seven of the thirteen prime contractors: Babcock (South East); Careers Yorkshire and the Humber (Yorkshire and the Humber); CfBT (North East); CSWP (West Midlands); Economic Solutions (North West – Greater Manchester); Futures Advice, Skills and Employment (East Midlands); Realise Futures (East of England).

Findings from the interviews with the telephone helpline contractors are also included below.

Supporting schools and colleges to fulfil their statutory duty for careers guidance for students up to age 18

From September 2012 schools have had a statutory duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their students from years 9-11. In September 2013 the requirement was extended to pupils in years 8 -13. An equivalent requirement was placed on colleges in relations to students up to the age of 18 in further education colleges.

The National Careers Services offers support to young people through its website and telephone helpline but has no remit to provide face-to-face guidance to young people below the age of 19, except for 18 year olds claiming benefit. The large majority of the work of the prime contractors and their sub-contractors is to offer face-to-face information, advice and guidance support to adults in one-to-one interviews or through group sessions. Despite having very little direct contact with schools, however, the National Careers Service is able to provide some support to help schools and colleges fulfil their new statutory requirements regarding the provision of careers support for their students. One of the more common means by which this is done is to provide staff in schools and colleges with regularly updated labour market intelligence (LMI), through bulletins, access to websites and blogs and re-tweets of National Careers Service tweets. In one region a group of schools asked the National Careers Service to provide a presentation to staff on LMI.

The National Careers Service is frequently co-located in colleges and this provides opportunities to promote the National Careers Service website, telephone helpline and mobile apps to students below the age of 19. In one region the prime contractor sent an e-mail direct to all schools to promote the National Careers Service website and telephone service and in the same region one of the sub-contractors organised a training session for teachers on using the National Careers Service website.

In some regions the National Careers Service is involved in organising skills shows which are attended by young people and teachers, and in several areas National Careers Service advisers are able to promote the National Careers Service services at such events, either in person, at large skills shows, or through leaflets, at smaller events.

While there are several examples of National Careers Service contractors supporting schools and colleges, the approaches vary from one region to another, and within individual areas. Some contractors have developed quite innovative approaches: for example, one prime contractor encourages all staff to sign up as speakers on the Inspiring the Future website; another goes into schools on parents' evenings to work with the parents as adult clients, but then uses the opportunity to promote the website to students.

The National Careers Service telephone and webchat helpline service reported early signs of some schools contacting the telephone helpline, following publication of the Statutory Guidance (DfE, 2014) and the introduction of new National Careers Service schools support materials (July 2014). The helpline team also attends school events, regional careers fairs to help increase awareness of the service.

National Careers Service links with employers

The main ways in which the National Careers Service contractors currently interact with employers is through the provision of redundancy counselling and, to a lesser extent, career development support for employees in work. In some regions the National Careers Service also organises job fairs. The other link is through being requested to join strategic groups where the National Careers Service contractors sit alongside local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Unionlearn reps., and they can seek to influence practice for young people.

National Careers Service links with employers to support the provision of careers guidance for young people at an operational level are limited in scope at present, but several prime contractors reported that these would increase in the future, under the new National Careers Service contracts from October 2014. Currently, there is a significant difference in practice between areas in which the prime contractor is one entity within a wider organisation that includes other companies, or divisions, that offer careers guidance services to schools and those in which the prime contractor is not linked to companies offering traded services for young people. In the former regions, or sub-regions, the National Careers Service contractor is able to pass the employer contacts it makes through its work on to the other companies or divisions providing school-employer link services, while in the latter this does not happen.

The National Careers Service telephone and website helpline service for young people and adults both reported they had limited contacts with employers, though this was likely to change from October 2014 onwards. The scale and nature of this work had yet to be fully determined, due to the imminent re-procurement of the telephone helpline services. It was highlighted that:

'There is a need to develop an appetite for greater use of the National Careers Service including its unique selling point to employers and schools. This has to be clear.' (Telephone and website helpline provider)

They suggested ways in which working links between employers, schools and the National Careers Service could be improved. There was a strong emphasis on building local partnerships and focusing on local economic development agendas. Some initial suggestions included, for example:

'Better use of virtual spaces including virtual co-location, extending the online presence through a matrix arrangement with differing partners, increasing the focus on labour market intelligence/information and positioning the service as the 'go to place' for good practice.' (Telephone helpline provider)

'There's certainly scope to use technology more, including screen and scrape technology to improve the online interface with young people, employers, schools and colleges.' (Telephone helpline provider)

Facilitating links with employers for schools and colleges

Most of the prime contractors interviewed reported that they did not currently facilitate links between employers and schools or colleges, as it was outside their current remit, but this would change under the next round of contracting.

Only two examples were given, one strategic the other operational. One contractor, which is a division of a company which also has another division that brokers schools-business links, spoke about promoting employer-school links to both employers and schools, and signposting both partners to other divisions in the company. In the other example, the National Careers Service contractor set up an activity for 18 year-olds in custody: the employers worked with the young offenders to raise their aspirations and they, in turn, were helped to see that the prisoners were not unemployable.

Developing the brokering role

At the time when these interviews with the National Careers Service prime contractors were undertaken, the Skills Funding Agency had recently announced the outcome of the round of National Careers Service contracts operational from October 2014. The specification for new contracts included an element on 'supporting inspiration', in which contractors had to set out plans for facilitating employer links with schools and colleges. However, the telephone and website helpline services for young people and adults were still in the re-procurement phase and they were unable to comment on the brokering role.

The contractors commented that the proportion of the budget allocated for this aspect of the work (5 per cent of the overall budget) was modest and would not pay for sufficient personnel to organise employer engagement activities for large numbers of schools and colleges. The focus would instead need to be on strategic roles and partnership working, with the logistic element comprising a database of employer contacts. Ideas for activities at a strategic level included engaging with employers to help them understand what they could offer to schools, providing training for teachers on developing effective links with employers and identifying employer champions for each school who could then work in the business community to encourage small and medium size employers to become involved.

To maximise the benefit of the limited resources available the National Careers Service contractors suggested working in partnership with the LEPs and other agencies. They also stressed the importance of not duplicating the work of the local education business partnerships (EBPs) which still operate within parts of their regions.

At the operational level, the prime contractors favoured a brokerage model where the National Careers Service could provide a bank of employer contacts for talks, visits, work experience, mock interviews, etc. and then could sell on further support services, under the National Careers Service brand. The contractor might organise a few activities as examples of good practice, but could not replicate this across the region.

Among the prime contractors who had secured contracts in the next round there was an enthusiasm for extending the role of the National Careers Service to include facilitating employer links with schools and colleges, but with a word of caution on what could realistically be achieved with the resources available.

Summary of findings

- National Careers Service links with employers to support the provision of careers guidance for young people at an operational level are limited in scope at present, but these are set to increase in the future, under the new National Careers Service contracts (from October 2014).
- The National Careers Service telephone and website helpline service for young people and adults have limited contacts with employers, though this was also likely to change from October 2014 onwards.
- Despite having no specific remit, and consequently very little direct contact with schools, the National Careers Service is currently able to provide some support to help schools and colleges fulfil their new statutory requirements regarding the provision of careers support for their students. While there are several examples of National Careers Service contractors supporting schools and colleges, the approaches vary from one region to another, and within individual areas. Some contractors have developed quite innovative approaches.
- The main way in which the National Careers Service contractors currently interact with employers is through the provision of redundancy counselling and, to a lesser extent, career development support for employees in work. The other is through membership of strategic groups, where the National Careers Service contractors can seek to influence practice for young people.
- National Careers Service Prime Contractors favoured a brokering model for the future, where a bank of employer contacts for talks, visits, work experience, mock interviews, etc. could be provided to schools and colleges, and where they could sell on further support services, under the National Careers Service brand.

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6. Stakeholders' views on employer engagement

Findings from telephone interviews with senior leaders from education, business and the National Careers Service are presented below.

Introduction

To extend understanding of the links between employers and schools, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with senior leaders from education, employers and careers sectors were interviewed between February to July 2014. In total, the perspectives of 23 stakeholder organisations are represented in this section. For three organisations, two representatives were interviewed from each (see acknowledgements). The purpose of these in-depth interviews was to gain a deeper insight into how working links between employers, schools and the National Careers Service were evolving from a leadership and senior management perspective. The interviews were also designed to provide insight to what works in practice and key lessons learned to help inform future policy developments linked to the implementation of the Government's Inspiration agenda (HM Government, 2013). For the interview briefing - see Appendix 6.

At the time this work was carried out, finding ways of making it easier for employers and educators to work together to benefit pupils, schools and college staff was a highly topical issue. Revised DfE Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges was on the horizon when the interviews took place. The new DfE Statutory Guidance (Department for Education, 2014) for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff and the Non-Statutory Department Guidance Advice (April 2014) reflects the Government's 'Inspiration' agenda with more emphasis on closer links between schools and employers. Background

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) has overall responsibility for the National Careers Service and has ambitious plans to transform the current National Careers Service to provide better service delivery for customers and to help them to realise more successful career outcomes. It aims to:

'Focus on key Government priorities for jobs, growth and localism, underpinned by inspirational activities and initiatives for adults and young people' (SFA, 2014)

In early April 2014, the National Careers Service formally announced outcomes from a procurement exercise for the delivery of the National Careers Service from October 2014 onwards. The outcomes from this exercise were not known at the time of the senior leader stakeholder interviews. Therefore, this research is primarily informed by respondents' views and experiences of working links between employers, schools and the National Careers Service from April 2012 to July 2014.

Findings

Views and experience of working links between employers, schools/colleges and the National Careers Service

The majority of respondents indicated working links between employers and schools/colleges have grown stronger in recent years. For example:

'The links are strong and growing because there's a commitment and willingness from more and more employers to spend time in schools compared to a decade ago.' (Schools & Colleges Body)

'There's now goodwill on both sides, in the past there's been limited resource from business and inflexibility in the schools system, the gap appears to be closing.' (Employer Representative Body)

'It's very easy to get employer engagement for work in schools i.e. nobody is turning us away. Businesses have shifted their perspectives dramatically. Ten years ago CEOs were talking mainly about the CSR part of the business and now the focus is on skills.' (Private Sector Careers Provider)

Just over three quarters of respondents indicated that more large-sized employers were getting involved in careers support activities for students and teachers in schools and colleges. Barclays Lifeskills, the British Chamber of Commerce, Business in the Community (Bitc) and National Grid each highlighted examples of approaches they undertake on a regular basis to connect with, and support, schools and colleges in curriculum and work experience placement activities across England.

There were also numerous examples given by other respondents of curriculum support materials and volunteer inputs by employers, employees and employer bodies inform and support schools and colleges. For example:

'There is clear evidence of strengthened links between large employers and schools in providing curriculum support materials, volunteers going into schools e.g. Barclays Life Skills, Inspiring the Future, Speakers for Schools, and work experience portal developments. Though it's quite different for SMEs.' (Employer and Careers Resource Developer)

Some employers and employer bodies reported difficulties in getting into schools to connect their work more fully with teachers, students and parents. In some cases, this was attributed to:

- a lack of understanding in knowing how best to navigate the schools system;
- a frustration that businesses sometimes struggle to find the right contact or link person;
- an over-supply in a particular geographical area i.e. a plethora of employers, products and services targeting the same school(s); and

- reluctance by some schools to let employers into the classroom.

It was noted:

'Schools vary considerably in their responsiveness to employers. Most employers do not know how to connect quickly and easily with schools in their area.' (National Careers Service Prime Contractor)

'Some schools have battened down the hatches. They don't know who to trust when there are lots of people knocking on their doors. Employers don't know who best to deal with - the Head teacher or the Employability or Pastoral Team? It's a conundrum that must be solved.' (Charitable Organisation)

The role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was viewed positively in strengthening local careers provision, however, there was a concern expressed that LEPs currently have no formal role with the Department for Education (DfE).

Working links between employers and colleges were reported as fairly well established with the National Careers Service having good working links in this context. For example:

'Colleges operate as learning companies tied into employers. They feature on study boards, vocational programmes, and many large employers provide dedicated staff to support work experience placements.' (Further Education Body)

'The National Careers Service providers are co-located in most colleges and this means we have good working links with employers and college staff.' (National Careers Service Provider).

The National Careers Service is co-located in colleges (and JobCentre Plus) which provides opportunities to promote the National Careers Service website, telephone helpline and mobile apps. This was reported as working well for adults, but low levels of take up from young people and parents

When asked about working links between employers, schools/ colleges and the National Careers Service, nearly all respondents (except National Careers Service providers) discussed their working links with National Careers Service at a strategic, rather than operational, level. This is hardly surprising given the role and responsibilities of Chief Executives, Directors and senior leaders/managers. As a result, the findings reflect the viewpoints and experiences of their contact (or otherwise) at a central/strategic level, rather than with Prime Contractor National Careers Service providers.

Some examples of current National Careers Service practice viewed as working well included joint activities such as:

- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) involvement in the 2014 procurement arrangements for the National Careers Service
- Vocational Qualifications Day

- Regional Skills Show events
- plotr website links and shared job profile information
- Working links with unionlearn
- Co-location in college student support services and JobCentre Plus; and
- National Grid shared information on employer engagement activities.

Despite the examples given above, the majority of respondents described current working arrangements with the National Careers Service at a central/strategic level as either none existent, very weak, and/or in need of improvement. For example:

'The National Careers Service is a well-kept secret as far as employers are concerned.' (National Employer)

'At a loss to say much at all, except there are no links!' (Schools & Colleges Body)

In nearly all cases, employers reported failed attempts to connect sufficiently with the National Careers Service at a central/strategic level resulting in very weak ties. For example:

'We see there is a key role for a body such as the National Careers Service to co-ordinate and signpost resources for schools. We have had some dealings but found there is no co-ordinated response.' (Education Representative Body)

In most cases, there was genuine confusion about the role and remit of the National Careers Service from employer bodies, employers and trade union perspectives. For example:

'The National Careers Service currently sits within a haze and, as a large employer, we are not clear on its raison d'être. It's an all-age careers service that focuses on older lower skilled adults - why?!' (National Employer)

This response reflects a level of understanding and perception which is misaligned with the actual remit of the National Careers Service and this either is a result of lack of information or service provision by the Service to this particular employer. Where working links were described, they were generally reported as in need of further improvement. For example:

'The National Careers Service needs to articulate clearly the extent to which it can bring together the offer to employers and schools. It is not adopting a strategic approach instead it is operating rather piecemeal.' (Employer Body)

'Many employers don't know what the service stands for; therefore, they don't know what they want from it.' (National Employer)

National Careers Service Prime Contractors reported that working links with employers should increase in the future. For example:

'The new contract in October provides a great opportunity to strengthen links with schools and employers. We're thinking about smart ways to minimise customer effort and maximise resources. The National Careers Service could bring services together rather than duplicating effort' (Telephone helpline provider).

