

A Review of Education Business Links in Norfolk

April 2007

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- support for the delivery of the work-related learning curriculum and enterprise education;
- work experience, its sourcing and delivery;
- professional development placements for teachers with employers;
- how employer links are sourced and resourced in practice.

Seven research questions were posed. Data was gathered during Spring 2007 via questionnaire, interview and focus groups involving stakeholder organisations, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers, young people their parents and carers.

**A Review of
Education Business Links
in Norfolk**

JB Consulting

April 2007

A Report Prepared for LSC Norfolk

by

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April 2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Review of Education Business Links in Norfolk was commissioned by Norfolk Learning & Skills Council and reported in April 2007. The purpose of the review was to inform Norfolk LSC's future strategy and decision making and commissioning EBL activity, recognising that the review has wider application in informing the 14 – 19 strategy, and operational practice, in the county. The review explored links between employers and the curriculum for the 14 – 19 phase of education in schools, colleges and other providers, including

- support for the delivery of the work-related learning curriculum and enterprise education;
- work experience, its sourcing and delivery;
- professional development placements for teachers with employers;
- how employer links are sourced and resourced in practice.

Seven research questions were posed. Data was gathered during Spring 2007 via questionnaire, interview and focus group from stakeholder organisations, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers, young people their parents and carers.

Key findings against research questions:

Q1. "How effectively do young people and their teachers and lecturers engage with employers within school or college learning programmes?" and

Q7 "Is the management and delivery of links between education and business for young people 14 – 19 in Norfolk providing a high quality and effective service and delivering value for money?"

The overall conclusion from the work undertaken during the review was that whilst most of the schools, colleges and employers consulted were engaged in a range of different types of EBL activities which are perceived by most as being useful in delivering work-related learning to young people 14+ and as being effectively organised and managed, it is evident that there is considerable scope for improvements to deliver higher quality and better "value for money" for the very large amounts of time and other resource currently being invested in EBL activity in Norfolk.

The various groups consulted in the review work were asked a number of questions designed to identify what those improvements might look like. The results are reported in the relevant chapters and brought together where appropriate in the list of recommendations at the end of the report about how education business links in Norfolk might be strengthened in the future.

Q2 “How are employer links supporting teachers and lecturers in developing their skills to deliver existing and proposed 14 – 19 curricula?”

Schools/colleges were able to identify only a few ways in which EBL activities had been useful in improving their ability to deliver work-related learning and the 14-19 curricula. There seems to be scope for greater exploitation of that potential, and some other interesting suggestions were also made about how to develop those abilities.

A large majority of the school/college participants in the review work said that they themselves were “very aware” or “aware” of the 14-19 reforms but almost half thought that other staff were not very aware of the reforms. The majority view among stakeholders was that schools generally are positive, though somewhat confused and uncertain about the future, and grasping at the implications of it all.

Q3 “Is work experience being effectively organised, resourced and evaluated?”

Taking the input from all of the various interests who contributed to the review together, it is evident that there are a number of key concerns about the organisation and resourcing of work experience, including:

- Employers facing too many approaches from individual schools and “self-generating” requests, in part due to a perception that Connexions on its own is unable to deliver an adequate supply of quality placements, which in turn is partly attributed to too much concentration of work experience demands in a limited time period of 10-12 weeks
- Inadequate preparation of pupils and setting of clear objectives etc
- Health and safety regulations which place significant constraints on what young people can do in work placements
- A perceived need for more streamlined H&S vetting procedures.

With regard to evaluation of work experience, whilst feedback systems are in operation, the review team felt that there is scope for improvement if the feedback results are to be considered sufficiently representative and reliable enough to base important decisions on them, including occasional analysis and reporting by independent evaluators. The review team also looked briefly at the situation with regard to evaluation of other EBL programmes in Norfolk, and it is generally recognised that there is not enough evaluation of wider and longer-term effects, primarily because of a lack of sufficient resource to carry it out or to commission it from elsewhere.

Q4 “What value is being added by work experience in the view of young people and their carers, teachers, lecturers and employers?”

4 out of 5 of all the young people taking part in focus group discussions who had been on work experience said that they had gained either some or a lot of

benefit from it and the vast majority of their parents/carers also thought that it had added value. Though amongst all of the interest groups consulted there were some substantial negative comments also, which are described in the report, Chapter 8 describes the numerous ways in which work experience is believed to benefit young people, in the eyes of the young people themselves, their parents/carers, schools, employers and key stakeholder organisations. The main ones relate to:

- Providing an awareness of the workplace environment, procedures, relationships, expectations etc
- Demonstrating the importance of key skills, reliability, personal organisation etc
- Improving confidence and self-esteem
- Helping young people to start thinking about their future, influencing aspirations and widening horizons
- Seeing the relevance of school, increasing motivation to achieve qualifications.

The review team also took the opportunity to ask about the usefulness and benefits of other kinds of EBL activity, and about their relative usefulness, and the findings are described in chapters 7-9, with the latter focusing on benefits to employers. Almost 9 out of 10 of the employers interviewed said that their organisation benefits either “a great deal” or “some benefit” from taking part in EBL activity.

Q5 What models of good practice in linking 14 -19 year old learners with employers exist nationally?

Apart from the 14-19 Pathfinder examples, the consultations with key players at national level produced little by way of concrete examples of good practice in organising EBL activities at a strategic/coordinating level, though some key principles were suggested which are explained in chapter 17. Not surprisingly perhaps, the examples of good practice identified by key stakeholders, schools/colleges and employers related mainly to local experience, and some of those are set out in Annex A.

Q6 “Are there employment sectors in Norfolk which are not being engaged and, if so, why?”

Nobody could identify sectors of the economy which are not engaged in EBL activity but a number of sectors were identified as ones where more opportunities would be welcome, especially but not only in rural areas.

The report was widely distributed and a seminar was held on 25 July 2007 to discuss the findings and consider ways forward.

OUTCOMES OF A SEMINAR HELD ON 25 JULY 2007 TO DISCUSS THE REVIEW OF EDUCATION BUSINESS LINKS IN NORFOLK

The seminar was convened by LSC Norfolk and included key stakeholders from Norfolk Children's Services; Connexions, The Exchange (Education Business Links Organisation for Norfolk); LSC regional and Norfolk teams; and the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce.

