

HOW TO SUPPORT CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS:

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS



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About this guide

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) are working together to help employers engage more effectively with schools to create stronger careers and enterprise support for young people.

As the worlds of business and education continue to change, collaborative relationships between the two are more important than ever, and can bring significant mutual benefit and create broader impact for society. The CEC helps to build these relationships, so all young people have access to meaningful work encounters and gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to enter the workplace.

The CEC and the CBI have collaborated to bring you this guide, based on our joint new research into employer engagement. Its aim is to help your business engage with schools as effectively as possible. Whether you're already working with a school or college or just starting out, this guide offers practical tips, lessons learnt from employer experience and research case studies.

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“The Careers & Enterprise Company are delighted to partner with the CBI to provide this practical guide for employers. Research from the charity Education and Employers shows that young people who have 4 or more workplace encounters while at school are 86% less likely to be ‘Not in Education Employment or Training’ (NEET) and on average will go on to earn 18% more than their peers who did not. We feel passionately about helping businesses engage with schools and colleges across the country to ensure young people are inspired and prepared for the world of work and businesses have access to a strong and diverse talent pool in the future.”

**Claudia Harris, Chief Executive Officer,
the CEC**

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“No single factor has greater influence over the long-term health of a nation’s society and economy than education. But preparing young people for the world they will face is a challenge for us all – not just schools. And this challenge extends well beyond the traditional curriculum – although academic achievement is important. Developing broader skills as well as an understanding of the world of work – and the opportunities it offers – is vital. Young people need good guidance and valuable opportunities to help them make the leap into a great career. It’s incumbent on business to play its part in this. That’s why we are delighted to partner with the Careers & Enterprise Company on this guide, which is designed to encourage firms to get involved and understand the hugely positive impact they can have when they get their approach right.”

**Neil Carberry, Managing Director,
People & Infrastructure, CBI**

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“There has never been a more important time for education and business to work meaningfully together for the good of all. My experience tells me that when employers connect with students, they both gain hugely out of the exchanges that are created. Young people are the employees and employers of the future and any opportunity to ignite young minds is an investment for the good. I wholly support the Careers & Enterprise Company and the CBI in putting together this practical guide for employers.”

**Carl Ward, Chief Executive,
the City Learning Trust and President,
the Association of School and College Leaders**

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In brief

WHY ENGAGE WITH SCHOOLS?

Needs and benefits for the company?

Focus of learning for pupils?

WHO TO ENGAGE WITH?

What kinds of pupils and schools?

In which parts of the country or neighbourhoods?

Sustained relationships with particular schools?

Contacting schools directly or through an intermediary?

WHAT TO DO?

What mix of activities and delivery methods?

Delivery in school, off-site, business workplace, online?

Responding to requests and/or proactive activities?

HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE?

Centrally and/or locally organised?

Led by HR, CSR or other functions?

Resources, including company employees?

Working independently with schools versus with providers and/or other partners?

1. Why engage with schools?

Build your skills by building theirs.

Building relationships with schools benefits everyone. Evidence shows that engaging with employers has transformative effects on the employment outcomes of young people. These encounters bring the world of work to life, develop skills, and encourage young people to take control of their futures. Employees working with schools benefit, too. They can develop new skills which can help further their own career progression and employer-supported volunteering often leads to increased brand loyalty and employee engagement.

Small effort yields big results. Evidence shows that just 4 encounters with the world of work has a huge effect on a young person's future. Many businesses start small and develop a school engagement strategy over time. Getting started is simple. Start by identifying why you want to work with schools.

Do you want to: (i) improve social mobility; (ii) inspire and develop the future talent pipeline; (iii) give back to the community in which you operate? Once you understand what you want to achieve, the next step is to think about what you can offer and engage with a school (or schools) to explore what would work best.

The time is now. With the unknown consequences of Brexit for the labour market and an ageing population, every business needs a diverse, strong, engaged and informed future talent pipeline. There is no more important time than now to start working with schools and colleges.

86%

The evidence clearly shows that a young person who has 4 or more encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training, and can earn up to 18% more during their career.

BUT

40%

At the moment only in 40% of schools are young people receiving this kind of encounter, and unemployment among young people is 3 times higher than the national average.

2. Who to engage with?

Know who's in charge – on both sides. Like any aspect of your business people make all the difference. You'll need a lead for activity and point of contact within your company, and a senior sponsor who can help secure budget and employee time. Get to know the key person in any school you're working with and the headteacher/college principal – you'll quickly appreciate that teachers are as busy and under pressure as you and your team, and operate on different timetables.

