



Rationale for *Inspiring the Future*

Research evidence shows that there is a practical need for *Inspiring the Future*. Here is a summary of the main issues.

Improving career choices, employment and social mobility

Careers insights are important. It provides young people, parents and carers with valuable information and validation/encouragement (cultural capital) to help them make the right decisions about whether they will stay on in education and what they will study as a route ultimately into work. Clear and realistic aspirations play important roles both in motivating young people to do well in school. Research commissioned by the Department for Education has shown that “aspiration and future plans has a clear affect on levels of educational engagement. Clarity of future plans, the perceived relevance of Key Stage 4 attainment and extent to which young people felt their plans were achievable all impacted on levels of engagement”.¹ More than that, high quality information, advice and guidance serves to reduce risks of unemployment as young people go into adult life.

It makes a difference to life chances and outcomes. Two important recent longitudinal studies (one US, one UK) have demonstrated powerfully the ways in young people can, and do, secure significant benefits from the information and encouragement that effective careers advice can provide: informal advice in teenage years leads to significantly higher employment levels ten years later, while career aspirations which are misaligned with understanding of qualification requirements increase the risk of NEET status twofold.²

Careers insights from employers is especially highly valued by young people and is of ‘high value to them’. Studies routinely show that young people hold professional expertise in high regard and often listen to employers more acutely than they do to teaching staff.³ The OECD recommends that employers are systematically engaged in providing careers advice to young people, arguing that it is

¹ National Centre for Social Research (2009), *Pupils with declining attainment at key stages 3 and 4: Profiles, Experiences and Impacts of Underachievement and Disengagement*. DCSF, 30. See also: Schoon, I (2005), *Teenage Aspirations for education and work and long-term outcomes. Evidence from two British Cohort Studies* Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics

² McDonald S et al (2007) “Informal mentoring and young adult employment” *Social Science Research*, 36: 1328-47; Yates S et al (2010) “Early Occupational Aspirations and Fractured Transitions: A Study of Entry into ‘NEET’ status in the UK” *Journal of Social Policy*, 40: 1-22.

³ Lord, P & Jones, M (2006). *Pupils’ experiences and perspectives of the national curriculum and assessment – final report of the research review*. National Foundation for Educational Research

adds real value to the advice offered by teachers and guidance professionals.⁴ Two-thirds of teaching staff and of young people surveyed want to hear from employers coming into school to talk about particular jobs.⁵ It is so valued by young people (and schools) as it gives young people access to new information about possible career aspirations and routes into specific jobs.⁶ A Deloitte/Taskforce (2010) study shows the extent to which employer-supplied careers advice impacts on young people. Drawing on responses from 333 young people aged 14-17, the poll highlighting a clear correlation between the number of times that a young person is able to speak to employers about the world of work and the confidence they have in their future plans.⁷

Statement	% strongly agreeing with the statement, with respondents grouped by the number of different employers respondent has received careers advice or information from			Improvement in numbers strongly agreeing with statement
	None	1 to 4	>4	
I feel confident to make a decision on my career, with the information I have	26%	23%	37%	+11%
I feel I know what I need to do to get the sort of jobs I want to do	21%	25%	36%	+15%
I have a good idea of the knowledge and skills I need for the jobs I want to do	23%	26%	44%	+21%
I am confident that I am developing the right knowledge and skills to get the sort of jobs I want to do	23%	23%	41%	+18%
I am confident that I will be able to find a good job	18%	29%	45%	+27%
I feel excited about the jobs that I could do when I leave education	34%	36%	46%	+12%

Effective careers advice underpins social mobility and is inequitably distributed across society.

Access to effective careers advice varies across society. As academic research routinely shows, career aspirations are highly influenced by social background with high achieving young people from working class backgrounds possessing significantly more modest aspirations than their middle class

⁴ “Research studies suggest that young people particularly value information on jobs and careers if obtained in a real workplace and through contacts with working people ...Through such experience young people can be introduced to some of the choices they will face in their professional and learning pathways.” OECD (2010), *Learning for Jobs*, 85, 87.

⁵ Education and Employers Taskforce/Deloitte (2010). *Helping Young People Succeed: how employers can support careers education – increasing and improving employer involvement in providing young people with careers education, information, advice and guidance*; Business in the Community/Edcoms (2007). *Business in school research findings*. Survey of 400 headteachers.