A discussion of the findings and recommendations in the review was led by John Barry, consultant, and further input was given by Caroline Williams, Chief Executive of the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce.

ISSUES ARISING:

Vision and strategy: There needs to be an overarching strategy for EBL in the county, with clear leadership from the 14 – 19 strategy groups. The strategy should be implemented through the 5 learning systems groups and each school should have an EBL plan which links through to the county-wide approach. The strategy should specify what it aims to achieve through EBL activity and how this will be monitored and evaluated. The strategy should specify what good practice actions it wants to promote, for example to embed work related learning into the curriculum and move away from a two week block at the end of the summer term. The strategy should explicitly link with related county wide strategies for skills development, economic prosperity and transport such as Shaping Norfolk's Future and the Norfolk community plan. This would give access to other funding opportunities.

Organisation of EBL: The idea of having an overarching body, with web presence, to promote EBL with end users and employers and be a first port of call clearing house was cautiously welcomed. It was felt that such a body should not be responsible for leading the interface with all employment sectors since this would conflict with long established FE College and employer partnerships (eg land-based sector work at Easton College). With new school/college consortia working to deliver the 14 – 19 reforms, there are opportunities to coordinate employer links between colleges and schools relevant to particular employment sectors. Outside of these partnerships, some co-ordination, particularly for work experience activity for schools, was necessary.

Relationship management with employers: It was felt that more work needed to be done with employers to generate 'co-ownership' of the issue of low aspirations and underachievement in the county and the knock on for the economy. It was recognised that working with young people was not right for all employers. It might be better to invest in training and developing key employers to generate high quality targeted links.

Work experience: The work experience placements currently outsourced by The Exchange to Connexions worked well with good health and safety and employer management procedures. This work is being brought in house to The Exchange for 2007/08. However there were problems when schools self-

generated work placements, often placing additional burdens on employers and with less security that placements were safe and appropriate. It was felt that more should be done to encourage schools to use the Exchange work experience programme. It was felt that schools could use wider definitions of work experience, eg using young people's experience of paid work, and of volunteering as contexts for work experience. It was strongly felt that work experience practice needs to move from a two week block at the end of the summer term to a much more flexible, integrated and personalised part of young people's learning experience.

Sharing resources and good practice: A view that good resources, procedures and practices, eg for carrying out health and safety checks, for pupil placement plans, for monitoring and evaluating placements (pupils and employers), personalised learning approaches and embedding work related learning into the curriculum were available in the county but these needed to be more widely shared. Ideas include DVDs and web based approaches and college tutors working with school staff on vocational programmes. There might be a role for a county-wide good practice conference to share practice and raise the profile of EBL.

Coordination of EBL: Agreement that EBL works best when there is clear strategic leadership in schools – ideally with a senior management champion in schools and someone to coordinate the whole work related learning curriculum (not just work experience). Current good practice in West Norfolk and elsewhere suggests that coordination might work best when based on consortia of schools rather than on individual schools – perhaps based on localities or consortia working together on new diplomas.

The role of the Learning Systems Groups: It was felt that local leadership of EBL was necessary and LSGs were the body to provide this. This is the approach being taken in West Norfolk. The LSG is responsible for local delivery of the 14 – 19 strategy of which EBL should be a component. LSG's can lead links with Local Strategic Partnerships joining up the wider skills and economic development agendas. Good practice of the 'Grow your Own' project in West Norfolk was cited.

ACTION

The issues and suggestions above will be brought together in an EBL section within the 14 – 19 strategy, currently being refreshed by the 14 – 19 strategy group and due to be considered at its October 2007 meeting.

A REVIEW OF EDUCATION BUSINESS LINKS IN NORFOLK

1. INTRODUCTION

JB Consulting was commissioned by LSC Norfolk in January 2007 to conduct a review of education business links in Norfolk, focusing on provision for the 14-19 age group. The background to the review and the research questions which it should investigate were set out in the project specification received by JB Consulting in early January.

The review team consisted of John Barry, who directed the project, and Malcolm Fender.

2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The project specification described the background to the review and its aim which was “to review education business links in Norfolk and to make recommendations for how these might be strengthened in the future”. It also stated that the research questions to be addressed in meeting this aim had been identified as:

1. How effectively do young people and their teachers and lecturers engage with employers within school or college learning programmes eg through work experience, work placements, teacher placements, enterprise education, increased flexibility programmes, young apprenticeships?
2. How are employer links supporting teachers and lecturers in developing their skills to deliver existing and proposed 14 – 19 curricula?
3. Is work experience being effectively organised, resourced and evaluated?
4. What value is being added by work experience in the view of young people and their carers, teachers, lecturers and employers?
5. What models of good practice in linking 14 -19 year old learners with employers exist nationally?
6. Are there employment sectors in Norfolk which are not being engaged and, if so, why?
7. Is the management and delivery of links between education and business for young people 14 – 19 in Norfolk providing a high quality and effective service and delivering value for money?

The review, and the questions posed, were seen to be timely given the proposals contained in the National LSC's publication in September 2006 of "Strengthening the Links between Young Learners and Employers", and the increasing importance of strong and coherent employer links to the 14-19 reform agenda, particularly the growth in the number of Young Apprenticeships and the introduction of specialised diplomas from 2008.

This report presents the findings from the work undertaken during the review. It is not the purpose of the report to focus on the detail of individual programmes, how well or otherwise they work, what changes might be made to them etc. The report on the whole takes a more strategic perspective. However, it does make a large number of references to some of these issues in outlining the contributions made by the different groups involved in the research, in order to do justice to their inputs and in recognition of the time and effort which a lot of very busy people gave to the review, for which the review team is extremely grateful. Specific questions were asked though about work experience and Professional Development Placements in particular, and the responses are reported. It was not the purpose of the review either to report on how schools and colleges are implementing the work-related learning agenda. Its focus was on education business links which are one important part of that agenda. However, participants were asked about awareness of the 14-19 reforms and about equipping staff to deliver them, and those responses are also reported on.

3. METHODOLOGY

It was agreed with LSC Norfolk that the work would be carried out in a number of separate, but interrelated, stages:

Stage One: Preparatory

An inception meeting was held with LSC Norfolk in mid-January aimed in particular at ensuring a common understanding of the LSC's requirements and expectations of the review, and providing background information and documentation for desk research.