Tailor support based on need. All schools are different, with a diverse mix of teachers and young people. Think about what you and your business can offer, and find out what the school needs. Talk to teachers about what support they need, share your ideas and be open and adaptable. For example, some schools may need mentors for a particular cohort, inspirational speakers for the whole year group, or support with engaging parents. With different ages, subject groups, and backgrounds to consider,

teachers can advise on what works best with their students – and as with any project you will learn as you go.

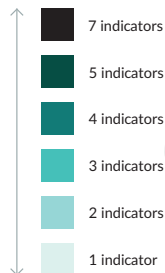
The CEC can connect you to the right people.

The CEC, working in partnership with Local Enterprise Partnerships, has built a national network of Enterprise Coordinators who bridge the gap between local employers and schools to provide all young people meaningful encounters with the world of work. Each Enterprise Coordinator is supported by an Enterprise Adviser (a senior volunteer from business) and together they support each school to develop a strong careers and enterprise plan. Informed by the CEC's research and the plans for their schools, they can give your business useful advice about how best to deploy your time and resources, where it is needed most and which activities are in demand. Further, the CEC funds proven programme providers and can introduce you to the right people to facilitate your activities.

In brief

Cold Spots Map

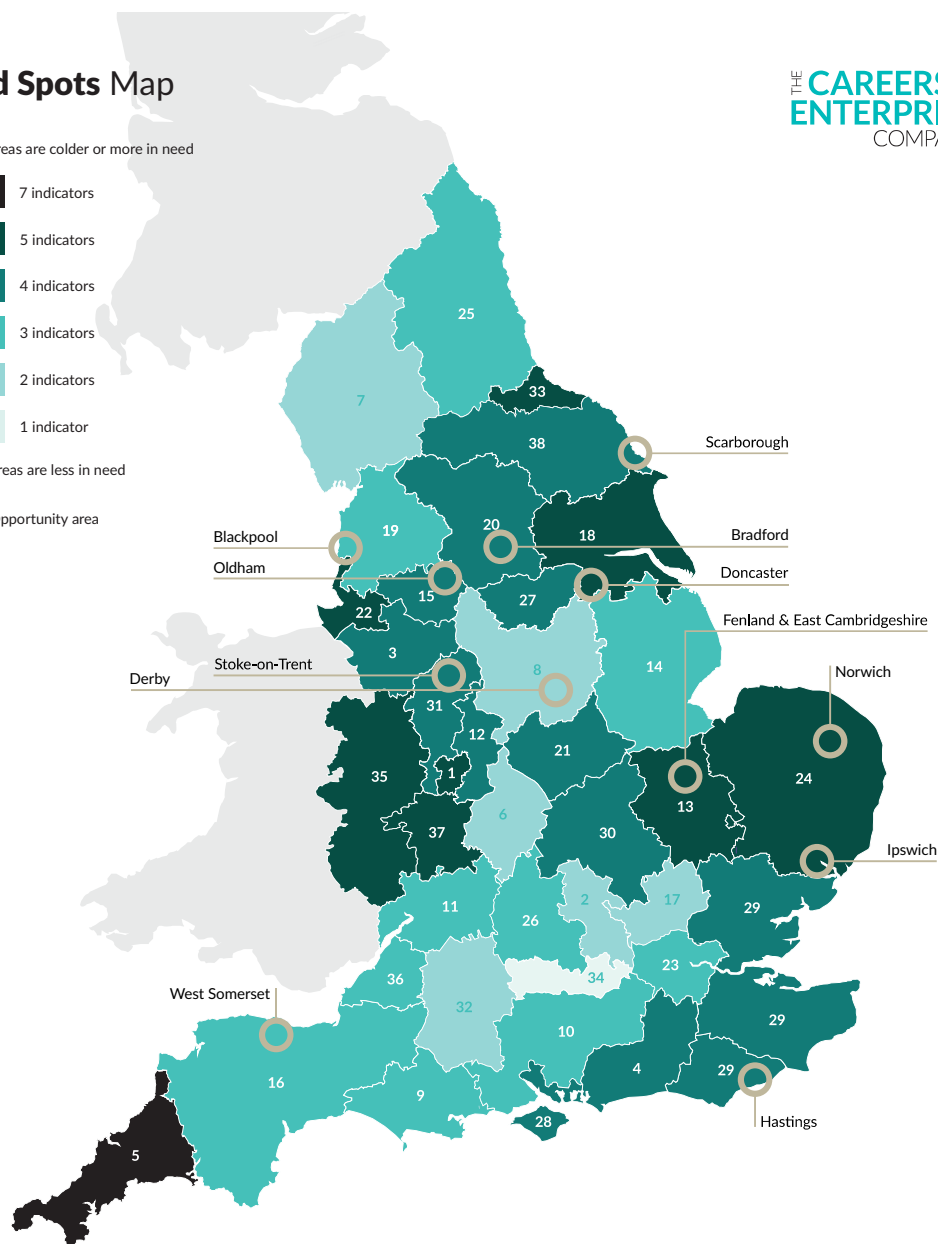
Darker areas are colder or more in need



Lighter areas are less in need

Opportunity area

THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY



No.	Local Enterprise Partnership	Indicators	No.	Local Enterprise Partnership	Indicators	No.	Local Enterprise Partnership	Indicators	No.	Local Enterprise Partnership	Indicators
1	Black Country	5	11	Gloucestershire	3	21	Leicester and Leicestershire	4	31	Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	4
2	Buckinghamshire Thames Valley	2	12	Greater Birmingham and Solihull	4	22	Liverpool City Region	5	32	Swindon and Wiltshire	2
3	Cheshire and Warrington	4	13	Greater Cambridge & Greater Peterborough	5	23	London	3	33	Tees Valley	5
4	Coast to Capital	4	14	Greater Lincolnshire	3	24	New Anglia	5	34	Thames Valley Berkshire	1
5	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	7	15	Greater Manchester	4	25	North Eastern	3	35	The Marches	5
6	Coventry and Warwickshire	2	16	Heart of the South West	3	26	Oxfordshire	3	36	West of England	3
7	Cumbria	2	17	Hertfordshire	2	27	Sheffield City Region	4	37	Worcestershire	5
8	Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	2	18	Humber	5	28	Solent	4	38	York and North Yorkshire	4
9	Dorset	3	19	Lancashire	3	29	South East	4			
10	Enterprise M3	3	20	Leeds City Region	4	30	South East Midlands	4			

This map is an extract from the CEC's [Cold Spots research](#), which indicated which areas of the country need the greatest support.

The Opportunity Areas, as announced by the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, have been overlaid on this map.

3. What to do?

It's not just work experience – employer engagement takes many forms. From providing strategic advice to the headteacher and senior leadership team to mentoring pupils or running enterprise competitions, school engagement takes many forms. Every school is different so work in partnership with teaching staff to find out what your school needs. The CEC can help by providing insight on which encounters are best evidenced and can have the most impact.

