

# Enterprise Adviser Survey

2023 Insight Briefing

# Introduction

Employers are integral to the modern careers system. Their engagement with schools and colleges is an essential bridge between the worlds of education and employment. They provide a window on the workplace, helping young people see the opportunities available, develop new skills, connect learning with its practical application in jobs and signpost the full range of pathways into work.

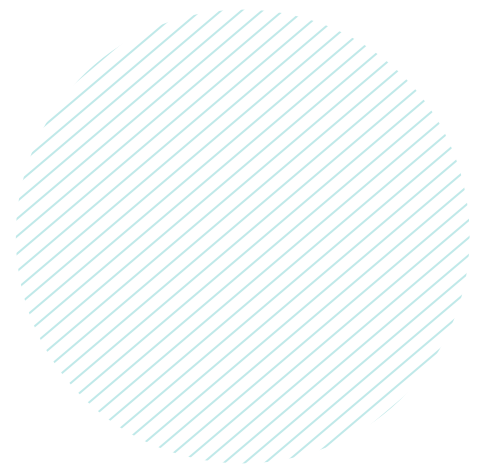
Employers also benefit. The relationships they develop with the education sector are helping them develop talent pipelines, close skills gaps, increase diversity, attract job and apprenticeship applicants and connect more closely with their communities.

Enterprise Advisers (EAs) are one important way business plays a part in system. EAs are business professionals who volunteer their time to work with schools and colleges to improve careers provision.

EAs work with and help develop the skills of Careers Leaders and senior leaders to help create opportunities for young people. This is done in a variety of ways, tailored to the needs of the specific school or college. This may include supporting with their careers plan, bringing in employer contacts, ensuring the local labour market is reflected in careers activities, or supporting senior leader or governor engagement with careers. They work as an integral part of the 44 strong national network of Careers Hubs (which now support 90 per cent of schools and colleges.)

There are currently over 4,000 EAs. The value of the time they invest working with the education sector is estimated at £6.7 million per year. Enterprise Advisers [Sanj Kamal](#), [Amanda Stevenson Bate](#), [Kirstie Payne](#), [Anna Smith](#) and [Andy Neal](#) explain more about their role and the positive impact it is having on young people and their organisations.

As part of wider stakeholder engagement, The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) runs regular surveys to understand the needs of the sector and key stakeholders. The EA survey was run in 2023, exploring the impact of the EA role on schools, colleges, employers, young people as well as highlighting areas for further training and support. This year 1,149 EAs took part in the survey, 27% of the overall EA population. This briefing explores the key findings from the survey.



# Business professionals working with schools and colleges say it has direct benefits to both business and the wider economy

Business engagement with schools and colleges is mutually beneficial. The benefits to the education sector flow from the direct links business engagement bring to the world of work and the rich and rounded experiences it affords young people. The direct business benefits are also becoming more recognised, tangible and measurable. The business professionals with experience on the front-line supporting schools and young people say the investment of their time brings positive returns for organisations and the economy.

At a time when the British Chamber of Commerce reports four in ten firms trying to recruit are struggling to find people with the right skills, nearly nine in ten EAs (89%) say business engagement with education is a good way to close skills gaps. The same proportion say a closer relationship between business and education is a way of improving UK economic growth.

84 per cent say business engagement with education is a good way of improving the diversity of the workforce – another key boardroom challenge. More than three in five (63%) say awareness of apprenticeships and technical pathways in schools and colleges has increased, offering young people broader choices on routes into the workplace. That number increases to 72 per cent for those who have been working with the education sector for longest (3+ years).

EAs say the role is an effective and efficient way for business to engage with the education sector and that their organisation has benefited in a number of ways through the work they do in schools and colleges.

Nearly four in five (78%) say the EA role is a cost-effective way for business to engage with the education sector, this rises to 84 per cent who have been in post for three years or more.

Engagement over the longer-term builds a deeper understanding of the benefits, translating into changes in business culture and practices. The longer an EA has been in the role the more influence and impact it has on their organisation. More than four in ten (42%) EAs in the role for three years or more say they have further developed their employer relationships with schools and colleges and a third say their employer has encouraged more staff to volunteer – up 14 per cent and 18 per cent respectively on those who have been in post for up to a year.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of those in the role for three years or more say their employer has recruited apprentices from local schools as a result of their engagement – up 44 per cent on the overall number and up 77% on the overall number last year.