A few Prime Contractors highlighted that at a local level their working links with employers currently take place outside of the existing National Careers Service contract. For example, through contracts with Local Authorities, National Apprenticeship Service and Work Experience brokerage arrangements funded by some schools.

The majority of other respondents reported stronger working links with the National Apprenticeship Service compared to the National Careers Service. A few indicated they have stronger working links with the UK Commission for Employment & Skills (UKCES) than the National Careers Service. The telephone helpline for young people reported it had limited contacts with employers, though this should change from October 2014. The scale and nature of this work was yet to be fully determined, due to the imminent re-procurement of the telephone helpline service.

Improving relationships between the National Careers Service and schools/colleges

Respondents were invited to suggest ways in which potential future working links between the National Careers Service, schools and colleges could be improved. There was a strong emphasis on building local partnerships and focusing on local economic development agendas. Some initial suggestions included, for example:

'National Careers Service has significant potential at a local level to work with Local Enterprise Partnerships as they mature and develop.' (National Careers Service Prime Contractor)

'Schools are struggling to balance academic outputs and employers don't know who best to connect with in these institutions. A clustering approach for schools to share resources could possibly help and National Careers Service should play a stronger role in this.' (Charitable Body)

'Employers and schools want to be able to access a directory of what's going on in the space locally and nationally.' (Employer Representative Body)

The majority of employers and employer bodies indicated that the National Careers Service should focus more on supporting young people, schools and employers alongside its work with adults. However the National Careers Service does not have a remit to provide face-to-face careers guidance to young people below the age of 19 (except to those young people who are 18 and registered unemployed), nor to work directly with schools.

Therefore, the suggestions below are based on participants' viewpoints and preferences. For example, it was suggested by employers and employer bodies, the trade union and

private and voluntary sector agencies that future improved arrangements should, and could, take place through more systematic mapping by National Careers Service to help explain what resources are available to schools. In addition, other ideas to strengthen the National Careers Service working links with schools and colleges included:

- act as a conduit or ‘go to place’ to help signpost people to find trusted quality-assured information and expert careers support services;
- scale up resources using trusted and quality-assured careers providers e.g. National Health Service Careers and others;
- make good use of STEMNET and strengthen the BIG BANG Shows in an identical way to the Skills Show Regional events i.e. incorporate National Careers Service staff more fully into these activities;
- get more businesses involved in the National Careers Service at a strategic and local level;
- signpost to other key sources such as Business in the Community (BiTC), the British Chamber of Commerce (BCC), Local Enterprise Partnerships etc.
- orchestrate collegiate partnerships i.e. draw together key gatekeepers and influencers at a local and national level;
- strengthen working links at a central and regional level with employers and unionlearn learning representatives in the workplace; and
- adopt a social partnership model to help address any imbalance and over emphasis on information, advice and guidance (IAG) for low skilled adults.

Three dominant themes emerged from the stakeholder interviews as follows:

1. Demand for a renewed focus on National Careers Service working links with employers and schools.
2. Clarity on leadership and ‘direction of travel’ for the National Careers Service.
3. New brokerage opportunities and challenges.

Each of these themes is explored in more depth below.

Theme 1: A renewed focus on National Careers Service working links with employers and schools

In nearly all cases, respondents highlighted the need for greater clarity from Government on the role and remit of the National Careers Service in working with employers and schools. This finding reflects some form of disconnect between the respondents’ viewpoints and the current role and remit of the National Careers Service.

In a few cases, respondents indicated the National Careers Service might struggle to meet the various competing demands from employers and schools. It was suggested expectations would have to be managed well by the Skills Funding Agency and Prime Contractors in the coming months.

Theme 2: Leadership and direction of travel for the National Careers Service

In most cases, respondents indicated greater clarity is required on the core purpose of the National Careers Service and its leadership role in helping employers and schools make sense of the careers landscape. This shows that a basic level of misunderstanding exists that merits greater attention by the Skills Funding Agency's National Careers Service. For example:

'The National Careers Service needs to decide its core purpose and execute this. It should provide better data to support young people, parents and teachers and this should be in a scalable format – not static! Government services are seldom trail blazers, therefore the National Careers Service should service the needs of the market for public good. It could also act as a catalyst for quality assured new tools and products.' (National Employer)

A private sector careers provider queried whether the National Careers Service is well placed to lead on this. For example:

'Public sector bodies often try to design products themselves when they could simply contract this work out to experts who have the know-how and technical expertise to make things happen more quickly.' (Private Sector Careers Provider)

Theme 3: Brokerage opportunities and challenges

It was apparent that National Careers Service future brokerage arrangements between employers, schools and colleges could potentially take many different forms, as outlined in Table 6.1 below. The opportunities outlined by respondents were also characterised in terms of:

- providing a calendar of events for schools and colleges;
- a list of employers willing to speak in schools;
- a kitemarking approach to quality-assured provision; and
- a 'Trip Advisor' approach to information to help guide users in the careers marketplace. For example: *'They should act more like Trip Advisor and give people the freedom to choose the level of service they want and/or can afford.'* (Further Education Body)

Some respondents highlighted challenges and their perceived concerns about duplication of effort; 'reinventing the wheel'; unmet expectations; insufficient funds to work with employers and schools; and a lack of joined up working between agencies and government departments. For example:

'I'm not sure about the National Careers Service acting as a brokerage service given there are so many out there already. Instead, the National Careers Service should have a signposting and kitemarking/quality assurance role. They should focus on providing a directory and face-to-face support for young people who need this most.' (Charitable Body)

'The National Careers Service is starting from a low base position and the limiting factor is inadequate funding to connect with sufficient numbers of employers and to work with schools.' (Employer Body)

From an employer perspective, the main issue highlighted was motivators and incentives for schools and employers to connect with the National Careers Service given its low visibility and perceived lack of impact to date in working with young people and parents.

What employers want from the National Careers Service and what the National Careers Service has to offer employers

In nearly all cases, respondents were very clear about what employers want from the National Careers Service. These expectations may or may not be realistically achievable or within the remit of the National Careers service; nonetheless, they reflect a reality from employers, school and college leaders' perspectives. Responses included:

- Individuals referred to employers by the National Careers Service with the right mind-sets, attitudes, knowledge and skills for a successful working future, including an understanding of work conventions.
- Co-ordination e.g. National Careers Service helping to make meaningful connections to people and resources.
- Easy ways for employers to connect with schools and colleges.
- A framework and support that is clearly understood.
- Orchestration to avoid duplication of effort by employers, schools and colleges.
- A single portal where people know to go to obtain information as a trusted starting point.
- Career mapping tools and psychometric tests.
- Signposting to models of best practice in working with schools, colleges and universities.
- A consistent standard of careers provision to young people and adults regardless of their background, gender and ethnicity.

Respondents were also asked to identify what the National Careers Service has to offer employers, schools and colleges. Responses included:

- Great examples of effective partnerships and good practice models.
- Trusted and quality assured information from a wide range of reliable sources.
- Inspiring communication messages to motivate people to take action.
- A conduit for linking people to career development professionals and resources available online and offline.
- A menu of differing resources and options available in the market..
- An all-age careers service that support employers looking for ways into schools and colleges.
- Intelligence on labour market supply and demand.
- Helping people find routes to employment, including careers advisers in Job centre plus and Trade Union Learning Representatives in the workplace.

Strengthening working links between employers, schools and the National Careers Service is part of the Government's Inspiration agenda. There is strong interest and support to create more opportunities for young people and adults in the places where they live and learn. The research undertaken explored the respondent's viewpoints on perceived barriers that might get in the way of progress. These were identified as follows:

- A plethora of new players in the market competing for schools and colleges' attention.
- Employers and schools bombarded with information and struggling to cope with the complexity and confusion.
- Schools and teachers need support in the transition phase of new statutory duties.
- A lack of awareness of the National Careers Service brand and what it really stands for and insufficient resources for effective communication and collaboration.

The majority of Employer Bodies and National Employers highlighted the need for greater cohesion between the National Careers Service and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). At the time of the research plans were underway to address this issue. There was a strong desire for greater consistency in employer and trade union working links at a national as well as local level.

Effective employer engagement models: working directly with students, teachers/lecturers, careers advisers, governors, head teachers/principals

Approximately half of the respondents observed that parents were often missing as a constituent group in employer engagement. All respondents indicated growing concerns about a very crowded and congested landscape. For example:

'It's a very crowded landscape and the National Careers Service needs to map this and align best practices to help identify what's working for whom in differing parts of the country.' (Employer Representative Body)

They briefly described their own provision, followed by examples of what works best, based on their own opinions and/or research findings. Many of these examples provided were also identified in the employer survey (see section 3, above) and the schools/college survey and in-depth interviews. For example,

- **Structured programmes**, such as: Barclays Lifeskills; BiTC Business Class; Career Academies UK; Young Enterprise; the Princes Trust, Local Authority led EBPs; STEMNET and Big Bang.
- **Career insights from employers and employees**, such as: Inspiring speakers and/or mentors coming into the school e.g. Inspiring the Future, Inspiring Women, Speakers for Schools, STEMNET Ambassadors, Inspiring Futures, National Careers Service Regional Road Shows.
- **Careers programmes** supported by careers professionals.
- **Institutional clustering arrangements**, such as: school-to-school, college-to-college or a mix of both.

The role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was cited by just over half of the respondents as critical in helping to shape future local arrangements between employers, schools and the National Careers Service. Some indicated:

'LEPs should be at the heart of this – business led brokerage – though there is no sense of priority from the Department for Education on this!' (LEP)

A wide range of effective employer engagement models were highlighted. Some examples of organisations and places for innovative and effective employer engagement models included: Barking and Dagenham College; Basildon School; Farnborough School, Nottingham; EU Skills and other Sector Skills Councils; and UKCES Employer Ownership pilots. Examples of effective work with students in schools and colleges included: ensuring access to work experience, talks, contacts and networking with employers; work-related learning curriculum plans and activities; a well-planned careers programme involving employers; skills events including employers, teachers and careers professionals; weekend and twilight careers advice sessions in local communities; and instant access through use of ICT and social networks.

The majority of respondents indicated that teachers/lecturers need a clear overview of what constitutes good quality careers education and guidance programmes and models of best practice. To support teachers/lecturers, examples given included: Career learning embedded in CPD; Project-led learning e.g. UTC approach; Skills Events; Industry Days for Teachers (block placements); Alumni insights; Subject Associations offering refreshers for teachers' CPD; Work experience for teachers/lecturers from the shop floor to the Boardroom; Professional Guides and training aimed at specific target audiences e.g. ASCL; Employers visiting schools, supported by a planned careers strategy, including de-

briefings; sector focused activities on post-16 employer engagement with SMEs; and use of reliable careers resources in the curriculum.

The Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce has, over the last year and a half, developed a successful Schools Forum model to support schools to build better links with the business world. An important element of the forum is to provide information on labour market intelligence relating to area of economic growth and employment opportunities in the region, this has been provided by the Local Enterprise Partnership, Local Authorities, Employment and Skills Boards and from research undertaken at local Universities – the aim of this is to ensure that curriculum development and careers advice is not disjointed and removed from the realities of the needs of local employers. Following the recent merger with Leicestershire Chamber in December 2013 the schools forum activity will extend further into this region.

For Governors, all respondents indicated this group needs help and support in understanding what effective employer engagement models look like and schools' new responsibilities for careers work. However, most did not view the National Careers Service as having a specific role in this regard, beyond local occasional presentations to Governor Bodies.

For Head teachers/Principals, all respondents felt that leadership from the top and 'buy in' was the most effective way of embedding effective employer engagement models. Examples included: leadership from the top and engagement with careers work from the heart; timetable suspended for the day to dedicate time for careers leadership and development work in a whole school approach; a commitment to Industry Days. It was noted:

'Where schools are performing well on careers there's usually a dynamic head teacher driving this forward with dedicated staff.' (Schools and Colleges Body).

In nearly all cases employers cited the need for a clear National Careers Service framework that is clearly understood, fit for purpose and with a clear focus. For example:

'Articulate a clear framework that joins up the dots and makes it easy for employers to connect with schools, colleges and careers professionals.' (National Employer)

Also, the best forms of brokerage were characterised as 'needs driven by local partners' supported by a coherent national careers strategy and National Careers Service framework. Further examples of best forms of brokerage that National Careers Service can potentially perform from respondents' perspectives are outlined in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Best case examples of brokerage that National Careers Service can perform

Examples	
<i>'Undertake a logistical planning role that maps what's happening in the careers landscape and plug gaps in careers support for young people and adults.'</i> (National Employer)	<i>'Ensure LMI is up-to-date, user friendly and feeds into the curriculum.'</i> (Employer Representative Body)
<i>'Signpost best practice and good quality provision to employers and schools.'</i> (Trade Union)	<i>'Build on existing databases that help employers and schools connect with the right people in an easy fashion. There is so much out there!'</i> (Employer Body)
<i>'Use technological solutions to reach more employers and schools, for example, search optimisers, search engines, APIs, moodles for curriculum development activities.'</i> (Private Sector Provider)	<i>'Develop more strategic partnerships through formal MoUs rather than reinventing the wheel or competing with agencies already well established in the market.'</i> (National Employer)
<i>'Promote destination knowledge of young people's career trajectories'</i> (Employer Body)	<i>'Support career hubs in the community, catalogue provision, provide career insights and careers education, advice and guidance to young people and adults.'</i> (Further Education Body)
<i>'Act as a contact point to signpost others and provide more inspiring careers activities, including careers insights and careers guidance.'</i> (Charitable Body)	<i>'Build on existing policies and practices that work well'</i> (Prime Contractor)

Potential of the National Careers Service's sphere of influence with employers and schools/colleges

In the curriculum

The majority of respondents indicated that the National Careers Service should be 'the place to go' for signposting to best practice, quality assured products and services, and accessing careers expert help and support. The current overarching framework for careers provision was reported to be confusing with a lack of visibility and understanding of the National Careers Service's work supporting young people, teachers, parents and employers. For example:

'There is no current mandate or clear remit from government for the National Careers Service to work in schools.' (Education Representative Body)

However, there was some cautious optimism that the newly awarded National Careers Service contracts, commencing October 2014, may provide inspiring ideas for curriculum development and teacher support. A further notable point was the issue of how Government will incentivise behaviour in National Careers Service working with employers, schools and colleges.