Prepare and debrief. School engagement is a real positive for companies, but can be challenging. Make sure employees get the training, resources and support they need when they start working with schools. Encourage employees across your business to collaborate and learn from each other's experiences. Engagement with schools sparks great ideas to bring back into the work environment, so ensure there are opportunities to capture these.

This table is an extract from the CEC's 'What Works' research.

STRONG EVIDENCE

High quality evaluations showing positive impact

- employer mentoring
- enterprise competitions
- work-related learning provided in cooperation with employers

SOME EVIDENCE

Lower-quality evaluations showing positive impact

- 1-2 week work experiences
- career learning co-delivered by teachers and employers
- careers talks
- careers websites
- curriculum learning co-delivered by teachers and employers
- cv workshops
- employer delivered employability skills workshops
- mock interviews
- workplace visits

LIMITED EVIDENCE

Insufficient evaluation evidence at present

- careers fairs
- e-mentoring
- job shadowing
- part-time working
- teacher CPD delivered by employers
- volunteering

4. How to be effective?

Your memory of school will not be right! Schools will be different from how you remember – whether that was just a few years ago, a decade or more. Most people's experiences of school are as a pupil or parent, but this engagement is a different type of relationship. Put aside your assumptions and memories about schools to understand them from a new point of view and appreciate the common pressures facing schools today including funding, changing curriculums and evaluation metrics. There is plenty of common ground; schools are businesses too. Your experience in business will offer you a lot of relevant and helpful insights which you can share with schools you are working with.

Work in partnership: teachers are your allies. Build an effective partnership which allows you to draw on their expertise and make the most of yours. Working

closely with teachers ensures what you are doing is effective, so finding a key contact within your school and clarifying respective roles is essential. Get to know their environment, pressures, processes and timings in the school year.

Test, learn and adapt. Keep reviewing and developing your partnerships with schools. Listening to feedback from teachers, pupils and your staff will help you all evaluate activities. At the outset, as you build the relationship with a school, being clear about the scope, duration and aims of the engagement is important. That way you have a framework for reviewing what has been done, seeing how to make improvements and keeping the engagement relevant to the ever-changing contexts in your business and within education.



WHY engage with schools?

Key questions

What learning outcomes do you want to achieve?

What is the motivation for your business to engage with schools?

Develop young people's futures:

- generic work skills, attitudes and behaviours
- specific skills such as STEM
- broaden career horizons

Improve workforce diversity and social mobility:

- increase diversity within specific sectors or occupations
- improve educational and employment prospects for disadvantaged pupils
- build a network through which to identify and recruit your future talent

Support employee development and engagement:

- personal and professional development
- increase employee engagement by giving back to the community

Embed corporate social responsibility priorities:

- contribute to communities
- create sustainable business
- embed employer brand and company reputation

WHY engage with schools?