# Business professionals working with schools say being an EA role enriches their career and are committed to continuing in the role

At a time when retention has become an increasingly important strategic issue for many organisations, EAs say their role working with schools and colleges in their local community enriches their current career and brings a strong sense of personal fulfilment. Nearly two thirds (63%) say it gives them a sense of purpose and 62 per cent say it has increased their network (Chart 1).

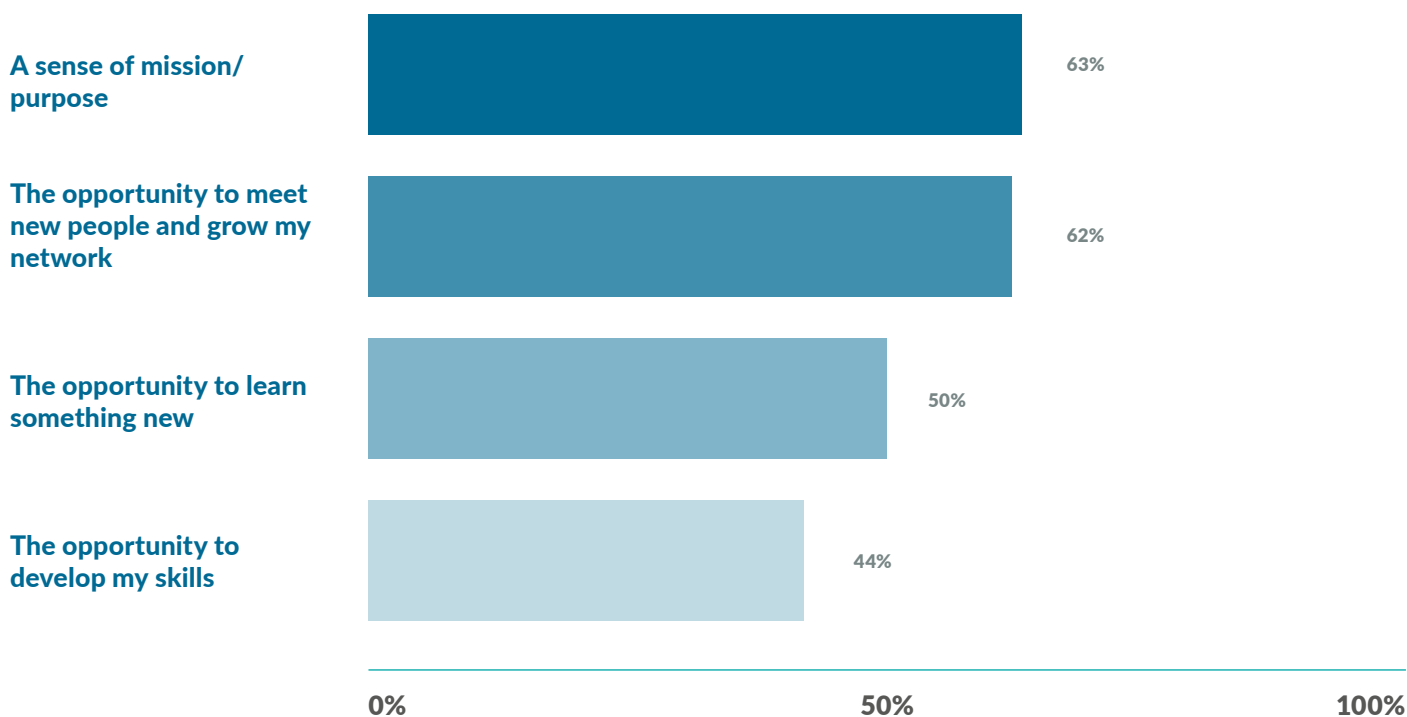
It has also enhanced their skills set. Nearly half (46%) per cent say it has helped them develop their communication skills and 45 per cent say it has helped them develop their relationship management skills.

Similar to other measures, the effect is more profound the longer they are in the role. For those in post for three or more years 54 per cent say it has improved their communication skills, 53 per cent say it has improved their relationship management skills and 30 per cent say it has increased their strategic planning skills.

Four in five (80%) say they want to continue in the role, nearly the same number (79%) would recommend it to someone else and 70 per cent say they have a good experience in the role.