Stage Two: Desk research

This was focused on a review of the documentation provided by LSC Norfolk and other stakeholder organisations, plus identification of good practice in other parts of the country obtained via discussions with contacts in DfES and other relevant bodies.

Stage Three: Discussions with key stakeholders

Face-to-face discussions were carried out with key individuals in a number of organisations involved in the planning, organisation and delivery of education business links in Norfolk. They were: The Norfolk Education Business Exchange, Connexions Norfolk, Norfolk Children's Services, the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, Norfolk Education Industry and Commerce Group, Norfolk representatives of Young Enterprise and Business in the Community, "Open Opportunity" in Norwich, and the two 14-19 Area/Learning Directors in West Norfolk. As was the case in all stages of the research, the discussion guide/questionnaire used was agreed with LSC Norfolk, based on a draft produced by JB Consulting.

Stage Four: Postal survey of schools and colleges

A postal questionnaire was sent to all state schools and colleges in the county. It was designed to address all of the research questions highlighted in the brief, and in particular to provide information on the respondents' roles vis-à-vis education business links in their institution, the EBL activities in which their institution gets involved, their views on the effectiveness of their links with employers, on what works well and what does not, and how they would like to see education business links develop given their increasing importance in the 14-19 curriculum.

The same questionnaire, 144 in total, was sent to two people in each institution. One questionnaire was sent to the 14-19 curriculum manager or equivalent, in all institutions. In half of the schools, a second questionnaire was addressed to the work experience coordinator, and in the remaining schools and colleges to a member of the teaching team who had in the last year or two been on a Professional Development Placement. The questionnaire was dispatched in early February, together with a covering

letter from LSC Norfolk and a stamped, addressed return envelope. A reminder was sent to non-respondents after three weeks.

Stage Five: Telephone interviews with employers and training providers

A telephone survey was carried out of 30 employers, and three training providers involved in provision for 14-19s, based on a semi-structured topic guide designed to address all of the research questions highlighted in the brief, but specifically from the employer/training provider perspective. The questionnaire was sent to them in advance for information but they were told that there was no need to fill it in prior to the telephone interview.

The employers to be approached were selected from lists provided by key stakeholders of employers that were known to have been involved in recent education business link activity of different types (work experience, enterprise activities, Young Apprenticeships etc). The selections were made to ensure a reasonable coverage of sectors, size and geographical locations within the county.

Stage Six: Face-to-face interviews with school and college personnel

The responses to the postal survey sent out to the schools and colleges were used to identify candidates for more in-depth discussions, assuming that they had indicated in their completed questionnaire that they would be willing to take part. A total of 19 schools/colleges across the county were visited in order to carry out face-to-face interviews with respondents whose responses to the postal questionnaire suggested fruitful avenues to pursue further with them. The aim of these interviews was to provide additional information about their institution's involvement in EBL activities, and to investigate in more depth issues around links with employers, the effectiveness of the various types of education business link activities, and the factors influencing it, and how interviewees would like to see education business link activity develop over the next few years. The interviews were based on a semi-structured topic guide agreed with LSC, and were carried out during March.

Stage Seven: Focus groups of learners

The postal questionnaire sent out to schools and colleges asked if respondents would be willing to arrange a focus group of their learners with recent experience of education business link activity. Experience has shown that focus groups of learners are not easy to arrange, and can be problematic in terms of securing actual attendance on the day because of the difficulties of fitting around students' timetables and break times etc. However, 10 focus groups were successfully conducted, involving a total of 79 pupils. Another was agreed but on the day it was discovered that it had in fact not been arranged. The groups ranged in size from 5 to 12 students. Two groups were all from Y10, six all from Y11, one from Y12 and one was a mix of Y10-Y12. There were 42 males and 37 females.

Topics for discussion included the participants' views on work experience, and their experience of other types of work-related activity.

Stage Eight: Postal survey of carers

Pupils attending the focus groups who had been on work experience were asked to take home a questionnaire for their parents/carers to complete and return to JB Consulting. In addition, where focus groups consisted of pupils who had not yet been on work experience, the school was asked to issue the questionnaire to 6-8 pupils who had done so for them to take home. The questionnaires were in a sealed envelope addressed to "parent/carer" which also included a covering letter from JB Consulting and a stamped, addressed return envelope. The questionnaire was anonymous ie it did not identify the school and it sought no details of parents'/carers names or other characteristics. It was designed to gather feedback from parents and carers primarily on their child's work experience but a few broader questions were also asked.

Response rates

Of the 144 which were dispatched to schools and colleges, 59 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 41%. Postal surveys often attract response rates in the region of around 10-15% so this response rate was very pleasing. It was particularly good given that all of the schools involved had been sent a postal questionnaire about work experience only three months earlier as part of a review being carried out to ensure fitness for purpose in the light of the forthcoming specialist diplomas which will require a different type of experience, together with funding pressures. Of course, even with a response rate of 41% it is not possible to argue that the picture which unfolds would not be different if all 144 addressees had returned a completed questionnaire. All of the points made in the report about the results from the postal survey need to be interpreted in the light of the 41% response rate.

The 59 respondents were from 50 separate institutions. At least one questionnaire was completed by two out of three of the institutions in the county. Responses were obtained from 32 of 52 secondary/high schools, 11 of 12 special schools, 2 of 4 Pupil Referral Units and 5 of 6 colleges.

Of 130 parent/carer questionnaires issued, 28 were returned (22%). Given the propensity of teenagers to "lose" letters etc from school before they reach home, or to "forget" to hand them over, this is a respectable response rate though clearly a higher one would have been preferable. Because it was an anonymous survey, there is no way of knowing whether those who returned completed questionnaires were fully representative of all those who, in theory at least, received one. The majority of the completed questionnaires (18 out of 28) were from respondents with children in Year 11, two were from year 12 and eight from year 10. All 20 from years 11 and 12 and three from Y10 had been on work experience with the remaining five from year 10 hoping to go later this year.

4. THE SCOPE OF EBL ACTIVITY IN NORFOLK

This section looks at what EBL activities are delivered in Norfolk, and the involvement in those activities by schools, colleges and employers in Norfolk.

The key stakeholders were asked to describe the range and scale of EBL activity for 14+ in which they were involved. The activities delivered by each organisation are described in the following paragraphs.