In leadership and governance

Most respondents highlighted a fundamental requirement for National Careers Service to demonstrate leadership and effective governance within its own organisation.

'The National Careers Service has such potential but it needs to work harder at responding positively to employers who have invested in careers support programmes in schools. The National Careers Service can provide impartial careers guidance but at present the future direction of travel is unclear.' (Employer Representative Body)

All respondents' indicated a strong appetite to work more closely with the National Careers Service at both a strategic and operational level. In one case, a major employer has formally written to BIS expressing his strong desire to support the work of the National Careers Service, in particular to join an employer-led advisory body.

A question was posed on the extent to which the National Careers Service should contribute to careers work with governors in schools and colleges. This was asked simply to reflect on the target audience that the new Statutory Guidance was likely to include governing bodies. Nearly all respondents recommended that the National Careers Service should leave the development of governance to other established bodies such as the National Governors Association, or alternatively, produce best practice models for governing bodies to draw upon.

In the use of labour market information (LMI)

Most respondents highlighted local and national LMI as essential within a high performing National Careers Service. For example:

'Employers expect them to do this sort of thing well.' (Employer Representative Body)

There was some evidence of the National Careers Service sharing LMI with other providers, but this was generally reported as under-developed. Fourteen respondents referred to the 'LMI for All' initiative as highly innovative. In some cases, the question was raised on how National Careers Service intends to use this new online facility and their involvement in the roll-out to employers and schools.

In developing ICT and innovative policies and practices

Twelve respondents highlighted inherent dangers in National Careers Service creating a platform that looks static and replicates what is already out there in the marketplace.

The majority of respondents indicated that the National Careers Service website could become more dynamic and content rich through partnership working with employers, charities and social enterprises. National Careers Service links with plotr were described

as in an early development phase. In some cases, the plotr initiative was viewed as a welcome innovative development; however, in other cases it was described as “a purely commercial venture operating alongside many others in the open market.” It was noted that the majority of respondents indicated National Careers Service has the potential to host webinars and support capacity building in schools, colleges and local communities. Twenty-one respondents indicated the National Careers Service should be promoting destination knowledge of young people’s career trajectories. This will require some thinking about how the service intends to use schools, college and higher education student’s destination data.

These findings reflect a disconnection between respondents’ expectations and the current remit of the National Careers Service.

Increasing the impact of the National Careers Service on education/employer engagement

Key suggestions from the stakeholder interviews are summarised as follows:

‘Focus on the learner journey and find effective ways to address disjointed and overlapping government funded activities, for example Job Centre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service, National Careers Service and UK Commission for Employment & Skills’ work with employers.’ (National Employer)

‘Optimise the strong brand and be clear on what the National Careers Service stands for.’ (Employer Representative Body)

‘Don’t try to develop or reinvent in-house ICT or LMI tools given the plethora of available innovative solutions in the marketplace and the availability of open source data.’ (Private sector careers resource developer)

‘Focus more on signposting employers and schools to quality career services and products.’ (National Employer)

The extent to which these suggestions reflect the reality of the National Careers Service now and in the future has yet to be determined.

Summary of findings

- Working links between employers and schools/ colleges have grown stronger in recent years, though this tended to be focused more on large-sized employers. While employers and employer bodies reported difficulties in getting into schools, links with colleges were fairly well established and supported by the National Careers Service. This should increase in the future, under the new National Careers Service contracts from October 2014, subject to key performance indicators (KPIs) being agreed with the Skills Funding Agency. To improve links, employer bodies place a strong emphasis on building local partnerships and focusing on local economic development agendas.
- Links between employer bodies and the National Careers Service tended to exist at a strategic, rather than operational level, with dealings confined to the national co-

ordination unit e.g. Sector Skills Councils. Where working links were described, they were generally reported as in need of further improvement. The majority of respondents described the current arrangements as either none existent, very weak, and/or in need of improvement.

- The majority of employer bodies and employers reported concerns about the quality and level of career provision for young people, particularly those most vulnerable. Employer bodies felt the National Careers Service should focus more on supporting young people, schools and employers alongside its work with adults.
- The role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was viewed positively in strengthening local careers provision, however, there was a concern that LEPs have no formal role with the Department for Education (DfE). Their role was cited by 14 respondents as critical in helping to shape future local arrangements between employers, schools and the National Careers Service.
- Employer bodies, employers and trade union perspectives expressed confusion about the role and remit of the National Careers Service. In nearly all cases employers cited the need for a clear National Careers Service framework that is clearly understood, fit for purpose and with a clear focus.
- Three dominant themes emerged from the stakeholder interviews: demand for a renewed focus on National Careers Service working links with employers and schools; clarity on leadership and 'direction of travel' for the National Careers Service; new brokerage opportunities and challenges.
- Employing bodies were clear about what they wanted from the National Careers Service (for example, easy ways for employers to connect with schools and colleges) and felt the Service had much to offer: in the curriculum; leadership and governance; in the use of labour market information; in developing ICT and innovative policies and practices.
- A wide range of effective employer engagement models were highlighted. Some examples of organisations and places for innovative and effective employer engagement models included: Barking and Dagenham College; Basildon School; Farnborough School, Nottingham; EU Skills and other Sector Skills Councils; and UKCES Employer Ownership pilots.
- Overall, the education, employer and National Careers Service landscape is congested and over-crowded. Some form of national co-ordination is required to support and add-value to local priorities.

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7. Conclusion

The conclusions from this research are presented below, with a focus on findings that relate specifically to understanding the link between employers, schools and the National Careers Service.

- Both the primary and secondary research undertaken for this research confirms the plethora of existing employer engagement activity with schools/colleges that brings significant benefit to learners. However, these activities need to be rationalised and incorporated within better co-ordinated structures and models that allow for a more substantive up-scaling and coherence of provision at a local and national level.
- Larger employers involved in some form of training were more likely to engage with education compared to SMEs. Finding ways of incentivising SMEs to work with education institutions and the National Careers Service is crucial. Barriers to participation of employers with educational institutions were mainly the lack of time and resources needed. There is scope, therefore, to incentivise, stimulate and support employer interest in engaging more fully with schools and colleges.
- Ninety four per cent of schools/colleges surveyed were involved in some type of employer engagement activity. The nature and scope of this activity varied according to type of educational institution with models of interesting practices evident. An examination of the reasons for this differentiation by school type is necessary so that policy to incentivise increased engagement can be properly informed by evidence based practice.
- The majority of activities with employers are organised for learners in the 14-19 age range, with an increasing emphasis on post-16 learners, particularly with regard to work experience and work shadowing. This is significant given research findings indicate young people benefit from exposure to multiple contacts with employers from an early age, so schools' work with employers for learners aged 11-14 needs to be developed.
- Links with employers not only inspire, inform and advise students about particular occupations and sectors, but also enhance the provision of careers and work-related education in the curriculum. Employer engagement activities in school and colleges should be promoted alongside careers education and access to impartial careers guidance, not as an alternative to impartial guidance. School leadership is essential to drive forward new conversations and actions on the added-value contribution of employers/employees, teachers and careers development professionals to the whole school delivery plan.
- Schools and colleges need and want further information and support on employer contacts and the range of activities they can bring to the institution(s) such as mentors, role models, work experience, talks and visits to the workplace. This could be through access to a database of employers on the NCS website or through a

brokerage service provided by the prime or sub-contractors. For the latter to work effectively, however, a mapping of existing education-business partnership organisations would be needed first, to avoid duplication and confusion, together with an increase in the resources available for this activity. Examples of good practice should also be widely disseminated to schools and colleges, for example, the British Chamber of Commerce model designed to expose teachers to the changing nature of the labour market information (LMI) provides an interesting approach to teacher's continuous professional development at a local and regional level.

- Significant scope exists to make greater use of shared intelligence on employer links with schools and the National Careers Service at a national level between government departments, the Skills Funding Agency and the UK Commission for Employment & Skills.
- Labour market information (LMI) is in demand from schools and colleges. The extent to which the National Careers Service is equipped to respond effectively needs to be further considered at a local and central level. The 'LMI for All' webportal (represents a rich resource for high quality, reliable LMI, with a role for the National Careers Service in supporting access by schools and colleges .
- Less than half of all the employers surveyed were aware of the National Careers Service. They wanted support from the National Careers Service with their training needs and help with identifying work experience students. A clear policy steer is required to determine the extent to which these needs should be met by the National Careers Service, and how they could be met.
- There is a compelling argument from the research evidence to find ways of making it easier for employers to connect with schools to enrich curriculum learning, work experience and career development opportunities. The role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), for example, was viewed positively by employer organisations in strengthening local careers provision. However, there was a concern that LEPs have no formal role with the Department of Education.
- The visibility of the National Careers Service is not apparent to employers, particularly in relation to how it is informing and advising young people, parents, teachers and employers. Some employers have experienced failed attempts to work collaboratively and effectively with the National Careers Service at a central level. Greater clarity in communicating the role and remit of the service could help address this problem.
- An 'Employer-Led Advisory Body' within the Skills Funding Agency could help facilitate the strengthening of strategic partnerships and more flexible utilisation of resources between the National Careers Service, employers and schools.
- National Careers Service Prime Contractors favour a brokering model for the future, where a bank of employer contacts for talks, visits, work experience, mock interviews, etc. could be provided and where they could work with other partners to

further support services to schools and colleges, under the National Careers Service brand. However, the present funding allocation for strengthening brokerage arrangements at a local level is likely to restrict the scale and impact of National Careers Service Prime Contractors' work.

- National Careers Service links with employers to support the provision of careers guidance for young people at an operational level are limited in scope at present, though these are set to increase in the future, under the new National Careers Service contracts from October 2014.
- Users of the National Careers Service do not distinguish between the centrally-managed website and telephone helpline, and the services provided by the contractors. There is a need to communicate more clearly what services are available and how they can be accessed. Overall, the education, employer and National Careers Service landscape is congested and over-crowded. Some form of national co-ordination is required to support and add-value to local priorities.

Appendix 1 Literature review

A search of recent academic and grey) literature, focusing on employer/education links yielded evidence of practice from a range of organisations, employer bodies and employer based careers services. The literature review that follows, based on this search, provides the context for the research and was used to inform the design of the research tools used.

Introduction

This literature review employed an adapted systematic review methodology for a comprehensive review of both academic and grey literature sources, including online sources. Items and materials were examined using abstracts and/or summaries, applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. The methodology allowed the most relevant material to be retained for further scrutiny, whilst permitting the retention of a broader literature. In addition, sources of good practice were investigated.

Different types of employer engagement with schools and colleges

Burge et al. (2012) conducted a review of employer involvement in schools, which involved assessing fifty-four items of literature, which showed that employers engage with schools in a variety of different ways. Employers could work directly with students, become involved in curriculum development, staff development or support leadership and governance of schools. They noted how:

'the most frequently mentioned ways in which employers work directly with students are through work experience, school/workplace visits, apprenticeships/training and mentoring' (p. 3).

Burge et al. (2012) also highlight how schools need a clear vision of what they want from school-employer partnerships, how it will improve outcomes for young people and to make the partnership work requires commitment, cooperation and leadership, with sufficient time and resources being given to making partnerships work successfully.

A YouGov/EDGE report on Business in Schools (YouGov, 2010) surveyed secondary teachers and sixth form/further education (FE) lecturers and found that the most common type of business activities were work experience, enterprise projects and workplace visits, with mentoring, workshops and school and teacher support being much less common.

Huddleston et al. (2012) in their review of practice in twenty independent schools point out that it can be helpful if pupils are expected to take part in a range of employer engagement activities (work experience, workplace visits, careers events), even though such activities might take place outside the timetabled teaching time. Staff did not see the majority of required employer engagement activities as extracurricular events. They *'saw the activities as part of a broadly defined curriculum which prepared pupils effectively for adult life. However, little evidence was found of links to the taught curriculum'* (p. 5).

Ofsted (2013), in their report 'Going in the Right direction', inspected the Careers Guidance Provision of sixty schools, especially with regards to the provision of sufficient labour market information; the promotion of training and employment opportunities; and the links between schools and local employers. They found that the arrangements for careers guidance in schools are not working well enough. Three quarters of the schools visited for the survey were not implementing their duty to provide impartial careers advice effectively. The survey also found that guidance for schools on careers advice is not explicit, the National Careers Service is not promoted well enough and there is a lack of employer engagement in schools.

Very few of the schools visited knew how to provide a service effectively or had the skills and expertise needed to provide a comprehensive service. Few schools had bought in adequate service from external sources. The report findings show schools were not working well enough with employers to provide students with direct experience of the world of work in order to help broaden their minds about realistic employment opportunities in their local area (Ofsted, 2013).

Vocational training and apprenticeships were rarely promoted effectively, especially in schools with sixth forms. Instead, the A-Level route remained the 'gold-standard' for young people, their parents and teachers. The report made a number of recommendations to the Government, schools, Local Authorities, The National Careers Service as well as for Ofsted itself. It recommended that:

- The Government provide more explicit guidance to schools on careers advice.
- The Government monitor students' progress and achievement when they leave school through accurate collection of 'destination data' to give a better understanding of a young person's journey to employment.
- The National Careers Service markets its services more effectively to all young people aged 13-18 and does more to disseminate information on national skills shortages so that young people gain a greater understanding of where there are likely to be greater employment opportunities.

Ofsted also recommends that its own inspectors take greater account of careers guidance and students' destinations when conducting future school inspections (Ofsted, 2013).

From an employer perspective, during late 2012 and early 2013 the Plymouth Manufacturing Group (PMG) undertook a survey to gauge the extent to which members engaged with the local education sector. The most popular forms of employer engagement included: offering work experience placements; offering apprenticeships; school enrichment activities; assisting with CV preparation and interview techniques; acting as a NAS apprenticeship ambassador. Other forms could include formal schemes such as: Business in the Community; Business Class Programme; Education Business Partnership; Industry Days/Business Simulations; Employer Endorsement Scheme; Engineering Development Trust; local Inspire event intended to 'Inspire Young People' (PMG, 2013). The national picture was similar with CBI (2010 and 2011) surveys indicating that provision of work experience placements was the most popular form of employer engagement. In a more recent survey the CBI (2013) reported that the majority of the 294 employers surveyed (85 per cent of whom had links with at least one school or college) reported that

‘not enough young people leave school with work experience (55 per cent unsatisfied), or having developed personal qualities like self-management (54 per cent) and attitude to work (35 per cent)’ (p. 6). The CBI report (2013) saw the value of stronger links between employers and schools and colleges, but the survey respondents also recognized there were a range of barriers to realizing this goal: ‘Business involvement should be expanded further, but barriers include uncertainty over how to make work experience worthwhile (29 per cent), lack of interest among schools or pupils (27 per cent) and insufficient interest among employees in working with schools or colleges (25 per cent)’ (p. 28).