Chart 1: Reported benefits of the EA role

## % EAs reporting each benefit



# Enterprise Advisers see positive impacts on careers provision and outcomes for young people which deepens the longer they are in role

Through their work supporting Careers Leaders and senior leadership teams, EAs are helping improve the delivery of careers education programmes in schools and colleges. More than three in five (61%) say their role is having a positive impact in helping schools improve their Gatsby Benchmark achievement.

Experience in the EA role is an important factor in helping improve performance and increase impact. The longer an EA's tenure, the greater their influence on improving the quality of careers provision and student outcomes.

More than four in five (81%) EAs who have been in the role for three or more years say they have helped increase their school's Gatsby Benchmark performance – this compares with 48 per cent who have been in role for up to a year. Sixty two per cent of those in the role for three or more years say careers education is now more of a priority for schools and college leaders – this compares with 47% who have been in the role for up to a year.

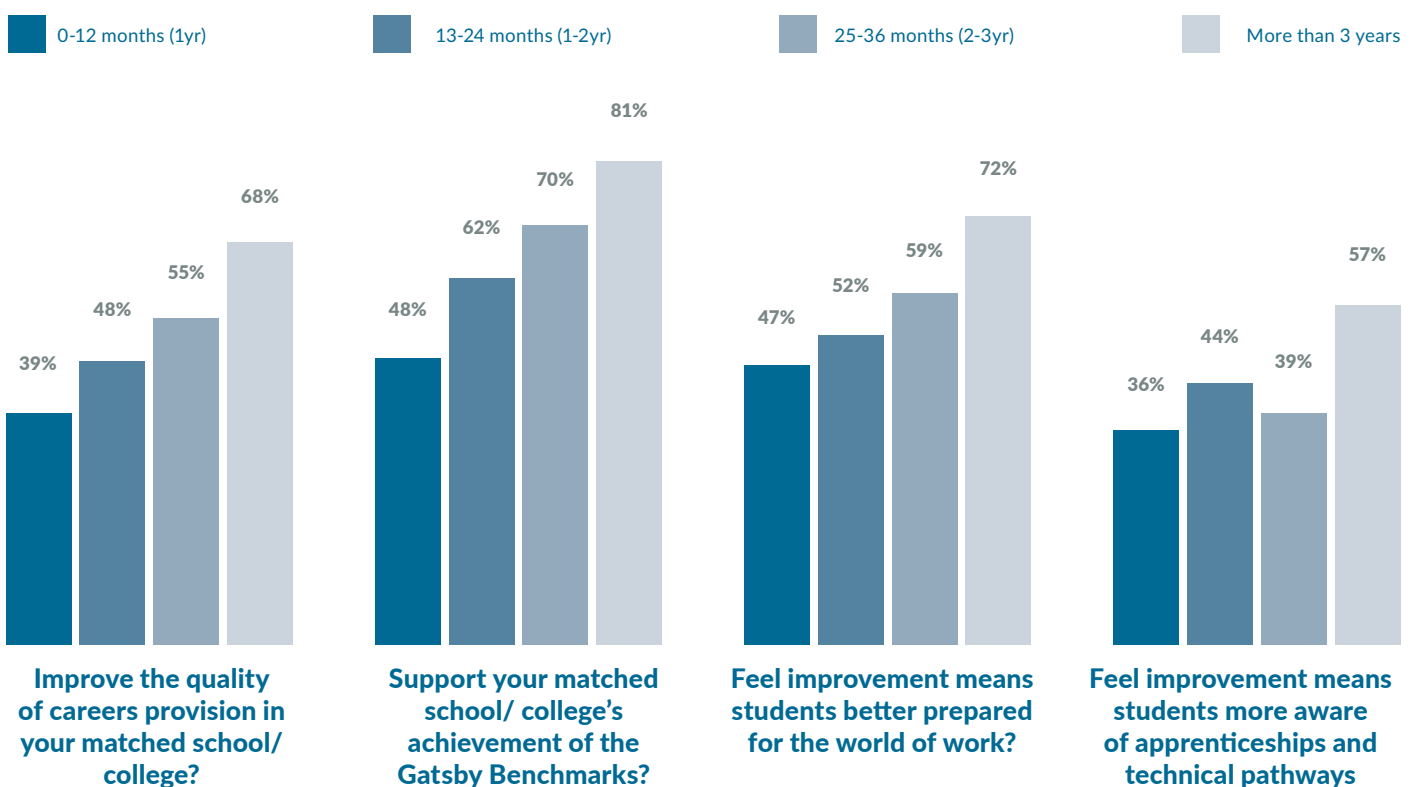
Nearly four in ten (39%) who have been in the role for up to a year say they've helped improve careers provision in their school. This rises to more than half (55%) who have been in post for two to three years and increases further to more than two thirds (68%) of those in post for three plus years.