4.1 The key organisations and their programmes

The Norfolk Education Business Exchange Limited

The Exchange Consortium is the EBLO which was established in Norfolk when the government required each of the 47 local LSC areas to set up an EBL Consortium. The two largest programmes for which The Exchange is responsible are KS4 Work Experience and Professional Development Placements, for both of which it contracts with Connexions Norfolk (see below). The Exchange also hosts Norfolk Setpoint and CITB Construction Skills (see below).

Most programmes are delivered by the partner organisations which make up The Exchange Consortium, with financial support from The Exchange, and they are described below. During 2005-6, about 25,500 young people in Norfolk schools participated in EBL activities through the partnerships of employers, schools and organisations within The Exchange Consortium. Each year the programmes available via The Consortium are described on The Exchange's website, with individual contact details, and all schools in the county (usually the headteacher) are sent a paper copy also. A regular EBL newsletter is also posted on the website to provide details of forthcoming events and other news. The ways in which The Exchange is funded have changed in recent years with a greater need for schools and colleges to contribute to the costs of services received. Programmes which The Exchange itself organises include two enterprise activities:

“The Stock Market Challenge” – teams of 5 students, each with different roles assigned (Finance Director etc), who have performed well in the “Fantasy Shares League”, also run by The Exchange with the help of two local companies, engage in “real-life” share trading, competing against each other to achieve the highest total asset value at the end of a virtual week of fast-moving world events.

“The Prom” – a project-management based enterprise activity that brings team working together with problem-solving and other key skills, and in which students produce a plan for the forthcoming end of year prom.

Connexions Norfolk

Connexions has a contract with The Exchange to run two major EBL programmes, Work Experience and Professional Development Placements.

Block work experience can take place in either Y10 or Y11: it is for the school to decide. Connexions is contracted to deliver 9000 work experience places in 2006-7. However, schools are expected to use only about 8000 of these because many young people find their own placements. Connexions visits every employer prior to a young person taking up the offer of a work experience placement, in order to check that adequate health and safety and employer liability arrangements are in place. It also carries out those checks on other placements arranged by schools and colleges as part of the Increased Flexibility Programme (450 such visits since Aug 2006). Pupils going on work experience are given a Journal produced by Connexions which is to be filled in while on their placement.

Professional Development Placements are aimed at teachers, teaching assistants and support staff in schools, though those working in other areas of education (eg FE and Sixth Form College, Connexions Personal Advisers etc) can access the programme also. Connexions has a target which is set by The Exchange in respect of Professional Development Placements (in terms of the number of teachers going on a PDP, their duration etc).

Traditionally PDPs have consisted of individual placements but in recent years there has been increasing use of a group “off-the-peg” PDP programme. The list of group events is sent to schools every year: 20+ events were held during the 2005-6 school year. The programme is increasingly focused on the forthcoming specialist diploma lines and on supporting enterprise learning.

Connexions piloted a whole school PDP service with two schools last year when all staff, not just teaching staff, went on individual placements or in small groups on an INSET day and has since arranged for several other schools also to have whole school PDP days. There is also a Management PDP programme for headteachers and other school managers who attend employer-led workshops focusing on management skills, followed by individual placements focusing on particular managerial issues.

Norfolk is the most active county in the region in terms of the number and range of PDPs, and is one of the top performers in the country. Moreover, Connexions has supported the delivery of PDPs throughout the Region, helping to develop a consistent approach to organising and participating in PDPs within the Region.

Norfolk Children's Services

Norfolk Children's Services' Business Mentoring programme has been awarded the National Mentoring Awards' “Approved Provider Standard” by the DfES and Home Office, which is the benchmark for organisations providing mentoring. The programme used to be run on contract to the Exchange but when the latter's funding was reduced, NCS took it over. About 2-300 people have been police-checked etc and are available to act as mentors. In a typical year, 500-600 pupils in the 14-19 age range in local authority funded schools take part.

The Norfolk Reading Partner programme organised by NCS (there is now also a Numeracy programme) is aimed at primary schools. However, it is described as encouraging businesses to “dip their toe” in the EBL water who can then be encouraged to become involved more widely. The success of the programme in attracting volunteers from business means that, though still coordinating it, the local authority no longer advertises it because of a lack of capacity to cope with increased volumes.

Norfolk Education Industry and Commerce Group

NEICG is a registered charity run by three retired business people who organise enterprise activities for schools. It works with volunteers from about 35-40 businesses, mainly larger ones, in organising and delivering three types of activity in which over 6,500 pupils (including primary) took part in 2005-6:

- Business Enterprise days during which whole year groups of Y9 to Y11, arranged into smaller groups of about six each, engage in simulation/role playing activities. If the number of groups is large, then NEICG brings in some of its business volunteers to help. About 2200 students are expected to take part during 2006-7.
- “Preparing for Opportunities” is a programme for Y10/11 which helps students identify their own strengths and weaknesses, provides mock interviews and works on CV writing, telephone techniques etc. Groups of six young people work with an adviser for a full day.
- The Food and Farming Challenge, a national programme, in which businesses set students a real, work-related challenge designed to provide insight into and experience of the food industry. It is run as a competition and the finalists run stands at the Norfolk Show.

Funding of the organisation’s activities comes from The Exchange (this has been reduced in recent years) and the County Council, together with charges made to the secondary schools involved. There are also in-kind contributions from local businesses (eg rent-free use of the office in Norwich) plus some ring-fenced funding from the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Society and Norfolk Farm Education Link for the Food and Farming Challenge.

Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber’s main EBL programme, “WorkWise”, is financed via business contributions and charges made to participating schools, with a contribution from Norfolk LSC. Until July 2004 it was fully funded by The Exchange. It consists primarily of two personal development programmes aimed at 14-16 year olds and facilitated by business volunteers who have undertaken specific training. One programme is for those approaching GCSE examinations but at risk of underachieving, and is designed to “give them a boost to carry them through their GCSEs”. The programme is delivered by business volunteers who tend to be junior/ middle managers. 60-80 of these facilitators are trained

each year, and since Workwise was started in 2001, 325 facilitators from 212 businesses have received the training. Taking part in the programme requires a big commitment from an employer as it involves, for each facilitator, two days training plus two days delivery. However, it is said that businesses value the training, so it is seen as a “win/win” programme.

