



## Employer Engagement policy

### Introduction

With the increased focus on employer engagement by the current government there is a view that we should our policy statement to include one relating to employer engagement.

This short paper explores this issue and provides some possible content and structure to a Careers England policy statement on employer engagement.

### Context

John Cridland, CBI Director General said: *"We know careers advice is on life support in many areas, as schools struggle with the statutory duty... businesses needs to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in"*.

Ofsted found that *"Links with employers were the weakest aspect of careers guidance in sixty schools visited. About two thirds of the schools reported that they had cut down their work experience provision for students in years 10 and 11 because of a reduced budget and because of recommendations in the Wolf Report"*.

In 2013, the government published its Inspiration Agenda which placed greater emphasis on the aspirations, inspiration and motivation of young people, and linked these concepts to contributions from employers and employees. This encouraged schools to adopt activities such as:

- Inspiring speakers
- Workplace visits
- Work experience
- Help with CV and mock interviews
- Mentoring (especially for those at risk of becoming NEET)

The Inspiration Agenda has been further reinforces with the refocusing of five percent of the National Careers Service funding for this area and the recently announced Careers and Enterprise company being established to facilitate greater employer engagement in schools and colleges.

## Careers England's position

We strongly support employer engagement in careers education and work related learning in schools and colleges and have emphasised the importance of improved co-ordination between employers, professional careers advisers and schools and colleges.

We believe employers can contribute to the career development of young people in four ways:

- Providing information, inspiration and advice about the world of work through talks and other interactions such as mentoring and exhibitions
- Providing opportunities to experience and learn about work and gain careers related skills through placement, visits and online resources
- Contributing to careers education activities such as CV preparation and interview practice
- Providing young people with contracts within the world of work (social capital)

The benefits to employers from engaging in these activities are very significant. They include:

- Direct benefits such as recruitment opportunities
- Indirect benefits such as reputational advantage and fulfilling corporate social responsibility objectives
- Workforce development benefits derived from employees building new skills and knowledge

However there are constraints on the contribution employers can make, for example:

- This is not their core business and they have time and resource constraints
- They are often limited to a detached knowledge of their own vocational area only

In summary, employer engagement on its own is not the complete solution to meeting young people's career needs. Career professionals working in partnership with employers is the most efficient model.

Career professionals (whether employed directly by the school or an external agency) are careers advisers qualified to at least Level 6 or a teacher who holds responsibility for the delivery of careers education and/or work related curriculum activities. They contribute by:

- Providing brokerage to ensure the contributions of employers are maximised and efficiently used
- Managing careers education and guidance programmes within schools which involves employers
- Providing professional careers guidance which is impartial and addresses young people's distinctive interests, abilities, aptitude and aspirations
- Providing a comprehensive view of the local labour market

## Conclusion

Employer and career professionals both have distinctive and complementary contributions to make to the career planning of young people. Working together within a planned programme of careers education and guidance enables them to provide more effective support to young people than they would on their own.