A similar pattern is seen in the impact of EAs work on outcomes for young people. Nearly half (47%) of those in the role for up to a year say the improvement in the quality a careers education in their school or college means students are now better prepared for the world of work. This rises consistently with time spent as an EA, increasing to more than seven in ten (72%) who have been in post for three plus years.

Likewise, more than a third (36%) of those in post up to a year say students are more aware of apprenticeships and technical pathways, rising to 57 per cent of those in post the longest (3+ years).

Chart 2: Reported impact on institutions and students

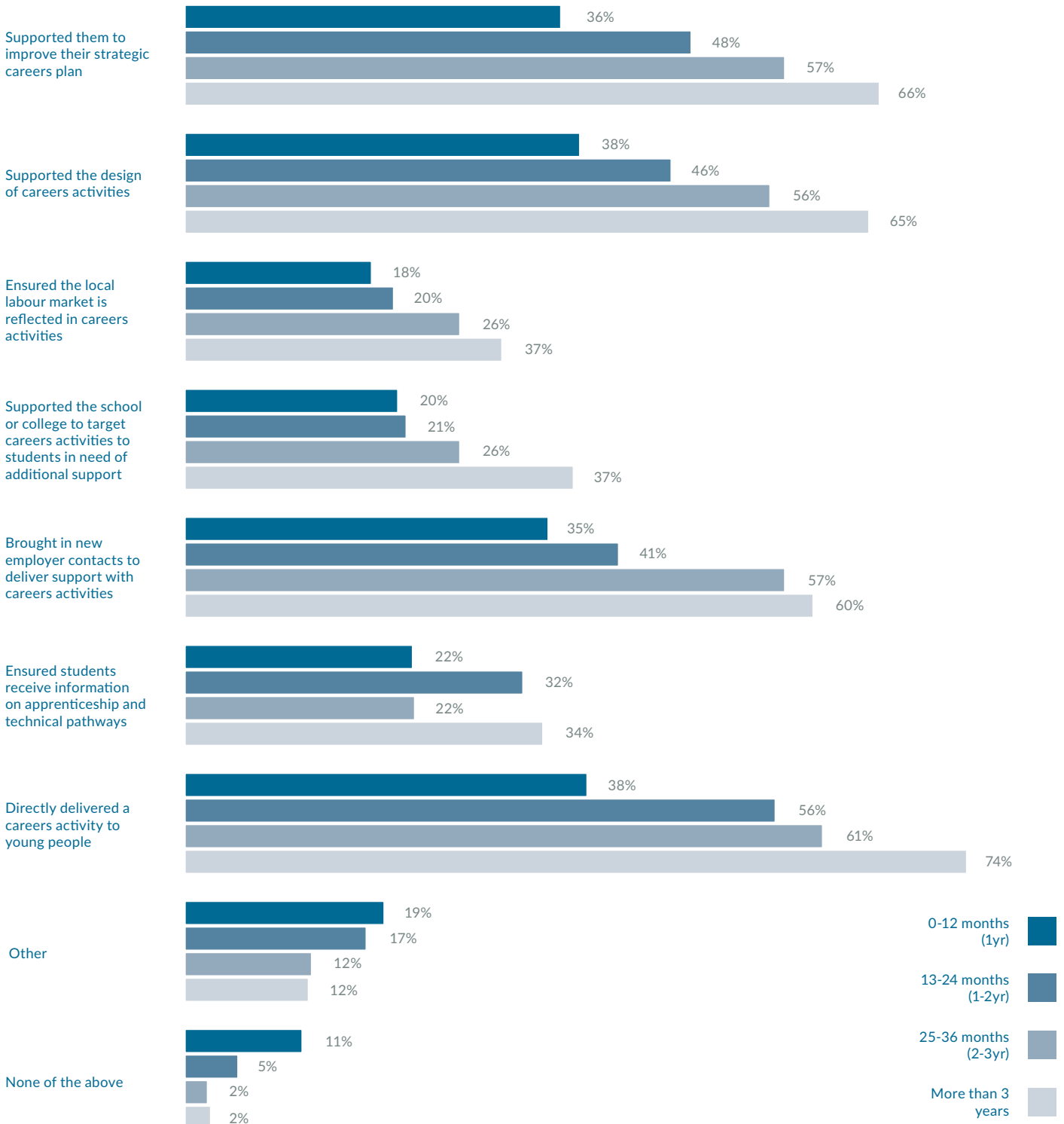
## % EAs reporting each impact measure



Source: CEC EA Survey 2023 (1149 responses; 1050 matched to an institution)

Chart 3: How EAs support the institution they are matched to

## % EAs reporting each support measure



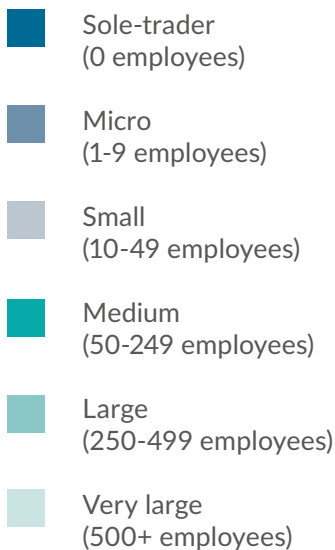