The UK Commission’s Employer Perspectives Survey 2012 provides a UK-wide picture of how employers are meeting their skills needs, looking both at their engagement with skills and employment services and their broader approaches to people development (UKCES, 2012a). The work placements on offer can be classified into three main groups:

‘education placements, for those currently in school, university or college, internships, including those who offer internships or graduate schemes and work experience placements, covering work trials for potential new recruits, placements targeting the unemployed or disabled and volunteering’ (UKCES, 2012a, p. 142).

Mann and Virk (2013) outline four different models of school-employer engagement:

- The ‘brokered’ model whereby ‘local or national intermediary organisations source employers and make them available to schools and colleges to support specific activities and initiatives – work experience placements, enterprise days, STEM clubs etc. Examples of brokers include Education Business Partnerships, STEMNET, Young Enterprise’ (p. 20).
- The ‘deep brokered’ model is represented by The Business Class model, funded mainly by UKCES and operated by Business in the Community, whereby local staff facilitate negotiations between a lead local business and a small consortium of schools, at which a ‘wide range of potential engagements are explored across the range of school life. Employer resources are sourced to meet the articulated needs and desires of each participating school’ (p. 20).
- The autonomous actor/market approach, as exemplified by ‘Inspiring the Future’, offers a new model of connecting employers and schools through use of a national gateway (a secure website), which ‘recruits employers who provide details of themselves and the types of support they are willing to offer (e.g. careers talks, reading partners, joining governing bodies). Teaching staff search the database for people in their locality who can offer what they need’ (Mann and Virk, 2013, p. 20).
- The final model involves the school or college alone. In this case, schools and especially colleges invest in their own staff resources to find and work with local employers. This may be a more expensive means of securing employer engagement than brokered models (Mann, 2012), but the quality of engagement secured may be high, although the net volume of activity may be reduced (Mann and Virk, 2013).

The Women's Business Council (2013) 'Starting Out – Evidence Paper' highlights the need for greater employers' engagement in work experience and information, including advice on how to tackle gender stereotypes and encourage non-traditional paths or efforts to smooth the transition into employment.

The National Careers Council (2013) indicates there is an urgent requirement for the National Careers Service to become more visible to employers (p. 17) and makes the case for 'employer input at a strategic level, national level' through the creation of a high-level Employer-led Advisory Board as a means of recognising and cementing essential links (p. 18). Case studies of exemplars of good practices in schools, in community agencies and with employers in Annex 2 of the NCC report (2013) illustrate the high levels of creativity and endeavour that exists in some schools and colleges in relation to partnership working.

The 'brokered model' can include regional organisations, run, for example, under the auspices of City Deals/Local Enterprise Partnerships. Chambers of Commerce can act as one of the partners within Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that bid for City Deal status. City Deals are designed to put cities and areas in control of the economic opportunities and challenges they face and to give them increased powers to meet local and regional needs. Hence, for example, Coventry and Warwickshire bid centred around advanced manufacturing and engineering and looked at ways of supporting and speeding up growth among companies in that sector. The region has a degree of autonomy to set its own economic agenda and alongside other types of support to help with exports, finding new premises etc. the LEP can support them to train or take on new staff to solve a skills shortage. Within the City Deal/LEP frameworks there is therefore plenty of scope to support school/college – employer links in working directly with students in the ways outlined below.

National campaigns such as 'Make it in Great Britain' can also play an exhortatory role. The campaign was intended to help transform the image of UK manufacturing and highlight its importance in relation to the economy. The Make it in Great Britain website can help employers looking to get involved with schools find different brokers who could facilitate such links. For example, Open Industry (http://www.etrust.org.uk/open_industry.cfm); Stemettes aimed at encouraging girls into STEM by hosting or sponsoring an event (<http://stemettes.org>); Inspiring the Future where employees give inspiring talks about their jobs (<http://www.inspiringthefuture.org>); Speakers for Schools (<http://speakers4schools.org>) has a similar remit. Below is more detail on one of these schemes: Open Industry (http://www.etrust.org.uk/open_industry.cfm).

Open Industry (OI) provides students (aged 11-18) with short visits to organisations focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects, where students can experience ways in which STEM based subjects are applied in the real world and are encouraged to engage with role models to help them to make informed career choices. OI work with enterprises and teachers to ensure that each visit is relevant to the National Curriculum and meets the school's learning needs and the objectives of the enterprise, while for enterprises the benefits include staff development, identifying possible future employees, encouraging students into the careers your organisation needs, and enriching and enhancing the delivery of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects with local schools.

The Perkins' Review of Engineering Skills (BIS, 2013) recommended that the Government should provide seed funding to develop nationwide roll-out of the Tomorrow's Engineers employer engagement programme and help schools and colleges connect with employers (p. 3). The engineering community should work with the Government to develop and promote new Level 2 and 3 qualifications as high quality vocational routes for 16-19 year olds to enter engineering careers; work with employers to encourage and support provision of work experience for post-16 students studying in colleges and schools; and work with Government to develop additional Trailblazer Apprenticeships in engineering' (p. 4).

This review also drew attention to the situation where schools could receive a large volume of material arguing the same case:

'a recent effort to collate materials identified over 70 different items being sent out to schools. As well as being inefficient, it is also ineffective because it is difficult for busy school staff to navigate this landscape, especially when messages are not coordinated. I welcome the efforts of the Royal Academy of Engineering and Engineering UK to bring the professional engineering institutions together under the Tomorrow's Engineers "brand" to coordinate the engineering community's outreach to and engagement with schools' (BIS, 2013, p. 21).

The Perkins Review was also impressed by programmes such as Tomorrow's Engineers:

'Employers have a role in giving young people more real-life contact with the world of work. In the Review, there were a number of views expressed about whether this is easy. Some businesses have noted barriers to effective engagement with schools; while others claim that they could spend every day showing schools around their plant. My own view is that we need to start from the perspective of the school, and design our interventions so that they are as easy as possible for schools and pupils to access. I have been impressed by the employer engagement programme under development by Tomorrow's Engineers. This programme works with the professional engineering institutions and STEMNET, to engage employers to provide industry visits, workshops, STEM Ambassador partnerships and careers resources, to incorporate engineering into pupils' experience and plant the seeds needed to grow the engineering talent needed by businesses. The programme has run successful regional pilots: I recommend that Government should support this valuable work so that it can be rolled out nationwide as soon as possible' (BIS, 2013, p. 22).

Employer engagement in working directly with students

Employers may work directly with students to develop skills and awareness in an attempt to raise student aspirations as well as helping them to develop skills that are important to employers (Burge et al., 2012; CBI, 2010 and 2011; Deloitte, 2010; Mann et al., 2010; Ofsted, 2010a and b; 2011). Huddleston et al. (2012) highlight how in employer engagement in independent schools the following activities are commonplace: work experience, careers advice from employers, enterprise activities, business mentoring, visiting speakers, workplace visits. The CIPD (2012) guide for employers on work experience makes similar points:

'the awareness and understanding of the world of work should be built into the delivery of education as a coherent and integral part of learning. This will give young people the tools they need to enhance their employability skills. It also helps young people to make informed choices about their future. Many employers recognise this and work with schools through a number of initiatives (career talks, visits, work experience)' (p. 27).

Employers providing work experience

Some employers provided work experience as a school-mediated short placement (typically two weeks) at an employer's premises, sometimes during the summer vacation (Huddleston et al., 2012). Schools could exploit their existing networks to identify relevant workplace opportunities for pupils, including making extensive use of networks of alumni, parents, governors and teachers. Pupils could also approach employers directly themselves.

Crowley et al. (2013) highlight how pupils may undertake some paid work independent from official school-employer links. Temporary or part-time work for young people is sometimes seen supporting their transition as these jobs can act as stepping stones to permanent full-time contracts and can help young people gain work experience, develop human capital and build social networks. Longitudinal tracking showed that in the recent past young people who combined full-time education with part-time work at the age of 16/17 were more likely to be in work at the age of 18/19 and less likely to be not in employment, education and training in the following five years than those who just studied full-time (Crawford et al., 2011).

Both the OECD (2012) and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2012b) endorse the value of teenage part-time employment as a means of supporting better school to work transitions for young people, although opportunities in this part of the youth labour market have shown a significant decline. This is especially pronounced for 16-17 year olds: the share of those in full-time education with a job having fallen from 39 per cent in 1992 to 20 per cent in the final quarter of 2012, according to ONS Labour market statistics (UKCES, 2013). Part-time work for young people was also typically in retail or hospitality, whereas work experience placements covered far more sectors (Howieson et al., 2010) and were often in sectors of occupational interest for the young people (Mann, 2012). The CIPD (2013a) point out that, following the decline in part-time work, then substantive work experience becomes more important as 'employers find it difficult to assess young people with limited work experience and young people find it difficult to 'market' themselves to employers' (p.4).

One of the recommendations of a Work Foundation report (Crowley et al., 2013) was 'for more local control and better co-ordination between agencies, authorities and government departments' on youth unemployment, including provision of work experience for those at school (p. 4). Stronger links between schools and employers (and the National Careers Service) could lead to more effective 'integration between school and the labour market by allowing young people to experience a variety of employment opportunities. This could include developing a wide range of activities such as business mentors, experiences of different work environments, talks from business leaders, and visits to workplaces (p. 5).

The YouGov (2010) report identified key features of good work experience placements from young people's perspective was the range of work available and the preparation that

went into accommodating them. Both Ofsted (2010a) and the CBI (2010) echoed these findings but thought that the quality of the work experience placements provided could be improved. Links with Education Business Partnerships enhanced the quality and relevance of both careers education and work experience (Ofsted, 2010b). The CIPD (2012) too have produced a guide for employers on work experience placements that work.

The government's acceptance of the recommendation in the Wolf review of vocational education that there should be no work experience pre-16 in England (Wolf, 2011), means that the need for effective work experience is now focused on 16–19 year olds, rather than on provision in Years 10/11. In September 2012 the statutory duty for all schools to provide work-related learning at KS4 was removed and in September 2013 a requirement for all 16-19 year olds to undertake work experience was included in study programme principles (DfE, 2013a). Since 2011, central funding for Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) was withdrawn, so schools wishing to maintain work experience programmes had to fund these activities themselves, and while some EBPs continue, most schools now have to manage all aspects of employer engagement themselves (Mann, 2012). So the organisation of work experience placements is now more challenging for many schools and the volume of employer engagement at 11-16 has declined (Hooley et al., 2013; Mann and Virk, 2013).

Burge et al. (2012) highlight the need for work experience to be well-structured and widely available, motivate students' learning by providing them with an opportunity to 'learn and earn' while finding out more about the skills required at work. Their review emphasises that features of successful work experience include the need to prepare students appropriately; for the work to be varied and include different experiences; giving students clear and realistic expectations of their placements; raising awareness among students about the importance of the skills they are developing; allowing time to reflect and evaluate; providing tangible outcomes from the work students undertake; linking work placements to students' skills and interests and providing rewards for good quality of work (p. 23).

The Sims et al. (2013) evaluation of the Work Experience Placement Trials highlighted that the placements were 'widely perceived by students, colleges and employers to have helped develop the skills necessary for employment, including team work, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling students to be more work-ready' (p. 9). However, the authors also acknowledged that:

'investment in a work experience coordinator is key to making work experience a more centrally managed and coordinated college-wide process' (p. 10). Such a role was seen as pivotal by both staff and employers who considered it valuable to have 'a central point of contact in the college' (Sims et al., 2013, p. 63).

In the case of students with learning difficulties and disabilities then supported internships, currently being piloted by the DfE, could be helpful. Supported internships could:

'provide a structured study programme, based at an employer, which is tailored to the individual needs of the young person and will equip them with the skills they need for the workplace. This will include on-the-job training, backed by expert job coaches to support interns and employers, and the chance to study for relevant qualifications – where appropriate' (Sims et al., 2013, p. 12).

The UK Commission's Employer Perspectives Survey's findings on Work Placements were that:

'Overall just over a quarter (27 per cent) of establishments offered any type of paid or unpaid work experience placement or internship in the 12 months preceding the survey. Around a quarter (24 per cent) of establishments had offered placements to school, college or university students, seven per cent had offered work experience placements covering work trials for potential new recruits and placements targeting the unemployed and four per cent had offered internships. Work placements for those at school are the type of work placement most commonly offered (18 per cent of all establishments)' (UKCES, 2012a, p. xxi).

'Larger employers were much more likely to have done so than smaller: two-thirds of those with over 100 employees (67 per cent) had offered some kind of work placement in the previous 12 months compared to 27 per cent of all employers' (UKCES, 2012a, p. xxi).

Employers offering work placements were:

'most likely to be motivated by social responsibility and altruism such as wanting to give people the opportunity to gain experience and to support disadvantaged people. A fifth reported that it did also help with recruitment. The most commonly cited reasons for not offering such opportunities among the 73 per cent of employers that had not done so were that they did not have any suitable roles as well as concerns over the time and resource it would take to administer. Just under one-in-ten of all establishments had offered a work placement which had resulted in long-term or permanent employment for the individual involved (nine per cent); this represents about a third (32 per cent) of those who had offered any form of work placement' (UKCES, 2012a, pp. xxi - xxii).

The different types of work placements could be classified as: **education placements**, for those currently in school, university or college; **internships**, including those who offer internships or graduate schemes; and **work experience placements**, covering work trials for potential new recruits, placements targeting the unemployed or disabled and volunteering. *'Of these three types of placement, those offered to students in education were most common (24 per cent). Only seven per cent had offered work experience placements and internships were the least likely to be offered with just four per cent of establishments having done so' (UKCES, 2012a, p. 142).*

The UKCES report acknowledges that their findings on work experience placements needed updating:

'in light of the recommendations made in the Wolf report (Wolf, 2011), the statutory requirement for workplace learning at key stage four was removed in March 2011, and from April 2011 the centralised funding for liaison between employers and schools such as this was retracted (Mann, 2012). Therefore it is possible that this change will impact on the future makeup of those on work placements' (UKCES, 2012a, p. 144).