⁶ Education and Employers Taskforce/Deloitte (2010). *Helping Young People Succeed: how employers can support careers education – increasing and improving employer involvement in providing young people with careers education, information, advice and guidance*

⁷ Education and Employers Taskforce/Deloitte (2010). *Helping Young People Succeed: how employers can support careers education – increasing and improving employer involvement in providing young people with careers education, information, advice and guidance*, 55

counterparts.⁸ Consequently, social mobility can be harmed when the information available to young people is drawn predominantly from family networks and this is increasingly the case.

The reduction of careers advice. The last twenty years has seen a systematic reduction in the extent of careers advice available to young people in schools, leaving teenagers to be significantly more dependent on family connections and mass media for information and guidance. As analysis from the annual YELLIS study, which captures the experiences of tens of thousands of year 11 (ages 15-16) pupils shows, access to advice across a range of different areas has declined significantly.⁹

Sources and value of careers / future advice	1994	1996	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Careers advisor / teacher personal Interview	49	46	46	37	36	36	32	27	25	26	27	25
Careers advisor / teacher giving talks	45	42	42	39	37	37	34	27	26	25	24	22
Other People giving talks	39	38	38	38	37	36	35	33	32	33	32	32
Careers Leaflets	44	42	41	40	38	37	34	33	31	29	27	25
Visit(s) to Careers Library	28	26	25	22	21	19	17	14	12	11	9	8
Older friends	48	48	49	48	48	49	46	46	45	45	45	46
Parents/Guardians	60	61	63	63	63	64	64	62	63	64	64	65
Other family members	52	52	54	54	55	56	56	55	55	57	57	59
Work experience	64	64	64	61	59	58	56	53	52	51	51	49

Consequently, employee-supplied career insights are of particular importance to young people from most deprived situations, notably the 2 million children growing up in workless households, who find it very difficult access to information which will help them navigate successfully their way through schooling into work. As Ofsted as demonstrated, young people not in education, employment or training between 16 and 18 frequently possess narrow and stereotypical views of the labour market and potential roles for them within it. The inspectorate has also shown that employers have significant roles to play in helping girls to give serious consideration to non-traditional occupational roles.¹⁰

A 2011 Taskforce yougov poll of 1,000 young adults, showed that 77% of young people who were NEET between ages 19 and 24 had experienced one or fewer employer engagement activity whilst at school, compared to 57% of those at university and 62% of those in full-time work. The findings correlated strongly with data gathered from some 20,000 teenagers which demonstrate that those

⁸ Croll, P. (2008) "Occupational choice, socio-economic status and educational attainment: a study of the occupational choices and destinations of young people in the British Household Panel Survey" *Research Papers in Education*, 23: 243–268

⁹ Wiggins A & Coe R (2009), *Careers guidance and participation in education – findings from the YELLIS dataset*. Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring. Durham University.

¹⁰ Ofsted (2011), *Girls' Careers Aspirations*. Ofsted (2010), *Reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training: what works and why*

who become NEET between ages of 16 and 18 have access to significantly fewer sources of information before making their decisions on what to do after the end of compulsory schooling.¹¹

Careers insights from employers are especially valued by young people and of ‘high value to them’. A survey of teaching staff from 201 schools and colleges (with higher than average levels of free school meals) by the Taskforce (January 2011) showed that seven out of ten considered short careers talks to be important to their schools or colleges, but only two out of ten found them easy to arrange.¹²

The Taskforce yougov poll of 1,000 19-24 year olds highlights a disparity in access to such careers advice. Only 38% of former independent school pupils never had the opportunity to received careers advice directly from employers whilst in education, compared to 49% of former pupils of non-selective state schools. Moreover, the impact of the advice for former independent school pupils was significantly greater: 77% saying it helped them decide on their career paths (28% a lot) compared to 56% of former non-selective state school pupils (9% saying it helped a lot).

As society changes, school demand for advice is growing rapidly. There is widespread consensus that access to reliable and trustworthy careers advice is becoming ever more important to young people facing transitions from the education into employment. There is a broad recognition, moreover, that transitions are becoming ever more difficult as the labour market fragments and jobs themselves become more complex.¹³

Widening gaps with private schools. Independent schools, by contrast, have rarely relied on such services to secure employer engagement. Driven partly by fund raising requirements, they have proved adept at harnessing alumni and parental networks, rich in professional expertise, to give pupils highly relevant careers information. As the alumni website of Winchester College asks: “Perhaps you are a barrister and can help a current Wykehamist discover something about chamber life? Maybe you work in the media or arts industry and wouldn’t mind advising on how to get into the business? Alternatively, do you work in the City or practice as an architect and would be prepared to be shadowed by a student?”¹⁴

Social Mobility Strategy. Amid record youth unemployment, there is an urgent need to rapidly improve young people’s access to broad and authoritative careers advice and prevent a dangerous widening gulf emerging in the experiences of state and independent school pupils. The Government’s 2011 *Social Mobility Strategy* supports *Inspiring the Future* as a way to ‘make a difference to raising aspirations and helping people to make informed choices about jobs and careers’ and has already committed to encourage hundreds of thousands of civil servants to take part in the scheme.