Build your skills by building theirs

Businesses identify many reasons to work with schools and their pupils in ways that bring mutual benefit.

- 1. Help young people develop work skills, attitudes and behaviours, including managing their own learning and careers.** Employers may have a direct interest in developing the workforce in their own locality or sector and want to address specific skill shortages. By encouraging more young people to study STEM subjects, for example, employers hope to fill occupations which face shortages.
- 2. Broader career horizons.** If young people have broader career horizons and understand vocational pathways, they will make better informed career choices.
- 3. Employee development and engagement.** Although this may not be an initial driver of business engagement, employers recognise that employee development brings significant benefits to their companies, and in turn sustains business enthusiasm. Through engaging with schools your employees can build their confidence and skills in public speaking, communications, presentations, leadership and mentoring. Offering support and time to your employees to volunteer can increase brand loyalty and overall employee engagement.
- 4. Increase workforce diversity and address social disadvantage.** Work with schools can focus on particular groups of pupils, including those from less advantaged backgrounds.
- 5. Corporate social responsibility.** Working with teachers and schools helps support local communities and sustainable business goals. It is occasionally a contractual requirement that companies work with local education institutions, for example on large construction projects, or can evidence community programmes in requests for business tenders.

At **Burges Salmon**, 56% of employees volunteer, with one saying, "I personally get a lot out of it. Seeing how the kids do. Some come in looking worried. But they come up with magnificent ideas and great presentations. Is there a measurement for that? No."

Aviva ran a 3-day workshop for girls in year 9 which led them to consider careers paths in IT and insurance for the first time.

BT provide resources and support for computing, teaching and tech literacy skills in primary schools to prepare future generations for living and working in a digital age.

Prudential offer national programmes to support skills development including financial education for primary pupils. They also offer responsive support for schools as part of the company's commitment to communities, which is organised by employees in local offices.

Small effort yields big results

You don't need a grand plan to connect and engage with schools – often enthusiasm and a driving aim is enough to get going. Some companies do have a clear strategy for working with schools and young people, but these often emerge from a period of experimentation, followed by evaluation, reflection and review.

To get started:

1. **Speak with schools at an early stage.** This will help you align your strategy and aims to the school's needs so that everyone benefits. You may find that your objectives develop once you start engaging with schools. So stay open minded and remember the best strategies can be a mix of proactive activity and flexible response to requests from schools. Alternatively, smaller businesses can focus on speaking with programme providers upfront so they can easily slot their resources into what is required, rather than liaise with each school individually.
2. **Resources.** Every company is different but working with schools will require resources – staff time mainly, but sometimes some budget. Securing senior buy-in can help ensure programmes get the funding they need. However sometimes businesses can set goals at a senior level without assigning the resource and time required to deliver them. Aligning the work with the strategic goals of the business (typically CSR or HR) can build stickiness. Many businesses have volunteering days which this work should be linked to and a supportive management culture can encourage employees to get involved. Be realistic about the resources your company can offer and consider whether it is best to work directly with the school (if you have a well-developed programme for example) or work with a programme provider who could offer training, support and facilitation from years of experience.
3. **Feedback and evaluation.** These are a vital part of developing and improving your activities and strategy, ensuring everything you do has maximum impact and that you respond to changes in the school curriculum and young people's experiences. Sharing your successes within your business can also help secure more resources and encourage more employees to get involved.

Personal interest and passion often get companies started. The MD of **Trewithen Dairy** wants young people in the south-west of England to know that there are good jobs in the region, including in the food sector.

An employee at **RPC** found his own career in law by chance and wants less advantaged pupils to understand the wide range of work opportunities out there, including in law and other professional service functions.

Allford Hall Monaghan Morris introduces pupils to architecture in a variety of ways including workplace visits, work experience and mentoring. Very visible commitment from its directors is making involvement with education part of its business brand.

[Read all our research case studies in full.](#)

WHO matters?

Key questions

Where in the country (e.g. region or nationwide) will you be active?

How important is it for you to reach large numbers of pupils?

Which demographic or type of pupils do you want to reach and therefore what kinds of schools?

Do you want to develop sustained relationships with schools and/or deliver one-off activities?

Will you respond to schools or intermediary organisations which approach your company and/or will you target schools yourself?

Could an intermediary organisation help you to make initial contact with appropriate schools?