The majority of secondary schools in the county have been involved in the programme over the years, and about half of them are regularly involved: this year about 25 programmes are being delivered in 18 schools. About 20-25 young people are on each programme, about 500-600 in total this year. The programme was over subscribed this year, and the Chamber believes that it could have run 35-40 programmes if it had the necessary resources. The programme is usually delivered away from school premises.

The Chamber has also been piloting (with EEDA support) an extended WorkWise called “Ready for Work” for young people at risk of leaving education at 16, and designed to help them consider their next steps, and improving their life skills if they intend to leave the education system. The programme starts with a two day Workwise programme and then runs on over 90 hours/year (a weekly two hour session involving business volunteers) during which participants are given a range of challenges/ tasks to complete (eg CV writing, researching local employers, visits to workplace, taster opportunities etc). The pilot has been a successful one and the Chamber is seeking funds for a 4 year programme.

The Chamber has also been working with a secondary school in the county to develop a “Young Chamber”, one of 50 such pilots around the country announced in the recent Budget and aimed at bringing together young people and businesses at local level in a direct way, “supporting meaningful business engagement with teaching and learning” and “promoting connectivity between schools and business”. Norfolk was one of the first areas to be involved. Young Chambers are intended to provide a framework that brings together local Chambers of Commerce, business, schools and pupils, to develop and take forward enterprise initiatives within individual schools. Young Chambers in schools will work with their local business networks through their local Chamber of Commerce, meeting regularly to take forward their programme of activities which will be derived from topics that students are studying within the curriculum, issues generated by the students themselves, issues suggested by local employers etc. Young Chamber is seen as a vehicle that will place more power in the hands of young people as to what happens with schools’ enterprise funding, empowering them to ask questions about how EBL activities in the school fit into the wider curriculum.

Norfolk Setpoint

Norfolk Setpoint which is hosted by The Exchange runs a number of programmes to promote greater understanding of science, technology, engineering and maths among young people and their teachers. Some of its programmes (eg Young Engineers for Britain Challenge, Launchpad and Hands-on Science and Technology) are aimed at primary schools but

secondary schools take part in a number of other programmes including Family STEM days, the “Challenge Programme” (working alongside national civil engineering company May Gurney) and The NASA Experience. The Setpoint also works with Hospital Radio Norwich to enable students of all ages from schools and colleges around the county to set up and run “Exchange Radio”, a live radio station which broadcasts through the hospital network, and via the internet, for upto 70 hours. Training is provided to teachers and students by volunteers from Hospital Radio Norwich.

The Nuffield Science Foundation runs a bursary scheme for Y12 students studying science, technology or mathematics who can apply through Norfolk Setpoint for research opportunities with local companies. The work takes place during the summer holidays and lasts for four weeks.

CITB Construction Skills

This is also hosted by The Exchange. It arranges a variety of in-school activities and support including Skills Taster and Workshops, Rapid Response and the Construction Awards Scheme.

East of England Cooperative Society

The Exchange has a contract with the above to run “Embedding Enterprise in the Curriculum” which is a pilot programme currently involving two schools and involves working with teachers to develop enterprise capability.

Young Enterprise

Young Enterprise runs three programmes. The most well-known is the Young Enterprise Company Programme in which students in Y10-Y12 set up and run a mini-enterprise for a year, supported by business volunteers. The Exchange makes a substantial financial contribution to the programme which runs in FE and Sixth Form Colleges as well as schools (including private schools). There are opportunities to compete locally, regionally and nationally against other YE companies, and to attend local trade fairs/selling days, to sell their products. About half of those taking part compete or attend trade fairs, or do both. There is also an exam which participants can take, which provides an OCR-accredited qualification. Across Norfolk, 5-600 students are taking part in the Company Programme this year: 30-35 mini-enterprises have been set up in 20-25 schools (some schools do more than one at a time). The numbers have been greater this year than in previous years (400 last year) and it is believed that this is due to schools’ use of their enterprise monies.

There are also shorter 1-1.5 day programmes based around i) how businesses operate, ii) enterprise skills iii) creative design, marketing etc. The programmes are delivered by YE staff or by business volunteers, with about one volunteer per 20 students. This year in Norfolk about 700-800 students in Y9-10 will have taken part in these short programmes, in 6 or 7 different schools - sometimes a class of 30 or so, and sometimes a whole or half year group. Unlike the Company Programme above, the number of students taking

part this year was lower than previously (last year 1000 students). Though about half of all secondary schools are involved in the YE Company Programme, most are not involved in the short programmes. It is believed that this is largely because, with the advent of school enterprise budgets, there has been a large increase in the number of organisations offering these kinds of programmes, and schools have difficulty knowing which to take up.

The Young Enterprise “Masterclass” is aimed at Y12-13 though KS4 pupils can take part also. The young people are introduced to business people and spend time with them finding out “what makes them tick”. However, it was reported that there has been little demand this year so far, with schools saying that they have “almost shut up shop” because they are being flooded by approaches from organisations offering enterprise-based activities.

Business in the Community (BitC)

BitC used to organise a fair amount of EBL activity in Norfolk for the under-14s but not since the focus of government funding shifted to the 14+. Most BitC activity now is with homeless, ex-offenders etc, aimed at improving their employability.

Partners in Leadership which was coordinated by BitC paired up heads and business leaders who learned from each other. About 200 Norfolk headteachers were involved. Though the Programme is officially no longer running, it is still arranged occasionally if a headteacher specifically asks.

BitC played a key part in developing “CommunEcate”, the E-mentoring programme devised for the Norfolk 14-19 Pathfinder, to help pupils in schools primarily in rural areas to link with businesses. A large company in Norwich which is a BitC member worked with several secondary schools: about 12-20 pupils in each school were involved. Though the programme has been deemed very successful (it was identified as one of the “good practice” 14-19 Pathfinders), it has not been expanded to include more companies or more schools because it was perceived as requiring a great deal of time (from BitC personnel and the Norwich company concerned) to set up, operate and manage.