'Given that until recently nearly all school pupils at key stage four had to undertake work experience placements, but only 18 per cent of establishments offer placements to those in school, the work experience these pupils have been getting has been concentrated amongst a relatively small group of employers. Given the range of careers young people are ultimately destined to embark upon, it could be argued that the experience of work experience placements would be more effective if it were shared across a more diverse range of employers from all sectors and sizebands. Currently it is larger establishments and those from the Non-Market Services sector that are much more likely to offer all types of work placement' (UKCES, 2012a, p. 145).

'Only a minority of employers offer work placements and where they do they tend to be provided for those in education and for schoolchildren in particular. This relatively limited activity is heavily skewed towards larger establishments and those from the Non-Market Services sector. Increasing and broadening employer participation in work placements is seen as one of the key means of meeting the Youth Employment Challenge' (UKCES, 2012a, p. 152).

The willingness of schools to participate in work experience is framed by the advice and funding support they receive from DfE (2013b). The guidance (as of November 2013) reinforced the shift in emphasis to provision of work experience as principally aimed at 16 – 19 year olds. The guidance stressed the importance of work experience for all students, but laid out three different patterns, which would depend on students' learning programmes. The **experiential pattern** would typically comprise one or two short periods of work experience or other work-related learning to test out vocational ideas connected to future study or employment options, such as study visits, projects and engagement with local enterprises. This path was likely to be predominantly followed by students taking A levels (level 3 – academic only route). The **vocational pattern** would be focused on a particular vocational area in order to contribute directly to a study programme. The target audience for this is likely to be predominantly students taking substantial vocational qualifications at or a combination of vocational qualifications with A levels at level 2 or 3. The **extended pattern** of work experience would be focused on developing employability skills, with maths and English occupying the majority of the study programme time. The target audience for this is likely to be predominantly students not taking a substantial qualification and studying at level 2 and below (DfE, 2013b).

Employer support for careers advice and career support

Huddleston et al. (2012) sampled twenty high performing independent schools and found an important purpose of employer engagement was to help pupils decide on and achieve their career goals. This could include helping pupils understand the implications of and support their choice university course. Other forms of careers support could include help pupils develop social or personal skills, including employability skills, helping pupils develop networks of value after leaving school and stimulating a culture of expectation and aspiration. Burge et al. (2012) point how employers working directly with students to develop their skills and awareness can act to raise student aspirations as well as helping them to develop skills that are important to employers.

Independent schools often exploit existing social networks to identify relevant workplace opportunities for pupils, including making extensive use of networks of alumni, parents, governors and teachers. Pupils commonly approach employers directly themselves.

Intermediary, or brokerage, organisations are rarely used. Many people in the social networks linked to schools work in occupational areas (notably, the professions) highly relevant to the career aspirations of pupils. Among the most effective practice identified was the systematic use of alumni aged in their late twenties to provide pupils with insights (through careers fairs or talks) into their transitions from education to early employment within a profession (Huddleston et al., 2012).

Employers could contribute careers advice to pupils, often through careers' fairs or regular careers' talks. Some schools would use many external visiting speakers, typically from businesses, the professions, or universities to address and interact with pupils, often on a very regular (i.e. weekly) basis (Huddleston et al., 2012).

McCrone and Filmer-Sankey (2011) point out that school careers education programmes can be the vehicle for employer engagement in careers events, such as options evenings and careers fairs, as external speakers, and historically careers education programmes also often incorporated a period of work experience, usually at the end of year 10 or the beginning of year 11. However, Ofsted (2010b) found that the quality and degree of structure of careers education provision differed widely between schools, with some offering a good quality, comprehensive programmes, while elsewhere provision was less-structured and more informal. Kintrea et al. (2011) also reported wide variations in terms of quality of careers education provision. Hutchinson et al. (2011) stress the importance of understanding the needs and issues of young people in different groups, careful targeting and differentiation of provision to different groups of young people, and on-going advice and support, rather than one-off interventions.

Hughes (2010) argues that careers support activities can and do make a significant difference in terms of learning outcomes such as increased self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation, and enhanced decision making, while a report by Deloitte (2010) considered that employers should be more involved in careers education in schools because of the impact of their input on young people's confidence and aspirations. Overall, 'employer engagement can perhaps best be seen as a process through which schools access specialist resources to help pupils clarify, confirm and support identification of career aspirations and routes towards securing them' (Huddleston et al., 2012).

However, Mann et al. (2013) point out how problems may arise where career decisions are made to pursue unrealistic occupational goals which might result in them struggling to find to find relevant work after leaving school, college or university. They found that 52 per cent of 13 to 16 year olds aspired to work in just three of the 25 possible occupational areas and that 'the career aspirations of teenagers at all ages can be said to have nothing in common with the projected demand for labour in the UK between 2010 and 2020'. This exposes a serious misalignment of ambitions and realistic employment prospects which makes future school-to-work transitions problematic:

'The danger is great that too many young people will find that the profiles they have developed – the mix of qualifications and experience on which they sell themselves to prospect employers – will not allow successful competition for available job opportunities leading potentially to a period of 'churn' as they adjust and seek' (Mann et al., 2013 p. 9).

Yates et al. (2011) highlighted that in some groups up to two in five young people had unrealistic aspirations, while Norris (2011) and St. Clair et al. (2011) emphasised how many young people were ignorant about local labour market opportunities and did not have effective career progression strategies. Hence the youth labour market is not working effectively in demonstrating to young people the different opportunities which are available and the decisions they need to take at 14, 16 and 18 to allow them to compete for these opportunities, especially as more realistic initial career aspirations were more likely to lead to better outcomes in terms of employment and earnings (Sabates et al., 2011; Ashby & Schoon, 2010).

Dean and Neild (2013) in their report on 'Skills for the Future' also point out that without:

'improved IAG and a better and earlier exposure to different types of employment, young people will remain poorly equipped to understand the opportunities available to them, leading to inappropriate aspirations and selection of training/courses' (p. 27).

Employers can therefore play an important role in career education and support, and in raising student aspirations, but:

'many previous reports show the evidence that the quality of the educational choice is improved by study counselling' (Borghans et al. 2013).

This finding would suggest that career guidance and counselling support is required both for those who have limited career aspirations and those who have unrealistic aspirations.

A report published by Ofsted (2013) in September 2013 found that the arrangements for careers guidance in schools were not working well enough, and that schools were not working well enough with employers to provide students with direct experience of the world of work in order to help broaden their minds about realistic employment opportunities in their local area.

A CIPD (2013a) study criticised the lack of support for young people during the transition from education to work, which is preceded by poor advice and guidance at school. Andrews (2013) points out that the National Careers Service has been criticised for not providing an all-age careers guidance service. Yet the government actually transferred responsibility for providing careers guidance from an external service and placed a statutory duty on schools to secure access to independent guidance for their pupils, with schools free to use any provider of their choice. With the exception of a few schools, which established innovative provision, in most schools this has resulted in deterioration in the level of careers guidance. The inconsistent quality and overall deterioration of provision can partially be explained by the absence of any regulation of the providers of careers guidance for young people, the lack of support and funding for schools and the weak monitoring and accountability measures.

Another report, this time on STEM graduates in non-STEM jobs, corroborates the importance of employer involvement in career education: 'many employers were actively working with schools, especially, and selected universities, to try to improve STEM students' (and potential STEM students') knowledge of STEM careers' (BIS, 2011, p. 11). The report also points out that:

'for some students the decision to go into a STEM career can result from an earlier decision taken at school, while for others it can be a part of a long-term process of career decision-forming at home and school which interacts with subsequent experiences at university, during periods of work and job searching. These influences can include school subject choices, careers advice and guidance, contact with employers, parental background and perceived image of STEM, peer group attitudes and so on, and can vary by gender, ethnicity and social class. There have only been a small number of studies which have focused on the career intentions of students, and only in some STEM disciplines, mainly engineering and IT. These have mostly focused on general career intentions while none has explored in detail the reasons why a STEM graduate might choose not to 'stay' in his or her discipline when making career choices' (BIS, 2011, p. 17).

The report highlights perceptions about the lack of impartial careers advice in many schools:

'around 40 per cent of the STEM graduates felt that they would have benefited from more career advice and support prior to university; this was highest (around half) for graduates of the Physical Sciences. For comparison, the figure for students was about 60 per cent (section 3.9). Many of these graduates stated they had lacked advice around how university subject choices linked to longer-term career directions. Many said there had been advice about getting into university, often from subject teachers, but little about longer term career implications (some commenting that their school might have had self-interest in the outcome of the former issue). Several also commented that advisers were more interested in those who were undecided about university, encouraging them to apply almost irrespective of subject, than in those who would apply but were undecided about degree subject. However, at least as many said no careers advice at all was provided to them prior to university' (BIS, 2011, p. 119).

'These are clearly strong 'pull' factors away from core STEM work. However, it seems that many STEM graduates lack awareness of the range of career opportunities that exist within the STEM world, in today's fast-moving, fast-changing high-tech engineering and science environment, both in the STEM Specialist sector and in STEM core roles within STEM Generalist employers. This is something that many of the large STEM Specialist employers are increasingly addressing, especially in earlier education stages and through their careers work in schools, but wider efforts are needed. Our interviews have focused mainly on the larger recruiters who have the resources to compete in the graduate market and to get their message over to graduates and students about the jobs and careers they offer. Despite their size, many struggle to do so. It is inevitably much more difficult for the myriad of smaller firms, which form a large part of the STEM demand, to get their message to market, and also to show potential recruits that they have worthwhile jobs for which to apply' (BIS, 2011, pp. 166-167).

The report continues on the theme of the importance of 'career interventions':

'Numerous research studies have shown that children develop opinions about STEM subjects at an early age and, as a consequence, there is now a large range of interventions and activities supported by and engaged in by the engineering and

science communities, at various stages within and outside the school curriculum. Many of these promote young people's interest in science, mathematics or engineering rather than necessarily their interest in or the benefit of pursuing careers in STEM' (BIS, 2011, p. 193).

Employers can clearly play an important role in offering young people support in their career understanding, helping them make more realistic assessments of the labour market. Employers can also play an important support role at a number of other career events and career activities, but even more pressing is the need to improve the structure and quality of careers advice in schools and colleges within which employer support can fit.

Enterprise activities

DCSF (2010) highlight how enterprise education can add significant value to Work-Related Learning (WRL) and vice versa:

'enterprise activities can provide a vehicle for exposing pupils to the world of employers and business, and giving them the skills they will need for the world of work. Given how complementary the two subjects are, schools can make good linkages between WRL and Enterprise Education, ideally weaving them together. This becomes easier when a school adopts a broad definition of Enterprise, as many of the skills considered to be enterprise skills are employability skills' (DCSF, 2010, p. 18).

In addition, it is noted that employees vary in their ability to ring-fence time as a resource for this activity:

'Some employers may be willing to give lots of time, to develop and support complex projects, or even to fund activities. Others may not be able to give much time, but have valuable experiences to share with your students' (DCSF, 2010, p. 27).

Employers could offer support to teachers on how to bring a business perspective to classroom-based activities (including through an informal 'buddying' relationship; giving talks to pupils and staff about their work; using specific examples that demonstrate enterprise in action; design and support an on-going project, attendance at a presentation or awards ceremony; hosting a visit to their organisation for a group of students; mentoring one or more students; participating in business games, through helping with setting the challenge, judging entries and giving out awards (DCSF, 2010, p. 27)).

Huddleston et al. (2012) point how activities such as enterprise competitions could be very popular with those pupils opting to participate.

Employers can add significant value to enterprise activities. Their involvement can help bring the world of work to life and help students and teachers to see how school activity is relevant to the workplace. In some schools and colleges a Business Relationship Manager seeks to develop relationships with local business. In other cases, external providers, such as Young Chamber or Young Enterprise, play a key role in facilitating enterprise education

(DCSF, 2010). There are many ways in which enterprise education can be supported in schools and colleges, and the purposes too can vary:

'some schools want to improve attainment, others want to improve their pupils' confidence and employability, or to improve pupils' engagement with learning' (DCSF, 2010, p. 37).

Some schools are very clear in what they wish to achieve through engaging employers in enterprise education in alignment with:

'the core principle of Enterprise Education [which] is to ensure young people are well equipped in facing the challenges of the world of work and entrepreneurship, resulting in a positive outcome for individuals, communities and the economy. Some schools have a very clear understanding and definition of enterprise and implement an enterprising approach to teaching and learning across the curriculum. However, not all schools are at this stage. Many are not clear about what 'enterprise' really means and are often not aware of the importance of delivering employability skills as well as skills required for self-employment' (McLarty et al., p. 1).

Business mentoring

Independent schools used employee business coaches, typically through optional extra-curricular activities such as Young Enterprise (involving employers as external team coaches) and participating in employer enterprise management schemes. Some business mentors could interact with a small number of pupils to provide long-term support and advice from a workplace perspective (Huddleston et al., 2012).

Young people prefer input from business mentors to contributions from their teachers when it comes to careers advice (CIPD, 2013a). The CBI education and skills survey (2011) found many employers encouraged their employees to act as mentors to students at school, college or university.

At the school level, Milburn (2009) noted that mentoring tended to be ad hoc and uncoordinated.

Acting as a pupil mentor can help employees build communication skills, the ability to help others, adaptability and the ability to be effective in different surroundings and with different tasks, responsibilities and people, influencing and negotiating skills, including persuading others, resolving conflicts and negotiating agreed solutions (Corporate Citizenship, 2010, p. 2).

Visiting speakers

Young people overwhelmingly agree that contacts with external professionals help in their career planning (Finegold et al., 2011).

Visiting speakers, typically from businesses, the professions, or universities, could interact with pupils, giving them a range of perspectives on work, employment and career. In some independent schools such events occurred on a very regular (i.e. weekly) basis (Huddleston et al., 2012).

Young people prefer talks from business leaders to contributions from their teachers when it comes to careers advice (CIPD, 2013a), and Mann et al. (2010) highlight the value of employers being seen in schools when they give talks to pupils as they can be seen as role models from the world of business.

The Royal Society (2010) study of a STEM role model scheme also point to how pupils see role models from the world of work as working in the 'real world' and being enthusiastic about their subject (p. 20).