Know who's in charge

Building strong relationships between your business and the teachers and senior leaders within schools ensures a long-lasting and meaningful impact on the pupils you want to reach. To do this:

1. **Identify designated points of contact in your business and in the schools.** Designating a coordinator, who often has another job role, from within your business will provide a valuable central contact point for schools, intermediary and partner organisations, as well as other employees.
2. **Get to know key contacts in your school.** Your ongoing relationships will most likely be with the head, deputy or careers coordinator. For one-off activities, you'll collaborate with the lead subject teacher or head of year. Your contact in the school can help to get other staff on board, organise timing and resources, promote activities and get the right pupils involved. Developing open and trusting personal relationships is invaluable, especially when staff move on and you need new contacts.
3. **Create an approach that works for you.** Every school/employer relationship is different and engagement strategies often evolve over time. During our research we encountered smaller companies where activities are coordinated by the MD/CEO or their PA. Large and medium-sized companies often have central strategies, but manage some or all activities at office or site level. International companies do not necessarily centralise responsibility for work with schools, partly because education varies so much between countries.
4. **Make someone responsible within your business.** Responsibility will depend on your business model. In larger businesses this is often with CSR, HR or learning and development. For specific activities, business managers can take an individual lead and involve their colleagues. Empowering your staff to take the lead can reduce central resources needed. As mentioned earlier, if your work with schools aligns to your overarching business goals, this can ensure it is afforded the necessary time, resource and attention.

Goldman Sachs is embedding school engagement across the business. Employees from all areas are involved, not just those within financial occupations, providing a wider range of career information, skills and expertise to pupils and schools.

Barclays aims to reach all secondary pupils through LifeSkills online materials which can be downloaded by teachers, pupils or parents. Volunteer employees also work directly with pupils and teachers. Marketing activities including TV advertising aims to reach as many schools, pupils and parents as possible. Barclays also targets schools that are harder to engage.

[Read all our research case studies in full.](#)

WHO matters?

Tailor support based on need

Timing

Our research focused on secondary schools which is where the majority of engagement takes place. However, employers are increasingly prioritising work with primary pupils as confidence and career aspirations are shaped at an early age.

Time your engagement activities carefully. Think about when pupils are making key choices such as selecting their GCSEs and avoid major exam periods. Busy periods may vary between schools, so speak to your school to find out when is best to organise activities. Arguably, the earlier you can engage with young people, the better, and typically the more flexible the school timetable.

Location / geography

Our research showed most businesses work with local schools as it is convenient for employees to visit. Employers who want to widen young people's access to opportunities often target schools in nearby, but less advantaged, neighbourhoods. Other employers, who want to promote careers in particular sectors or occupations, target pupils in all parts of the UK which can affect how they deliver activities. Don't forget that some schools are very well connected with businesses whilst others are often overlooked. Do think about where you can have the greatest impact. The CEC can provide guidance on which schools, cohorts and young people have the greatest need.

It was harder in this research project to find many employers working with rural schools, and this reflects the findings in [the CEC's Cold Spots research](#). There is little employer engagement in coastal or remote areas of the country as it's geographically challenging to participate. The 'coldest' areas are in places such as Cornwall and the Black Country while the warmest areas are in London and the home counties. However, even within these 'warm' areas there are schools which

are relatively 'cold'. For example the schools in the outer boroughs in London typically see much lower levels of support. There are some great examples of employers using innovative methods to connect remotely with schools and young people so we encourage you to inspire your employees to get creative in how your business could reach young people in these areas.

The Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, has also identified 12 Opportunity Areas where government will focus on social mobility. These are Blackpool, Bradford, Derby, Doncaster, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich, Norwich, Oldham, Scarborough, Stoke-on-Trent and West Somerset. The CEC and the CBI are supporting employers to focus their efforts on young people in these areas to tackle low social mobility. More employer engagement in [those areas is welcomed and needed](#).

Targeted activity

Employers often choose to focus on certain subject areas, educational pathways such as apprenticeships, or particular demographic backgrounds such as gender, ethnicity and social disadvantage. Employers are also increasingly working together on common purposes to increase impact and reduce duplication of effort.

There is an increasing need for employers to work with young people with special needs, where you see far higher levels of NEETs. Programmes like National Grid's supported internship model show best practice in this area.

NG Bailey has ambitious targets, aiming to work with a high number of pupils on STEM-related activities. It visits interested schools and works with those with a serious commitment to co-delivering high quality interventions. The company measures how many pupils it reaches and evaluates the impact of its activities.

Hope Cement in the rural Peak District has close ties with local secondary and primary schools as part of its commitment to the local community. The company and secondary school share resources, expertise and careers activities.

Johnson & Johnson has worked with young people in selected schools over several years. They have a global commitment to helping less advantaged pupils achieve their education and career aspirations.

Carillion approaches local schools based on community needs, and prioritises harder-to-help pupils. It also contributes to programmes led by other organisations.

Jaguar Land Rover delivers STEM and engineering-related activities, linked with the curriculum. It reaches thousands of pupils each year through bespoke facilities in 6 locations in the UK, managed by FE colleges who understand the needs of local schools.