EDP Business Awards

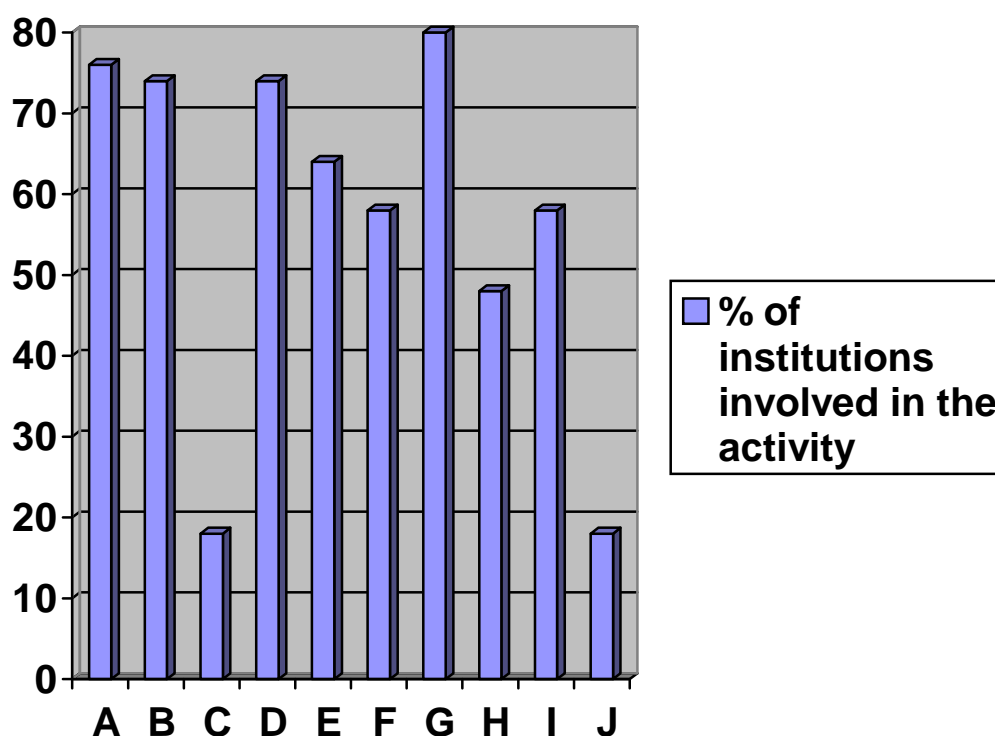
The Exchange sponsors the “Best Industry Education Link” category in the Eastern Daily Press Business Awards competition.

4.2 School/college involvement in EBL activity

This section presents the findings from the postal survey, supplemented where appropriate by information gathered during the visits. Q4 in the postal questionnaire which was sent to schools and colleges asked them to “*tick the boxes in the table below which best describe the different types of EBL activity in which your institution gets involved in respect of young people 14+*”. It also informed respondents that a later question asked about Professional

Development Placements. The bar chart below shows the percentage of the 50 schools/colleges ticking the relevant boxes. It should be borne in mind that FE colleges and Sixth Form Colleges are unlikely to have ticked the block work experience box, and that some special schools do not take part in it because they do not consider it appropriate for their pupils.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of schools/colleges involved in each type of EBL activity



Total number of institutions = 50

A = work experience; B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employers; E = employer/provider presentations in school/college; F = work-related problem solving; G = enterprise activities; H = mentoring; I = Increased Flexibility Programme; J = Young Apprenticeship

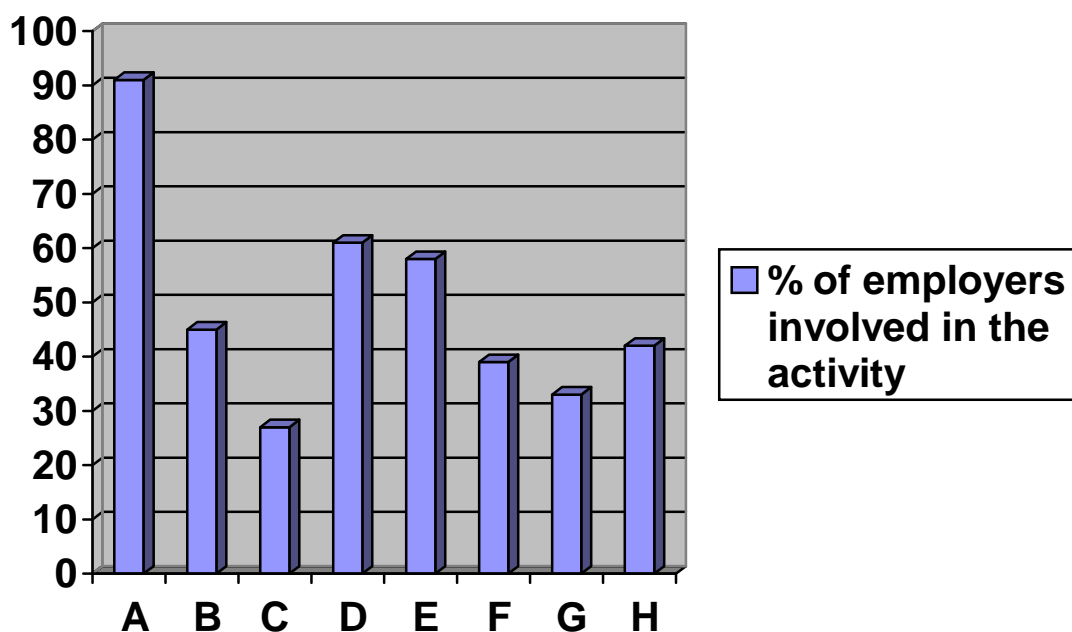
It can be seen that the majority of the 50 institutions take part in a range of activities. Of the 50 institutions which responded to the questionnaire, 40 of them took part in enterprise activities, followed closely by “block” work experience (38), “other work placements” (day a week etc) and “visits to employers”. A majority also included employer presentations, work-related problem-solving and the Increased Flexibility Programme in their EBL activity. It was evident from the school visits that several schools had significant numbers on “enhanced” IFP-type programmes eg a day a week at college plus one or two days a week on placement with an employer – one school had 20% of the year group on this kind of “package”, not including those on IFP itself. Numbers on such programmes were expected to increase next year as IFP funding declines.