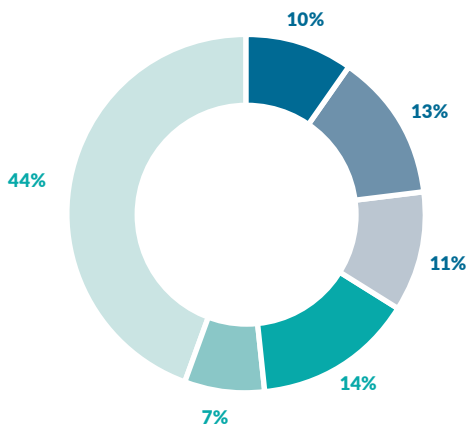
Source: CEC EA Survey 2023 (1149 responses; 1050 matched to an institution)

## Technical Note

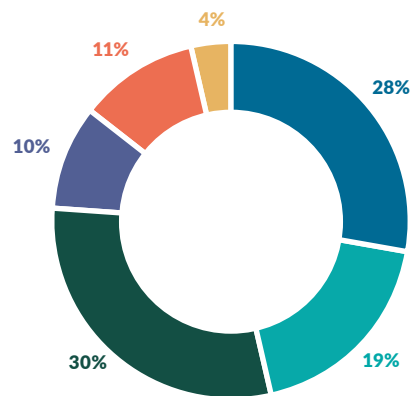
The Enterprise Adviser survey was open from February-March 2023. All Enterprise Advisers were invited to take part. 1,149 responses were received – 27% of the EA population.

A more detailed analysis of the sample shows:

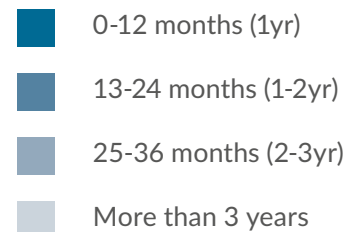
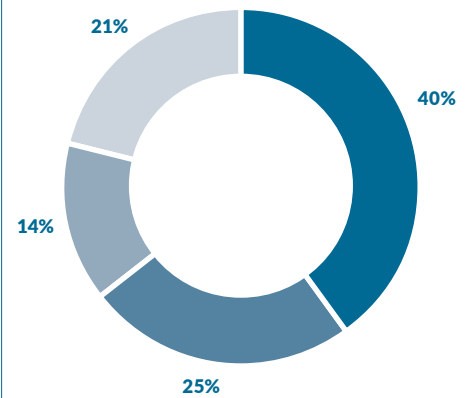
### What is the size of the organisation you work for?



### Which of the following best describes your current job role?



### How long have you been signed up as an Enterprise Adviser?



The background is a solid teal color with a pattern of fine, parallel white diagonal lines. Overlaid on this are several overlapping circles of varying sizes, also in the teal color. The largest circle is centered in the middle of the page.

**THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE**  
COMPANY