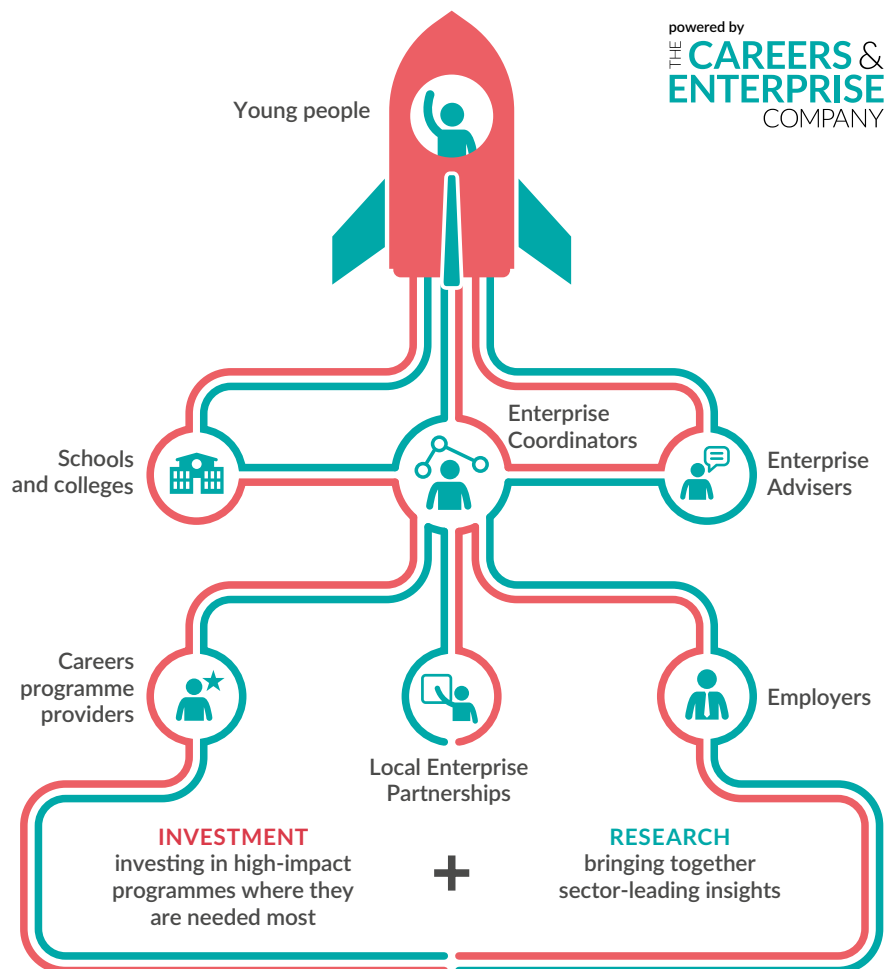
Read all our research case studies in full.

WHO matters?

Fuelling young people's futures

- 
Local Enterprise Partnerships oversee the network locally
- 
Employers help young people get 4 or more encounters with the world of work
- 
Careers programme providers deliver high-impact careers and enterprise programmes
- 
Enterprise Coordinators connect schools and colleges with employers and providers
- 
Enterprise Advisers (senior business volunteers) work in partnership with schools and colleges to develop a careers plan and connections
- 
Schools and colleges work with Enterprise Coordinators and Enterprise Advisers to get their young people the careers and enterprise support they need
- 
Young people are prepared and inspired for the future

powered by
THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE
 COMPANY



The CEC can connect you to the right people

The CEC can help your business connect with schools and colleges and support your engagement activities.

One of the CEC's key pillars of work is building a national network in collaboration with Local Enterprise Partnerships that connects schools and colleges to employers across the country. Trained, full-time Enterprise Coordinators work with clusters of schools and colleges to create and deliver plans to improve their careers and enterprise activities and connect them to the world of work. Senior business volunteers, Enterprise Advisers, support the Enterprise Coordinators to provide strategic counsel to leaders in schools and colleges and connections to local employers.

The CEC's research draws together what is known about the best ways to prepare young people for the world of work and focuses on 2 key areas: the geographical areas across England that need greater

support in careers and enterprise and what works in careers and enterprise provision. This enables employers to concentrate resource where it is needed most and on programmes that will have the greatest impact.

Further, the CEC's investment funds help the best ideas spread quickly by funding proven programme providers to whom employers may be introduced.

Importantly, the CEC also helps schools and businesses to understand each other. Appreciating the similarities and differences between your business and schools is crucial.

Once relationships are well established with schools and programme providers, employers often find they can go it alone, working directly with one or more schools.

