

# Closing the Gap

## Employer Engagement in England's Schools and Colleges in 2019

Employer engagement with schools and colleges is critical to the delivery of world-class careers education. In recent years, the number of employer encounters and workplace experiences that young people receive has increased significantly, aided by a system of national support and coordination.

But there is more to do – and we know what it will take to finish the job, enabling all young people to engage meaningfully with employers, so that they can be inspired by and better prepared for the world of work.

### 1. Employer engagement matters

The Government's Careers Strategy places employers at the centre of careers education for young people. This is because of the compelling evidence that exposure to business has multiple impacts, including a positive effect on young people's aspirations, awareness, skills as well as their attitude to studying.

Young people are now experiencing, and needing to adapt to, a fast-changing labour market. And we know that fewer young people are undertaking part-time employment in addition to their studies. This makes the need for high-quality workplace experiences and links to employers even greater during their education. Aside from the positive effects on young people there are benefits to business and to the employers that take part – by raising the skills of staff involved and by developing talent pipelines.

The Careers Strategy sets out an ambitious goal of providing at least one encounter with an employer per year for the seven years that young people spend in secondary and further education (a minimum of seven encounters), as well as at least two experiences of the workplace before they leave full-time education.



The Careers Strategy outlines the need for employers to offer a minimum of

**4 million**

employer encounters every year.

**1 million**

workplace experiences  
every year.

## 2. We are seeing progress

We track the volume of student engagement with employers through detailed data from 4,000 schools and colleges in England. Our analysis shows that more young people are now accessing employers during their time in secondary education than in recent years.

Four out of five young people now meet employers every year to learn about the world of work and two out of three leave school and college having had experiences of the workplace. In the last 18 months the number of young people who don't regularly meet employers has fallen rapidly.

Thanks to the efforts of employers this gap has reduced by nearly half in the past 18 months - from 1.2 million to 700,000 out of a total student population of 4 million.



Four out of five young people are meeting employers every year to learn about the world of work.



Two out of three young people are leaving school and college having had experiences of the workplace.



In 18 months young people missing out on an employer encounter has nearly halved



1.2 million



700,000

### 3. Closing the gap

Despite the significant improvement we are seeing, there is still a way to go. The final stretch of any journey can sometimes be the most difficult – but we also know there is a determination from both employers and educators to continue to close this gap and ensure every young person receives their minimum entitlement.

We will continue to support partnerships between employers and education to make this happen, and Closing the Gap highlights what we need to do to achieve this.

#### I. Increasing the number of opportunities available to young people

Over 200 larger companies have become 'Cornerstone Employers' in local areas, taking responsibility for delivering enduring business engagement. In recent months we've seen Small and Medium Enterprises step up in increasing numbers, with 1500 engaging through our Give an Hour campaign - delivered in partnership with Local Enterprise Partnerships. Many more employers are also supporting schools and colleges both directly and through some brilliant local and national programmes.

#### II. Increasing targeted efforts through coordination

We know local variations in coverage exist, for example:

- Only 1% of young people in Worcestershire miss out on employer encounters compared to 25% in the North Hampshire and South West Surrey area.
- 23% of young people in Hertfordshire don't get workplace experience compared to 49% in nearby Berkshire.

Our partnership with all 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships in England provides a structure to make connections at a local level and address imbalances.

#### III. Addressing the variation in experiences of different age groups

Young people aged 11 to 14 are most likely to miss out on employer encounters, whilst young people below the age of 16 are less likely to benefit from experiences of workplaces than those aged 17 to 18.

Closing the Gap enables us to pin-point gaps, by local area and by year group.

#### IV. Continuing to apply a focus on the quality of impactful experiences

Our work in supporting Careers Leaders in schools and colleges to identify and support individual students is an important foundation for this.

The growth and maintenance of the Enterprise Adviser Network including the role of Enterprise Coordinators is critical to achieving powerful connections between schools, colleges and business.



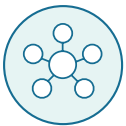
Learn more about how to [#makeadifference](#) by visiting [www.careersandenterprise.co.uk](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk)

# How to get involved



## 1. Give an Hour

Change the life of a young person, just by showing them what is possible. Your unique industry knowledge and experience as someone who owns or works for a business can make a difference to the options a young person considers for their careers.



## 2. Join the Network

Partner with an individual secondary school or college and use your business experience and networks to help them develop a strong careers programme.



## 3. Become a Cornerstone Employer

Combine your business passion for raising the aspirations of young people with your strategic skills to empower careers provision in your area.



Find out more by visiting [www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers-volunteers](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers-volunteers)

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