Barriers to employee careers advice being the norm in schools and colleges

¹¹ Rennison J et al (2005), *Young People not in Education, Employment or Training: Evidence from the Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots Database* (2005). Department for Education and Skills, 26

¹² Education and Employers Taskforce (2011), *Evaluation of Visit our Schools and Colleges week*.

¹³ “In nearly all OECD countries, education systems are growing and diversifying, with more courses for different target groups. At the same time, jobs and careers are constantly evolving and job security is diminishing. While these changes are expanding opportunities, they also increase the complexity and difficulty of choices that young people need to make.” OECD (2010), *Learning for Jobs*, 77

¹⁴ The online community of Old Wykehamists. <http://wksoc.com/>. Accessed May 7 2011.

What 2010 Deloitte research showed. For any new intervention to succeed in significantly increasing the availability of employer careers advice to young people, it is important to understand the barriers preventing schools from accessing the resource. In 2010, Deloitte worked with the Education and Employers Taskforce to address this question. Finding significant willingness across both the education and employer communities for closer collaboration in provision of careers advice, the Deloitte investigation identified a range of obstacles preventing effective collaboration.¹⁵

Barriers for schools and colleges. From the teachers' perspective, while there is wide recognition of the value of employee-provided careers advice, for many schools arranging careers fairs/carousels or visiting speaker series is hugely time consuming. It is so demanding because individual and organisational networks are limited and where new relationships need to be formed to bring in volunteers, each one needs personal attention. Schools have the option of commissioning a local intermediary to take responsibility for a delivering a careers fair, but costs have been high. With recent removal of government funding, such intermediaries are now required charge full costs to schools. In some parts of the country, such intermediaries have closed down altogether.

Some schools do find it easier to bring in employee volunteers to speak to young people about careers, especially related to professional careers. Independent and grammar schools in particular are well placed to draw on parental networks to provide advice to pupils as well as work experience relevant to career aspirations. Non-selective state schools, especially those located in areas with high levels of worklessness (as pupil eligibility for Free School Meals is a key indicator) and at a distance from metropolitan centres routinely find it much more difficult to engage with the diversity of employers relevant to pupil aspirations. Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units also face particular challenges. Managing transitions from education to employment is particularly important for these schools and they often struggle against ignorance in engaging appropriate employer support. For the gifted and talented in state schools, effective careers advice is a means to rebalance the advantage of access enjoyed by independent school pupils. Highly competitive courses such as medicine or veterinary science offered by Russell Group universities see insight into related professions as a highly desirable, if not essential requirement, in university applications. Access to such advice, if not found in family circles, is a particular challenge for state school pupils. *Inspiring the Future* recognises and addresses these inherent disadvantages.

Barriers for employers. As Deloitte reported, too many employers simply 'don't know where to start' and with good reason. To date, there has been no mechanism to allow large employers to support systematic employee volunteering with schools. A national employer is required to manage relationships with a myriad of individual schools and/or local and national specialist organisations each with differing, if at times overlapping, interests. Inefficiencies in such a system are great, creating administrative obstacles which prevent more systematic engagement. For smaller employers, access to information about volunteering opportunities with schools are typically limited with approaches from schools or their intermediaries focused on provision of two week work experience placements which often represent a significant demand on the SME employer.

Overwhelmingly, it is schools and their intermediaries which initiative relationships with employers. To date, employers, notably SMEs, have found it hard to engage with schools on a strategic basis, optimising staff development opportunities, alignment with corporate objectives, such as

¹⁵ Education and Employers Taskforce/Deloitte (2010). *Helping Young People Succeed: how employers can support careers education – increasing and improving employer involvement in providing young people with careers education, information, advice and guidance*

recruitment in specific areas or subjects or provision of demonstrable support for schools in greatest need.

Consequently, *Inspiring the Future* is designed to address these needs.

- It enables national volunteering schemes, representing the diversity of the labour market
- Allows targeted support for those schools facing highest needs and greatest levels of inherent disadvantage
- Minimises the transaction costs experienced by all participants, supplementing existing mechanisms for enabling employee volunteering with schools

Further information

For more detailed research about education and employers working together visit:

<http://www.educationandemployers.org/research.aspx>