The CEC has helped connect **Dentsu Aegis Network**, a large digital media and communications agency, to careers programme provider, My Kinda Future, to create a school outreach programme. The programme commits Dentsu employees to 50,000 volunteering hours in schools and colleges across England, with activities including a digital challenge in schools, teacher CPD, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities. This work has been aligned to the CEC's 'coldspot' data, to target young people in greatest need and support Dentsu's ambition of recruiting a diverse and creative talent pool. To find out more visit www.jointhecode.co.uk

Capgemini has worked closely with the CEC to forge strategic relationships with schools and colleges through the Enterprise Adviser Network. Over 20 senior business leaders at Capgemini volunteer as Enterprise Advisers, helping schools to build school-wide careers plans and better links to employers and provider programmes, including Business in the Community and Apps4Good. This partnership ensures schools and colleges have strategic support to build a careers plan, access to more inspiring employer encounters and better information about career opportunities in the sector, including apprenticeships at Capgemini.

[Read all our research case studies in full.](#)

WHAT to do?

Key questions

What learning outcomes do you want to achieve?

- career information:
 - understanding sectors
 - occupations
 - education pathways
 - career management skills:
 - CV writing
 - interview skills
 - networking opportunities and skills
- generic work skills, attitudes and behaviours:
 - working with other people
 - confidence building
 - creativity
 - presentation skills
 - business and commercial understanding
 - communication skills
- specific curriculum subjects or work-related skills:
 - STEM, marketing and media
- improving educational attainment of pupils
- improving teacher or school capability

How will you deliver activities?

- mentoring
- enterprise competitions
- work-related learning, co-delivered by teachers and employers (often as part of curriculum teaching in school)
- work experience
- careers fairs and careers talks
- CV workshops and mock interviews
- employer-delivered employability skills workshops
- workplace visits or job shadowing

Where will learning take place?

- in school
- off-site
- in the workplace
- online

What will trigger activity?

- your own programmes
- contacting the schools with whom you have existing relationships
- requests from schools you may not know
- invitations from programme providers to support their activities
- requests from schools known to your employees through their roles as parents or governors

It's not just work experience – employer engagement takes many forms

Many people think of work experience when they think about employer engagement in schools. In fact there is a wide variety of activities employers can take part in. These include mentoring, running enterprise competitions and delivering careers talks. Many of these have a lower time burden than work experience and can be easy ways to start relationships with schools.

The [What Works in Careers and Enterprise research](#) provides guidance on which activities are the best evidenced and most impactful. Our research showed employers engage with schools in many ways:

1. **Careers talks, CV workshops, mock interviews** and **careers fairs** are popular activities with schools. Think about how you can pitch your expertise and innovative approach to these activities to the school which may not be aware of what you can provide.
2. **Workplace visits** and **work experience** are highly valuable as they give pupils a real feel for the world of work and experience in a workplace. Workplace visits need careful administration, logistics and attention to health and safety, so you'll need to plan them carefully. Schools are struggling with the costs of work experience checks, so speak to your school early to see if this is a barrier.
3. **Activity-based workshops** can be intensive, engaging and memorable experiences for both pupils and teachers. They give pupils the chance to practice both generic and specific work-related skills, and gain real insights into career opportunities and career management skills.

Workshops can take place in school, off-site and usually happen outside the normal school timetable. Workshops can be co-delivered with teachers and/or with provider organisations who can manage logistics and communications with schools, saving you a lot of time and work. The CEC can recommend careers programme providers based on your needs and ambition.
4. **Competitions** between teams of pupils can be woven into workshops or programmes of work that include projects. Judging and prize-giving is a great opportunity to involve senior executives and recognise the achievements of pupils.
5. **Online learning materials** are a newer form of delivery, capable of reaching huge numbers of pupils and/or teachers and parents. Some businesses are also giving face-to-face support to teachers and/or pupils to use their materials effectively.
6. **Career guidance.** Employers are often concerned that young people do not have access to sufficient individual career guidance. The employers in this study didn't see themselves as responsible for delivering individual guidance for pupils, but did see their role as broadening understanding and experiences of the world of work.

WHAT to do?

Use your experience and knowledge of career opportunities, skill needs and educational pathways within sectors and occupations to suggest activities that will help develop pupils' practical skills – for work generally and in subjects relevant to your business. Being proactive in suggesting activities to schools can help broaden perceptions of what you can offer and result in a more impactful programme.

Manage the scale and breadth of your activities

Employers can get overstretched with ad hoc requests and/or embark on too many proactive activities at once. Once you have some initial ideas, clarifying your business offerings into a few broad strands and communicating these clearly to schools is a good idea.

Specialist careers programme providers can help, especially for organising activities outside school. Providers can work with the school to decide which pupils would most benefit from attending events and ensure they travel safely. They can also oversee groups of pupils, especially when teachers are not present, and produce learning materials to fit the curriculum. The CEC can help you navigate the available options, helping you save time and result in a higher quality programme.