An Ipsos Mori (2009) study of work-related learning found that 46 per cent of the year 11 pupils it surveyed had listened or spoken to a visitor from business.

Workplace visits

Workplace visits can be useful, for example, through participation in 'take your daughter to work day' (Huddleston et al., 2012).

Visits to workplaces can help young people with job searches as this process is a frustrating and demotivating experience for many young people, especially if they lack the knowledge about job opportunities, how to apply for jobs, how to write a good CV and a good application (CIPD, 2013a).

An Ipsos Mori (2009) survey found that 58 per cent of the year 11 pupils had visited a workplace.

Employer engagement in curriculum development

The review by Burge et al. (2012) shows that employers may be involved in supporting the curriculum by advising on and developing relevant curricula as well as (supporting the) development of curriculum-related and lesson resources. However, Huddleston et al. (2012) found little evidence of employer engagement links to the taught curriculum in independent schools.

Employers have been engaged in curriculum development in a range of vocational areas (Ofsted, 2010a), and in those relatively few cases where involvement was extended to curriculum delivery, as in business education, then where such involvement became embedded, it correlated with excellent teaching (Ofsted, 2011).

Lynch et al. (2010) in their evaluation of the first year of the Diploma highlighted the perceived benefits of work-related learning, where teachers 'welcomed the link between theory and the real world practice of industry, business and the professions' and learners valued the 'real world' context of their programme. The challenge, however, following the Wolf Report (2011) is to ensure that work-related learning also delivers sufficient breadth of learning and development.

The DfE (2013a) response on progress in implementing the Wolf recommendations makes it clear that:

'16 - 19 year old students pursuing full time courses of study should not follow a programme which is entirely 'occupational', or based solely on courses which

directly reflect, and do not go beyond, the content of National Occupational Standards. Their programmes should also include at least one qualification of substantial size (in terms of teaching time), which offers clear potential for progression either in education or into skilled employment' (p. 5).

Burge et al. (2012) point out how school-employer partnerships should be about building links between learning in the classroom and what happens outside school in the world of work and examining how different types of learning could be integrated.

Burge et al. (2012) also point to a:

'lack of evidence on the impact of employer involvement on young people's achievement and progression. The majority of the research evidence focuses on perceptions of soft outcomes such as enjoyment and engagement' (p. 3).

UKCES (2011) produced a briefing paper on 'The supply of and demand for high-level STEM skills' which drew attention to the role of brokers such as STEMNET, which is a programme which 'aims to inspire young people by providing enrichment activities in science, engineering, technology and maths. These include after-school clubs and a STEM Ambassadors programme' (UKCES, 2011, p. 9). Such programmes and brokers are seeking to influence how school curricula are developed and implemented.

Employer engagement in staff development

Employer engagement can support staff development.

Mann et al. (2010) emphasise the value of good relationships between teachers and employers, as teacher recommendations can lead to student work opportunities, and there is also value in pupils seeing there are close relationships between teachers and employers. Employers can also be involved in developing teachers' expertise in particular curriculum areas through the provision of advice and curriculum-related resources.

Employers could also help teachers to bring a business perspective to classroom-based activities, particularly in relation to enterprise activities, including business games, and help bring the world of work to life in a way where both teachers and pupils could see how classroom activities could be relevant to the workplace (DCSF, 2010, p. 27).

Employer engagement in supporting school leadership and governance

Mann et al. (2010) highlight how employers in the UK are playing an 'increasingly important role' as school governors and are contributing 'positively' to the leadership of schools via their commercial skills, in areas such as leadership, management and marketing.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) 2011 survey of employers found that 28 per cent of respondents had employees that acted as governors, and this was the third most common way for employers to be involved with schools (CBI, 2011).

The review by Burge et al. (2012) concludes that employers are using their skills and experience to support the governance of schools and such partnerships can lead to an

improved community profile, with partnerships enhancing the profile and reputation of a school. They also highlight how employers/businesses may use their skills and experience to support the leadership and governance of schools, through for example sitting on the board of governors of a school or providing financial support to schools.

‘Profound’ employer engagement: University Technical Colleges

Mann and Virk (2013) emphasise that University Technical Colleges (UTCs) represents a distinctive institutional form of educational delivery aimed at young people aged 14 to 18, which builds on elements of existing practice but varies in the intensity of the focus on work-related learning and employer engagement across school life. Employer engagement permeates approaches to teaching and learning, pupil progression and institutional operation. The pattern of employer engagement encompasses a wide range of activities involving both staff and pupils and is labelled by Mann and Virk (2013) as ‘profound’ engagement, whereby employers are involved in supporting learning through curriculum design and review; project design and delivery; development of work-related learning resources; classroom presentations; business mentoring; work experience/Job shadowing/managed part-time employment; workplace visits; careers activities; and enterprise activities. In addition, employers are actively involved in school governance and staff development.

Malpass and Limmer (2013) highlight how UTC students welcome their strong and frequent links with employers: for example, students studying engineering felt that their experience was greatly enriched by the involvement of industrial sponsors and they were impressed by the authenticity of their industrial engagement.

This high level of engagement contrasts with the relatively ‘superficial’ levels of employer engagement encountered in most English secondary schools, which is not uncommon, but is generally low volume and largely focused on introducing pupils to the world of work (Mann and Virk, 2013). More substantive engagement of employers in supporting teaching and learning or providing support to senior managers is much rarer (Mann & Percy, 2013).

A CIPD (2013b) survey found problems with engagement from the employer side too: ‘more than half of employers (58 per cent) questioned in our latest survey said they do not engage with local schools (this figure is 69 per cent for the private sector). When asked why, an overwhelming majority (63 per cent) said they have not considered this or they are not sure what they have to offer to schools’ (p. 3).

Conclusions

The literature review provides insights to the nature of education employer engagement. For example, Burge et al. (2012) conclude that:

‘there is some agreement in the UK literature that ‘successful’ employer engagement is characterised by: long-lasting, mutually acceptable and beneficial relationships between schools and businesses’ (p. 25).

The advantages for pupils could be grouped in different ways but could include:

- Insight into the world of work;

- Increased knowledge of certain industries;
- Enhanced or more realistic career aspirations;
- ‘Insider advice’ from employees; improved work-readiness; and
- Improved transitions to work or other forms of education.

There may also be benefits in relation to motivation, engagement, self-esteem and the expansion of personal networks.

A survey by KPMG (2010) found that many head-teachers agreed with a statement that employers’ involvement in pupil learning has ‘a positive impact on attainment’ (p.7).

Surveys of teaching staff also reveal that teachers believe that work experience and placements can improve pupil motivation with a consequent improvement in attainment (Mann 2012).

The review of Burge et al. (2012) points out that the literature is rich with examples of positive perceptions of the impact of employer involvement, but very little hard evidence on positive effects on pupil attainment.

The benefits for employer-school involvement for the employers themselves appear clear according to Mann et al. (2010) in their review for the Education and Employers Taskforce. The benefits appeared to be three-fold.

- First, because people like working for employers who support communities, engagement with schools positively enhances recruitment and retention. Additionally, work experience could often be seen as ‘the best possible interview’ (p. 9) and as a way of saving on the costs of recruitment.
- Second, for many employers, working with schools and colleges can help build awareness and a positive reputation with a community.
- Third, through their involvement in schools, employees can develop skills and competencies, including supporting the learning and development of others, which are of value to their employer and are often featured in organisational competency frameworks.

Research (Mann & Percy, 2013; Percy & Mann, 2014) also indicates that a higher level of employer contacts for older school pupils does, on average, give them advantages in early adulthood in relation to employment outcomes and earnings over their broadly matched peers without such engagement with employers. Contacts with employers could be influential in helping young people build their understanding of the labour market (Mann and Caplin 2012; Deloitte 2010).

The Sims et al. (2013) evaluation of the Work Experience Placement Trials identified that:

'the principal factors contributing to successful work experience placements were: effective coordination, good matching of students to placements, ensuring students were well-prepared for placements and flexibility in timing of placements' (p. 10).

The Wolf review of vocational education (2011) highlighted the importance of work experience for helping young people to develop the skills required for employment in a major review of vocational education:

'Helping young people to obtain genuine work experience – and, therefore, what the CBI calls 'employability skills' – should be one of the highest priorities for 16-18 education policy in the next few years' (p. 130).

The government's response to the review was to introduce from September 2013:

'a requirement for all 16-19 year olds to undertake work experience was included in study programme principles' (DfE, 2013a, p. 10).

The examples given in this review of the literature shows that employers are working and linking with schools and colleges in a variety of ways, but these activities need to be incorporated within structures and models which allow for a more substantive up-scaling and coherence of provision at a local and national level.

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Appendix 2 Technical summary

The quantitative element of the research comprised two surveys conducted using Computer Assisted telephone Interviews (CATI), which were undertaken by BMG Research. This included surveys of representatives from 301 employers and 98 schools and colleges.

The main aims of these surveys were:

- To establish the current levels and nature of engagement between employers and schools to deliver careers and employment related activity;
- To understand the demand for future engagement between employers and schools to deliver careers and employment related activity;
- To identify the current level of awareness and use of the National Careers Service amongst employers, schools, and colleges; and
- To determine the potential future role of the National Careers Service in supporting links between employers, schools, and colleges.

Employer survey

Survey respondent profile

IDBR data was used to construct a sample of employers that was representative of the population of employers in England. As such non-interlocking targets were set by sector, region, and company size as presented in the tables below. A slight sampling uplift was included in the North East to ensure a minimum response rate of 20 to ensure more detailed analysis could be performed by region.

Targets by sector for employers		
	Target	Completed
ABDE Primary sector (SIC 2007 01-9, 35-39)	12	14
C Manufacturing (SIC 2007 10-33)	43	41
F Construction (SIC 2007 41-43)	30	30
GHI Transport, retail and distribution (SIC 2007 45-56)	77	79
J Infocomms (SIC 2007 58-63)	16	14
M Professional activities (SIC 2007 69-75)	45	42
N Administrative and support services (SIC 2007 77-82)	19	22
KLOQRS Other services (SIC 2007 64-68, 77-82, 86-88, 90-93, 94-96)	58	59
TOTAL	300	301

Targets by region for employers		
	Target	Completed
North East	20	20
North West	34	34
Yorkshire and the Humber	25	25
East Midlands	24	24
West Midlands	28	28
East of England	34	32
London	49	49
South East	54	56
South West	32	33
TOTAL	300	301

Targets by company size for employers		
	Target	Completed
1 – 9	139	141
10 – 49	93	95
50 – 249	43	39
250+	25	26
TOTAL	300	301

The sampling frame for this survey comprised of 3,000 employers that met the above criteria (contacts purchased from Experian) giving a response rate of 10 per cent.

Responses were received from Chief Executives, Human Resources representatives, and those with responsibility for links with schools and colleges.

Fieldwork process

The survey was conducted using a CATI approach between 20th January and the 9th February 2014. Employer interviews were designed to take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Potential respondents were called on a range of days and times on up to 10 occasions before being recorded as non-response.

Analysis

In order to address minor variations against specific targets for employers, the achieved data was subsequently weighted by sector, region, and size to reflect the overall composition of employers in England using IDBR data. The un-weighted and weighted sample profiles are presented in the following tables.

Weighted and un-weighted bases of the employer sample by sector; NUMBERS		
	Weighted base	Unweighted base
ABDE Primary sector (SIC 2007 01-9, 35-39)	10	14
C Manufacturing (SIC 2007 10-33)	47	41
F Construction (SIC 2007 41-43)	41	30
GHI Transport, retail and distribution (SIC 2007 45-56)	78	79
J Infocomms (SIC 2007 58-63)	10	14
M Professional activities (SIC 2007 69-75)	41	42
N Administrative and support services (SIC 2007 77-82)	24	22
KLOQRS Other services (SIC 2007 64-68, 77-82, 86-88, 90-93, 94-96)	49	59

Weighted and un-weighted bases of the employer sample by region; NUMBERS		
	Weighted base	Unweighted base
North East	10	20
North West	34	34
Yorkshire and the Humber	25	25
East Midlands	23	24
West Midlands	29	28
East of England	35	32
London	58	49
South East	54	56
South West	33	33

Weighted and un-weighted bases of the employer sample by size; NUMBERS		
	Weighted base	Unweighted base
1 – 9	249	141
10 – 49	25	95
50 – 249	22	39
250+	5	26

Responses were cleaned and coded by BMG using MERLIN software with cross-tabulations provided by sector, region, size, level of engagement with schools and colleges, and level of awareness of the National Careers Service and provided to IER for interpretation in SPSS format.

Schools and colleges survey

Survey respondent profile

On inception it was agreed that the sample of schools for this survey would reflect the research conducted by Ofsted. As such non-interlocking targets were set by region (including targeted local authorities), and type of school as presented in the tables below. It should be noted that in order to gain further coverage in the local authorities of interest an additional 18 interviews were undertaken.

Targets by region for schools		
	Target	Completed
North East	6	8
North West	9	12
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	8
East Midlands	6	7
West Midlands	6	9
East of England	5	10
London	6	5
South East	11	14
South West	5	5
Total	60	78

Target by school type		
	Target	Completed
Academy sponsored schools	9	16
Academy converters with a sixth form	18	23
Academy converters without a sixth form	9	10
Maintained schools with a sixth form	8	13
Maintained schools without a sixth form	16	16
Total	60	78

The sampling frame for this survey comprised of schools and academies on Edubase that met the above criteria. A total of 1,102 unique school contacts were available giving a response rate of 7 per cent.

The target number of colleges was set at 20 with no additional sampling criteria. Two hundred and forty-two college contacts were available giving a response rate of 8 per cent.

Fieldwork process

The survey was conducted using a CATI approach between 20th January and the 10th February 2014. School and college interviews were designed to take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Potential respondents were called on a range of days and times on up to 10 occasions before being recorded as non-response.

Analysis

Responses were cleaned and coded by BMG using MERLIN software with cross-tabulations provided by school and college type, region, level of engagement with

employers, and level of awareness of the National Careers Service and provided to IER for interpretation in SPSS format.

Appendix 3 Schedule for in-depth telephone interviews with a sub-sample of schools and colleges

Introduction

You have already kindly contributed to the initial survey of schools and colleges. The purpose of this interview is to gain a deeper insight into how schools and colleges work with employers to enhance and complement their provision of careers support for young people up to age 18, and to collect views on how such work might be developed further and, possibly, be facilitated by the National Careers Service.