The question also asked them to describe any EBL activities in which their institution gets involved but which were not in the table. Other activities mentioned included: employer involvement in curriculum design; mock interviews (four mentions); CV writing; careers fairs; visits to sheltered workshops; the Student Apprenticeship scheme; “Workwise”; “Preparing for Opportunities”; “Make Your Mark”; “Stock Market Challenge”. It became clear during the school visits that some schools had subsumed mock interviews and CV writing within “enterprise activities

4.3 Employer involvement

During the telephone interviews, employers were asked the same question as that posed to schools and colleges in terms of participation in EBL activity. The chart below indicates the percentage of the 33 interviewees who said their organisation gets involved in the various EBL activities in respect of young people 14+.

Figure 4.2: % of employers involved in each type of EBL activity



A = work experience; B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employer premises; E = employer/provider presentation in school/ college; F = enterprise activities; G = mentoring; H = PDPs.

Activities mentioned by employers which were additional to those included in the questionnaire were: careers fairs (9 mentions); “Workwise” (5); Mock interviews (4 – it is likely that some others included them within enterprise activities); “The Prom”; The Stock Market Challenge; Young Apprenticeship; NHS Ambassador Programme; Taster tents (a construction company erects a tent in school grounds: several schools attend on different days, and small groups take turns to sample different trades).

It is clear that the majority of the 33 organisations taking part in the telephone interviews (30 employers and 3 training providers) were involved in a range of different types of EBL activity:

- 13 employers (40%) were involved in six or more types of activities
- 22 employers (66%) were involved in four or more types of activities
- only 3 employers were engaged in just one activity (block work experience).

What is perhaps even more surprising is that, though the larger employers were generally involved in a wider range of activities, it was not the case that small employers necessarily restricted themselves to just one or two. Indeed, two employers with just 5 and 25 employees engaged in 5 and 6 different types of EBL activities respectively, and two other employers with 9 and 12 employees were involved in four different types of activities.

Of course, a different picture might have emerged if the employers taking part in the survey had been a purely random sample taken from, for example, the local Yellow Pages. However, it had been agreed at the outset that the resources available for the research with employers should be focused on those known to be involved in EBL activity because of the need to seek feedback from them about effectiveness of support arrangements etc. Efforts were made to identify a small sub-sample who might have been expected to be involved in EBL activity and were not, but this did not prove possible.

4.4 Summary of main findings on the scope of EBL activity in Norfolk

The majority of the 50 schools/colleges which participated in the review work take part in a range of activities. 4 out of 5 take part in enterprise activities and almost as many in block work experience, other work placements and visits to employers. A majority also include employer presentations, work-related problem-solving and the Increased Flexibility Programme in their EBL activity.

The majority of the employers interviewed also take part in a range of different types of EBL activity, with two thirds of them having been involved in four or more types of activities. Only 10% of employers were engaged in just one activity ie block work experience. Moreover, though the larger employers were generally involved in a wider range of activities, it was not the case that small employers necessarily restricted themselves to just one or two. Indeed, two employers with just 5 and 25 employees engaged in 5 and 6 different types of EBL activities respectively.

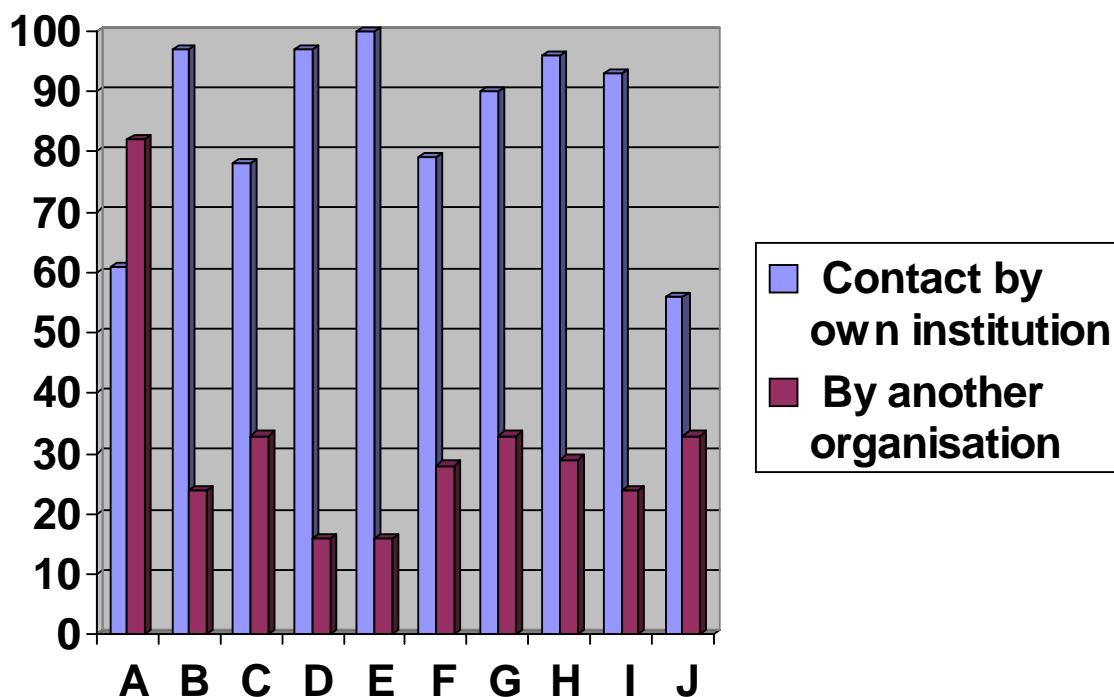
5. WHO INITIATES THE EMPLOYER CONTACT?

5.1 Initial contact on behalf of schools/colleges

As described later in the report, a majority of employers stated that the volume of contacts and requests from individual schools and colleges is an issue for them. In order to provide a broad indication of the extent to which schools and colleges approached employers directly rather than via a third party, respondents to the postal survey of schools and colleges were asked to indicate for the different activities whether the initial contact with the employer to discuss their possible involvement is made directly by the school or college or by another organisation.

The bar chart below indicates the responses given in terms of the percentage of schools and colleges which offered the relevant activity.

Figure 5.1: Proportion of schools/colleges reporting initial contact made by their own institution or by another organisation



NB: Numbers do not add to 100% because many ticked both boxes eg as confirmed during the school/college visits, block work experience is sourced via various different routes, including a high percentage of self-generated (pupil/parent etc) placements.

A = work experience; B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employers; E = employer/provider presentations in school/college; F = work-related problem solving; G = enterprise activities; H = mentoring; I = Increased Flexibility Programme; J = Young Apprenticeship.