E.ON UK provides materials and workshops related to energy, and to develop general careers and employability skills. It groups its offerings into 2 broad strands: one is linked to STEM subject teaching and the other to programmes of careers work in schools. This makes it easier for schools to understand what the company can offer.

Aviva's activities have included an intensive 3-day workshop in its own creative workspace on digital skills for girls. The girls worked on business tools and processes, developing their IT skills, career understanding, teamwork and presentation skills. The company were struck by the girls' rapid increase in confidence once engaged with each other on practical activities.

Provident Financial's work with schools is rooted in community support. In addition to traditional careers activities its staff support literacy in primary schools by reading with pupils. Employee volunteers have also mentored headteachers in budgeting which is part of the company's expertise and a real challenge for schools.

[Read all our research case studies in full.](#)

Prepare and debrief

Delivering a high quality programme requires effort – but it is incredibly rewarding and with the right preparation and debrief, your efforts can have a great impact. The CEC networks can provide a valuable source of insight and support. From speaking to other businesses you can learn about tried-and-tested approaches and share your own experiences.

You will also need to prepare your own company staff for engaging with schools. Company employees need time to plan and prepare for activities, so brief them beforehand and give them access to company resources, but without constraining their own abilities to respond flexibly. A few employers are considering more in-depth training for employees. If you have them, consult your existing volunteering policies to clarify how much work time employees can spend and to account for this cost.

You'll need to do some administration, especially for company visits, work experience or events held outside school. Often working with established providers can support this process, particularly the training and support to your employees.



HOW to be effective?

Key questions

Will you centrally coordinate work with schools and/or manage it locally?

Which business functions will lead or be involved?

- senior leadership team
- HR (including learning and development)
- CSR
- other, such as marketing

Will there be a dedicated budget? How many employees, spending how much time?

Will you work independently or use providers and/or partners to help you deliver?



Your memory of school will not be right!

Schools and companies often work well together, but operate day to day in slightly different ways and you'll need to appreciate those differences. For example, teachers can't generally receive phone calls or reply to emails during the school day as they will be teaching.

Timing within the annual and daily school timetable is generally quite inflexible, so often you'll need to plan activities quite far ahead and make sure they run on time. Similarly, the schools you work with will need to appreciate that your time is equally important. Taking time to understand each other's cultures and pressures and having these conversations up front can be vital to the smooth running of programmes, and ensuring you are investing in activities that will make the biggest difference.

Work in partnership: teachers are your allies

Building relationships with the teachers at your school is the critical step for long-term success of your school engagement. Take the time to understand your school's priorities and the environment teachers work in. Make it easy for teachers to understand yours by getting them to experience your workplace if you can.

Beyond this, many companies become more interested in developing teachers, and the capability of schools, as their experience in education builds. Programmes of work co-delivered by teachers and employers, often in normal school lessons, can integrate the skills and understanding of employees into both subject teaching and the careers and enterprise curriculum. They also bring purposeful contact between pupils and employees and develop teachers. Teachers often welcome the added relevance that co-delivered programmes can bring to their teaching, and it can have a longer-term impact on pupils than sessions delivered by employees or teachers alone.

Tideway has developed a wide range of online subject-teaching materials for different ages. Teachers helped plan these at the very start. The materials are produced by a specialist education company using the ideas, expertise and video input of Tideway's employees. The company is now planning to invest more in training its own staff to increase delivery of face-to-face activities with pupils in schools.

[Read all our research case studies in full.](#)

HOW to be effective?

Test, learn and adapt

The most effective programmes are flexible to the changing needs of schools and business. Evaluating, reflecting and reviewing your programmes will help you to continually refine your offer to schools. When you're building a relationship with a school, be clear and open about the scope, duration and aims of the engagement at the outset. That way you have a framework for reviewing activities and identifying how to adapt and improve them.

Involving the schools, teachers and even pupils in the evaluation process is crucial to ensure that the activities you are providing are having the impact you

intend. The evaluation process is also important for ensuring that your education engagement fits within your broader business priorities as these may change.

Most importantly celebrate and recognise success, both in the business and in the school or college.



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Further help & information

The Careers & Enterprise Company is establishing a national network of Enterprise Coordinators and Enterprise Advisers across England to help connect schools and employers. Details of the programme can be found on our website www.careersandenterprise.co.uk.

Enterprise Coordinators are based in the Local Enterprise Partnerships and can be contacted through them.

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The CBI is the UK's premier business organisation, providing a voice for firms at a regional, national and international level to policymakers. Our purpose - helping business create a more prosperous society. More information about our work and organisation is on our website www.cbi.org.uk.

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