The school/college

1. Confirm: (a) type of school/college; (b) age range of students; (c) mixed/boys/girls; (d) size, in terms of student numbers
2. Identify National Careers Service region
3. Record name, job title and brief role description of the member of staff being interviewed

Provision of careers support

4. What arrangements has the school/college made to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for its students up to age 18?
5. In which year groups does careers education feature in the curriculum?
6. What use is made of the National Careers Service, by the school/college and its students?
7. Could you say more about your reasons for this response?

Work with employers

8. In what ways does the school/college make use of employers to enhance and complement the provision of careers support described above?
9. Specifically, how are employers used to provide information, advice and guidance to students?
 - What range of activities are organised?
 - For which year groups of students? (and, in each case, is this for the whole year group or for particular groups of students in the year group and, if so, which groups of students?)

10. How are employers used to contribute to programmes of careers education in the curriculum?
 - What range of activities are organised?
 - For which year groups of students? (and, in each case, is this for the whole year group or for particular groups of students in the year group and, if so, which groups of students?)
11. Does the school/college organise work experience and/or work shadowing for students?
 - If so, for which year groups of students? (and, in each case, is this for the whole year group or for particular groups of students in the year group and, if so, which groups of students?)
 - What are the school's/college's overall aims for work experience and work shadowing?
12. Does the school/college organise any careers-related activities where employers engage directly with parents/carers?
 - If so, please describe them
 - What impact do these activities have on parents' understanding of career opportunities for their sons and daughters?
13. What use does the school/college make of any national programmes of employer engagement, such as Inspiring the Future, STEM ambassadors, Young Enterprise?
14. What use does the school/college make of any regional or local schemes such as coordinated work experience?
15. How are the employer engagement activities you have described above organised
 - by the school?
 - or by the employers?
 - or by a third party-organisation?
16. If you use a third-party organisation, what is the annual cost to the school/college of this facilitation service?
17. How would you describe the value added to your provision of careers guidance by the range of employer engagement activities outlined above?
18. How do you evaluate the impact of these activities, including collecting feedback from the employers?
19. Would you say that the amount of employer engagement activities in the school/college has increased, remained broadly the same or reduced since the new arrangements for careers guidance were introduced in September 2012?
20. Please give the reasons for your response.

Future developments

21. What plans do you have for developing your work with employers over the next three years?
22. What do you see as the barriers to effective employer engagement with schools and colleges?
23. What factors would facilitate more effective employer engagement?
24. How important would it be to have available an organisation that could broker employer links for the school/college?
25. It has been suggested that the National Careers Service could take on this role. What views do you have on how this might work in practice?

Case studies

We plan to include a number of case studies of good practice in our report. A researcher would need to visit the school/college to interview staff and students to collect the information. Would you be willing for the school/college to be included as a case study for the report?

Appendix 4 Case studies: Examples of good practice

The six case studies presented next were identified from the 12 in-depth interviews.

Thomas Knyvett College, Surrey

11-16 mixed converter academy, with approximately 500 students

Careers support

The manager of careers education, information, advice and guidance is responsible for overseeing the delivery of independent careers guidance, careers-related activities and work experience. He is also responsible for raising aspirations and developing links with the community, including business. Careers education features in the curriculum for all five years. The school is part of a group of schools that commissions careers support services from a new, independent company. The service that the school commissions provides individual careers guidance interviews and a programme of careers education delivered through groupwork and career learning events.

Employer links

The school sees its activities with employers as helping to increase students' awareness of the career opportunities available and to help them realise the need to work hard. It has evidence that the links are making a positive impact on raising aspirations as students are now applying for higher level courses at 16+ than they had done previously. The school tries to link with local employers as far as possible. These include several large, multi-national companies, such as CISCO. The emphasis is on taking students out on visits to broaden their awareness of what is available. Recent activities have included a visit to British Airways at Heathrow, to learn about apprenticeships, and to the Surrey Skills Fair. CISCO runs a 'Dragons Den' type of activity on their premises, which helps develop students' interpersonal, team-working and presentation skills. The same company provides regular mentoring sessions for about 30 of the more able students in Year 11.

Work experience placements of one week are arranged for Year 10 students, to enable them to find out about a particular career and to develop their employability skills, qualities and attitudes. Most students participate and those that do not (either because a suitable placement cannot be found, or because their parents have declined to give their consent) participate in a world of work week in school, to which employers contribute. Until this year the placements have been found by an external organisation – a service for which the school paid – but when the company went into administration the school opted to organise the placements.

The school is looking to further strengthen its links with local businesses and to establish a new project to develop students' entrepreneurial skills.

Contact: Robert Davy, Manager of CEIAG davy_r@thomasknyvett.org

Evelyn Grace Academy, Brixton, London

11-16 mixed sponsored academy with approximately 800 students.

Careers support

The careers and work-related learning officer is responsible for the progression of Year 11 students. She provides individual careers guidance interviews for all students in Year 11 and organises careers education from Year 8 to 11. She is also responsible for employer links.

The careers and work-related learning officer is a qualified careers adviser who holds a Level 7 Postgraduate Diploma with QCG. She is on the Career Development Institute's Register of careers professionals and works to the CDI's code of professional ethics. Impartiality is further ensured through the school inviting other providers, including apprenticeship providers and local colleges, to speak to students about the full range of options available. All Year 11 students are encouraged to make at least three applications to post-16 providers.

Employer links

The school's programme of employer engagement starts in Key Stage 3. The curriculum in both Years 8 and 9 includes a ten-week unit of careers education, in the course of which all students attend at least two, and often three, talks from employers organised by the careers and work-related learning officer. The aim is to help broaden the students' understanding of the range of opportunities available, and there is also an emphasis on promoting equality of opportunity and challenging stereotypes.

Further employer talks are arranged in Key Stage 4, with a focus on local employers (although these include large international companies such as St James Construction working on the Nine Elms project) to encourage networking which could lead to possible opportunities for work experience or employment. Work experience is no longer organised in Key Stage 4, as the school questioned its value following the publication of the Wolf Report in 2011. Instead all students, at the end of the summer term in Year 10, participate in a four-day employability programme that is hosted at a local college and organised by *Entrepreneurs in Action*, at a cost of several thousand pounds. In addition a group of about 30 Year 10 students participate in an entrepreneurial programme run with JP Morgan, which involves fortnightly sessions over several weeks. Also in Key Stage 4 local employers offer mock interviews, a CV-critiquing service and opportunities for students to receive feedback on their presentation skills.

The amount of employer engagement activities has increased since the careers and work-related learning officer was appointed. Plans for the future include more promotion of apprenticeships and fostering links between subject departments and particular employers. The school is opening a sixth form in September 2014 and plans to introduce work experience, or work shadowing, in Year 12, where the placements are linked directly to students' career aspirations. This is in line with the approach taken by the academy trust (ARK) of which the school is part.

Contact: Francesca Hall, Careers Adviser francesca.hall@evelyngraceacademy.org

Stopsley High School, Luton

11-16 mixed foundation school, with just under 1,000 students.

Careers support

The careers and work-related learning co-ordinator is responsible for careers education, information, advice and guidance, including work experience, across the school.

Careers education features in the curriculum in Years 8-11. The school buys in a careers guidance service from the local authority for those students in Years 8-11 identified as needing more in-depth guidance (between 50 and 60 students). The school's careers co-ordinator, who is currently working towards the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development, provides careers guidance for all the remaining Year 11 students not seen by the local authority's personal adviser. In addition the headteacher interviews all the Year 11 students in the autumn term, to emphasise to the students the importance of preparing for the post-16 transition. Impartiality is ensured by providing all students with information on the full range of options available.

Employer links

The school believes that its links with employers make an invaluable contribution to its careers support. Giving students direct contact with the world of work, through both inviting employers into the school and taking students out into the workplace, reinforces messages about being work-ready and having employability skills.

The work with employers starts in Key Stage 3, with two banks leading enterprise days for students in Years 8 and 9. In Key Stage 4 employers are invited into school to speak to students about opportunities in their sector. The talks vary from 10 minutes in assembly to up to an hour with a small group of students interested in hearing about a particular career area. Speakers are found through the *Inspiring the Future* website and through contacts in local businesses. The careers co-ordinator and subject departments also arrange visits to local businesses to broaden students' awareness of the opportunities available. Some students, in lower English sets, have mock interviews with employers to help boost their speaking and listening skills.

All students in Year 10 have a two-week work experience placement, the purpose of which is to enable students to gain an understanding of the world of work. The local education-business partnership finds about 40% of the placements and undertakes the health and safety checks for all placements, including those found by the school. The annual cost of this service is about £8,000.

The school recently arranged work shadowing for a small group of Year 11 students who were considering applying for apprenticeships. This followed a very successful special information evening, for students and their parents, on apprenticeships. Each student shadowed an apprentice for a day.

The amount of employer engagement activities in the college has increased in recent years as the careers co-ordinator has established more networks with the local business community. Pressures on curriculum time, however, plus the cost of the support service for work experience, are causing the school to look at alternative ways of organising work experience in Key Stage 4.

Contact: Russell George, Careers and WRL Coordinator rgeorge.st@campusluton.org.uk

Ossett Academy and Sixth Form College, Ossett, Wakefield

11-18 mixed converter academy, with approximately 1,800 students including about 350 in the sixth form.

Careers support

The head of careers is responsible for careers education and IAG from Year 7 to the sixth form.

Careers education features in the curriculum for all years from Year 8 to Year 13. The head of careers is a qualified careers adviser, who is on the Career Development Institute's Register of careers professionals and who works to a code of professional ethics. Impartiality is further ensured by the school inviting other providers, in particular the local college of further education and the apprenticeship service, to speak to students about the full range of options available.

Employer links

The school organises a large careers fair each year for students in all years, and their parents, at which many employers are represented. Also open to all students is a programme of talks throughout the year, where businesses talk about the work that they do.

The main concentration of employer links is currently in the 14-18 age range, to ensure that students receive impartial information and advice on the opportunities available, and a real-life perspective from business. All students in Year 10 have a mock interview with an employer. In Year 11 talks from local employers and the apprenticeship service are arranged to inform students about options in employment and training. Also in Year 11, students are taken out on visits to several large employers in the region, such as Coca Cola, YPO, BAE Systems and one of the banks. These visits are also open to students in Year 12 who are not planning to progress on to university. All students in Year 12 have a second mock interview with an employer.

The school has dropped work experience for all in Key Stage 4 and now arranges placements only for sixth form students who need work experience to support their applications for certain post-18 options. Other bespoke work experience placements are organised for some Key Stage 4 students, particularly those with special educational needs.

The school makes good use of the STEM ambassadors and is also working with a group of Ossett retailers on a Young Enterprise activity. The development of entrepreneurial skills is another feature of the school's work. There is an enterprise group in the enrichment programme, which 50-60 students from Years 7 to 11 opt into: it is run by the school but local employers support the programme by forming panels to which students present their business plans and offering advice.

Almost all of the employer engagement activities are organised by the school itself, although the school is also a member of a local work experience consortium through which useful contacts are shared.

The amount of activities has increased following the appointment of the new head of careers. Plans for the future include introducing some activities in the lower school and increasing the range of business sectors from which employers are drawn.

Contact: Dan Green, Head of Careers dgreen@ossettacademy.co.uk

Swanshurst School, Birmingham

11-19 girls' community school, with 1,800 students including 300 in the sixth form

Careers support

The 14-19 co-ordinator is responsible for careers education, information, advice and guidance, and work-related learning and enterprise throughout the school.

Careers education features in the curriculum for Years 8 to 13. The school commissions careers guidance services from two private, matrix-accredited careers companies for students in Years 11, 12 and 13. Advisers from the external providers also give presentations to parents on the different options and pathways available to students.

Employer links

The school views its links with employers as important in broadening students' horizons beyond the usual, limited list of job titles.

In Year 9 all the girls, working in small groups, interview three different women about their careers and the pathways they took to get to where they are now. In Year 10 all students have a two-week work experience placement and in Year 11 employers and apprenticeship providers give lunchtime talks about their jobs and the skills needed in the workplace.

All sixth form students following vocational programmes participate in work experience to enhance their subject-related knowledge, understanding and skills. Among those taking A level courses, approximately one-third choose to undertake work experience placements, either linked to their career aspirations or to provide them with an insight into middle management roles. Other sixth form students who participate in work experience include those who need recent and relevant work experience to support particular post-18 applications, such as medicine or primary school teaching.

In Year 13 practice interview sessions with employers, and workshops on apprenticeships run by external careers advisers, are organised for students not progressing on to higher education.

The amount of employer engagement activities in the school has increased in recent years, as a consequence of students now considering a wider range of pathways, not just progression on to university. The school is also looking to expand its links in the future, particularly in the sixth form. It is planning to join the post-16 pilot of a CBI work-ready project being commissioned locally as part of a 'Skills for Birmingham' initiative. This will take place in the summer term of Year 12, for students planning to go into employment at 18. The school is also hoping to introduce work experience for more students in Year 12, and practice interviews with employers for the whole year group.

Contact: Debbie Beckford, 14-19 Coordinator debbie.beckford@swans.bham.sch.uk

Richard Taunton Sixth Form College, Southampton

Sixth form college, with approximately 1,250 students aged 16-19

Careers support

The college's careers adviser is responsible for careers information, advice and guidance. She also assists the managers responsible for the tutorial programme with planning the careers sessions in that programme.

Careers education is organised in the weekly tutorial programme for all students, plus two 'off-timetable' careers days. The careers adviser holds a professional qualification in careers guidance and is available to provide impartial careers advice and guidance for all students.

Employer links

The college views its employer engagement activities as very valuable. It recognises that students need access both to one-to-one careers guidance and to the inspiration, information and insight into the world of work that come from direct contact with employers.

The college organises a programme of visits to employers and a programme of talks given by employers. The visits are organised by the various subject departments and aim to give students an insight into jobs linked to the courses they are studying. The talks are organised by the careers adviser, advertised to all students and promoted by the tutors. They were originally arranged at lunchtime, but they now take place in tutor time and attendance is higher.

The college also organises two careers fairs each year, at which employers are well represented.

All students are encouraged to undertake a period of work experience and placements are organised for particular course programmes. The main purposes of work experience are to make students aware of the career opportunities open to them, to help students develop links with particular businesses and to give them a realistic view of the world of work. In addition students undertake longer-term volunteering placements.

The college is organising a half-day employability conference, at which employers will give talks and lead workshops.

The college has made use of national programmes such as Year in Industry, run by the Engineering Development Trust, and STEM ambassadors. It organises its own work experience placements but is a member of the local, Solent EBP which provides some employer contacts.

Links with employers have increased in recent years and the college plans to extend its links to cover a wider range of career areas.

Contact: Maria Baker, Careers Adviser bakerm@richardtaunton.ac.uk

Appendix 5 Schedule for telephone interviews with a sample of the National Careers Service prime contractors

Introduction

IER has been commissioned by DBIS to undertake research into understanding the link between employers, schools and colleges, and the role of the National Careers Service, in relation to providing careers guidance to young people. We have surveyed a sample of schools/colleges and a sample of employers. The purpose of this interview is to find out about the National Careers Service's current work in facilitating links between schools/colleges and employers, and to collect the views of National Careers Service contractors on how such work might be developed in the future. We have conducted in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of 12 of the schools and colleges surveyed initially and are contacting the National Careers Service prime contractors in each of the regions where these 12 schools/colleges are located.

National Careers Service **contractor**

1. Record: name of organisation; region; name and job title of contact person

Enhancing and complementing careers guidance in schools and colleges

2. The Education Act 2011 gives schools and colleges a statutory duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for students up to age 18. In what practical ways does your service currently support schools and colleges with fulfilling this requirement?
3. In overview, what links does your service currently have with employers?
4. In what ways do these links support the provision of careers guidance for young people?
5. Does the service currently facilitate links with employers for any schools or colleges in the region?
6. If so, what is the extent of this work and how does this operate?
7. It has been suggested that the National Careers Service could take on this role. What views do you have on how this might work in practice?

Appendix 6 Stakeholder interview schedule and guidelines

A series of telephone interviews took place between 26th February and 19th March 2014. Each interview lasted between 30 - 45 minutes. Care was taken to ensure a balance of views and experiences by involving a selection of school and college leaders, employer bodies and major employers, as well as SMEs through the Federation of Small Businesses, and a range of careers providers from private, public and Charitable Organisations. We are greatly indebted to all participants for sharing their 'first hand' views and experiences.

An interview schedule of 7 questions was used for all 21 interviews: a copy is provided below. In nearly all cases (95 per cent), individuals had reflected on the set questions sent in advance (Stakeholder Briefing Guidelines, February, 2014). These were approved by the BIS Project Advisory Group. In three out of 21 cases (14 per cent), a second person joined the interview at the request of the participating organisation, in order to provide a managerial delivery perspective.

Overall, participants gave quite detailed and considered responses, as well as providing some examples of emerging good or interesting policies and practices at a national, regional and/or local level. All quotes outlined in this report have been anonymised, though an indication of the type of organisation is made explicit.

Background

The University of Warwick's Institute for Employment Research (IER) is currently working on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills on a research study to understand the link between employers and schools, together with the role of the National Careers Service. The research team is based on a partnership involving Warwick IER¹ and BMG Research². The key aims of the research are to understand:

1. How the National Careers Service contractors and the Young People's helpline are working with schools, employers and LEPs
2. How these links can be enhanced;
3. What employers require from the National Careers Service and how they currently link with schools and colleges; and

¹ <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/>

² <http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/>

4. How the National Careers Service can improve services within the requirements and spirit of the Government's 'Inspiration' agenda³.

The research study involves a literature and data review, surveys of employers⁴ as well as schools and colleges⁵, together with in-depth case studies of six schools/colleges which showcase good and interesting practice, followed by key stakeholder interviews.

You are formally invited to contribute to the research study by participating in a key stakeholder interview with Dr Deirdre Hughes, Associate Fellow, Warwick IER.

This work is set within the context of the Government's 'Inspiration Vision Statement'⁶: "We need to provide more inspiration for young people, more real-life contact with the world of work so that when they come to make big decisions, they understand where different choices could take them in the future."

Stakeholder interviews

Representatives of up to 20 relevant organisations have been identified to potentially participate in the key stakeholder interviews. The main purpose is to discuss preliminary findings from a completed literature and data review, surveys of employers as well as schools and colleges, together with in-depth case studies of 6 schools/colleges which showcase good and interesting practice. Your views and experiences of what works in practice and key lessons learned to help inform future policy developments linked to the implementation of the Government's Inspiration agenda will be fully explored.

If you are willing to participate, this will involve being interviewed for between 30 and 45 minutes. The interview will take place at a date and time that best suits you, ideally between 26th February – 17th March 2014. This will be carried out by telephone, skype, and/or face-to-face, as appropriate. Your identity will be treated in the strictest of confidence, unless you specify otherwise⁷. However, we will seek your permission in advance to identify your organisation as a contributor to the

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238841/bis-13-1176-inspiration-vision-statement-R2.pdf

⁴ Data from up to 300 companies will be collected.

⁵ A total of 140 15-20 minute CATI interviews with schools and colleges will be carried out, supported by David Andrews (Research Consultant), targeting 1-2 staff in each of 60 schools/colleges and 1 staff member in 20 colleges.

⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238841/bis-13-1176-inspiration-vision-statement-R2.pdf

⁷ Warwick IER adheres to a professional research ethics code of conduct which can be accessed at: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/rss/researchgovernance_ethics/research_code_of_practice/humanparticipants_material_data/.

research, so that this can be included in the acknowledgements of the final report. At this stage, agreement has been secured, in principle, from the CBI and other employer, education and careers sector bodies to feed into and support the research.

Thematic areas for exploration⁸ include: -

Q1. Your organisations' views and experiences of working links between employers, schools/colleges and the National Careers Service.

Note: National Careers Service Prime Contractor Q1. What links have the National Careers Service and Prime Contractors been able to establish with schools/colleges and employers? How is this currently working?

Q2. How can arrangements be improved between the National Careers Service and schools/colleges to create effective mechanisms for employers to connect with more young people?

Q3. What support do employers want from the National Careers Service and what do you think National Careers Service has to offer employers?

Q4. Your views about effective employer engagement models working directly with:

- Students
- Teachers/Lecturers
- Careers advisers
- Governors
- Headteachers/Principals

Q5. What are the best forms of brokerage that the National Careers Service can perform with employers and schools/colleges?

Q6. The potential, if any, of the National Careers Service's sphere of influence with employers and schools/colleges:

- In the curriculum
- In leadership and governance
- In the use of labour market intelligence/information
- In developing ICT and innovative policies and practices
- In supporting destinations of young people (below the age of 25 years old)
- Other, please specify and elaborate.

⁸ This may alter depending on the preliminary findings from the literature and data review, survey of employers as well as schools and colleges.

- Q7. How can the National Careers Service work smarter to connect with more employers and schools/colleges in a way that achieves greater impact? Other additional comments or observations.....

Appendix 7 Additional survey analysis

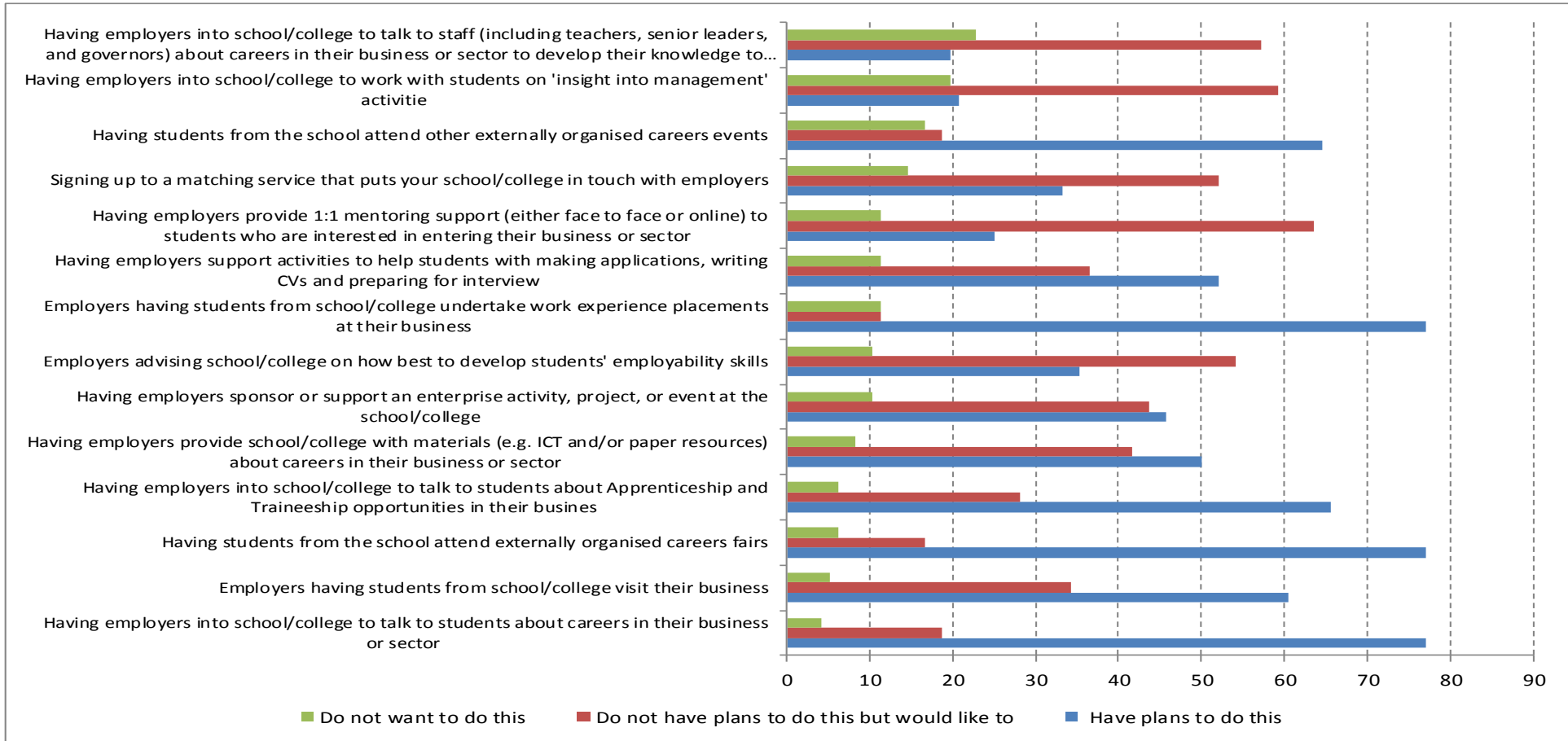
Table A1 Ways in which school/colleges were linked with employers to support careers advice activities by type of school (multiple responses) (row percentages)

	Academy sponsored		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE college
	Sixth form	No sixth form	sixth form	No sixth form	sixth form	No sixth form	
Employers have been into school/college to talk to students about careers in their business or sector	100	100	96	100	100	94	94
Employers have been into school/college to talk to staff (including teachers, senior leaders, and governors) about careers in their business or sector to develop their knowledge to support students	42	33	30	0	42	31	53
Employers have provided school/college with materials (e.g. ICT and/or paper resources) about careers in their business or sector	83	67	96	100	92	75	71
Employers have provided 1:1 mentoring support (either face to face or online) to students who are interested in entering their business or sector	42	67	52	22	67	63	29
Employers have supported activities to help students making applications, writing CVs and preparing for interviews	67	100	74	78	75	75	59

	Academy sponsored		Academy converter		Maintained school		FE college
Employers have been into school/college to talk to students about Apprenticeship or Traineeship opportunities in their business	75	100	87	78	92	94	82
Employers have had students from school/college undertake work experience placements at their business	100	100	91	67	92	94	100
Employers have had students from school/college visit their business	83	100	91	89	75	81	100
Employers have advised school/college on how best to develop students' employability skills	58	100	65	56	67	63	65
Employers have been into school/college to work with students on 'insight into management' activities	25	100	26	44	25	13	35
Students from the school have attended externally organised careers fair(s)	92	100	91	89	92	100	88
Students from the school have attended other externally organised careers events	67	67	83	89	75	69	76
Employers have sponsored or supported an enterprise activity, project, or event at the school/college	50	67	61	56	75	88	65
Have signed up to a an online matching service that connects employer/employees to local schools and/or colleges	33	0	57	33	25	50	47
Other	0	0	30	22	25	6	18

Source: Schools/colleges' survey (Schools/Colleges who undertake employer-linked external events) (n=92)

Figure A2 Plans for future links with employer



Source: Schools/colleges' survey (n=98)

Table A3 Companies' Engagement with Schools or Colleges

		Not engaged in Schools/ Colleges	Engaged in Schools/ Colleges
Involved in Government funded activity	Yes	9	16
	No	161	115
Offer apprenticeship or training	Yes	30	43
	No	140	88
Principal activity	Primary sector (SIC 2007 01-9, 35-39)	7	3
	Manufacturing (SIC 2007 10-33)	33	15
	Construction (SIC 2007 41-43)	24	17
	Transport, retail and distribution (SIC 2007 45-56)	50	28
	Infocomms (SIC 2007 58-63)	4	6
	Professional activities (SIC 2007 69-75)	23	19
	Administrative and support services (SIC 2007 77-82)	16	7
	Other services (SIC 2007 64-68, 77-82, 85-88, 90-93, 94-96)	13	36
Number of employees	0-4	131	75
	5-9	18	25
	10-19	12	12
	20-49	5	11
	50-249	2	3
	250 plus	1	3
	Missing	1	1

		Not engaged in Schools/ Colleges	Engaged in Schools/ Colleges
Region	North East	5	5
	North West	12	22
	Yorkshire and the Humber	11	14
	East Midlands	12	11
	West Midlands	19	10
	East of England	17	17
	London	40	18
	South East	36	18
	South West	17	15
	Missing	1	
Total no of companies		170	131

Source: Employers' survey, weighted (n=301)

Appendix 8 Definition of schools

- **Academies** are publicly-funded independent schools that are not managed by a local authority. They receive their money direct from the Government and are run by an academy trust, which employs the staff. There are two types of academy.
- **Sponsored academies** – formerly local authority maintained schools that have been transferred to academy status as part of a Government intervention strategy and are run by a Government approved sponsor.
- **Converter academies** – formerly local authority maintained schools that have voluntarily converted to academy status. It is not necessary for converter academies to have a sponsor.
- **Maintained schools** are publicly-funded schools managed by a local authority. There are two main types of maintained school.
- **Community schools** are controlled by a local authority.
- **Foundation schools** are funded through a local authority but have more freedom to change the way they do things than community schools.

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