As can be seen in figure 5.1, for every activity a majority of schools/colleges reported that they themselves make initial contact with employers, and for five of the 10 activities the proportion exceeds 90%. Not surprisingly perhaps, the activity for which another organisation made most of the initial contacts was block work experience, with 82% of the institutions which offer it stating that the initial employer contact was made by another body. Interestingly though, almost half also indicated that their own institution made initial employer contact for block work experience. It is quite clear that for all activities other than block work experience, the number of institutions making direct contact with employers far outweighs those indicating the involvement of a third party.

During the school visits, where the interviewee had indicated in the completed postal questionnaire that for one or more activities the school initiates the contact with the employer, they were asked what are the advantages/disadvantages of doing it that way rather than via a third party. Typical responses in terms of advantages were:

- *Connexions cannot cope with the numbers (block work experience)*
- *Because otherwise it takes too long and businesses want things to get going once you've got them on board (other placements)*
- *It enables us to form a better, closer relationship, understand each other's expectations and requirements which are communicated directly with no information loss through a third party*
- *Gives us company contacts for future use; can build up a bank of good, reliable employers who we know and trust, and we can have greater control over who the company sends*
- *Gives the school greater control over the outcomes and quality*
- *Better familiarisation with placement personnel and placement roles provided for pupils. Able to make better judgements about the quality and relevance of a placement when you know about them personally. Able to match placements with the needs of pupils when we know the placement at first hand*
- *We can ensure that the provision will be relevant and directly related to the needs of our pupils*
- *Pupils show greater motivation, commitment and perseverance when they have arranged their own placement, and employers seem more likely to take our pupils that way than when another organisation does it. The employer understands who they are taking on and what will be involved (special school)*
- *Avoids the charges made by third parties*

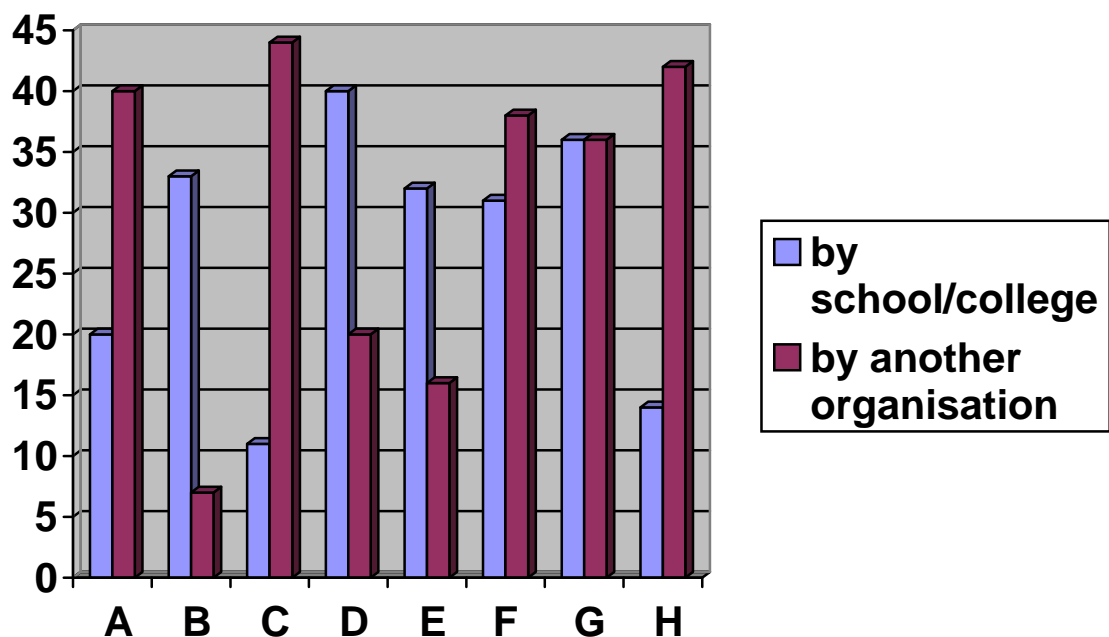
The main disadvantage of doing it directly related to time and resource eg

- More work for the school generally (*“though using third parties can sometimes be more time-consuming sorting out problems”*)
- Outside organisations have more time and resource to identify and weed out weak/poor companies, and are able to supply a replacement company if a problem occurs.

5.2 The employer perspective

Employers/providers were asked whether the initial contact with them about particular EBL activities was made directly by an individual school or college, or by another organisation. The responses are set out in the table below. The bars indicate the percentage of employers who stated that initial contact, in respect of the individual activities in which they were involved, was made only by schools/colleges or only by another organisation.

Figure 5.2: Proportion of employers reporting initial contact made only by school/college or only by another organisation



NB: Numbers do not add to 100% because many employers reported a mixed picture regarding source of initial contact.

A = work experience (block); B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employer premises; E = employer/provider presentation in school/college; F = enterprise activities; G = mentoring; H = Professional Development Placement

Some employers said that all initial contacts about becoming involved in any EBL activity came from a third party whilst others said that all the contacts came from individual schools. However, for the majority of employers, the picture in respect of all activities was more mixed. In the case of work

experience, for example, 20% of employers said that the initial contact comes only via schools, and 40% said all initial contact comes via a third party. . However, 40% said that it was a mixture of the two. In a few cases it is the employer/training provider who tends to approach the school with regard to a particular type of link activity. 10% of employers said that initial approaches about block work experience came primarily from young people themselves, or in a few cases via parents/relatives who were employees. In a few cases, young people had also made the initial contact about other work placements or work shadowing. With regard to EBL activities not listed in the table, the approach about taking part in careers fairs was always via schools directly, and for “branded” activities (eg Workwise, The Prom, The Stock Market Challenge) it was by the sponsoring organisation concerned.

5.3 Summary of main findings on contact with employers

It is quite clear that for all EBL activities, employers are receiving a considerable volume of initial contacts/enquiries directly from schools/colleges. This has implications for the pressures on employers, for the resources devoted to that contact activity by schools/colleges, and for impact on perceptions of effectiveness of EBL support arrangements, all of which are discussed further in the later chapters.

6. HOW SCHOOLS ORGANISE AND MANAGE THEIR EBL ACTIVITIES

During the school visits, interviewees were asked to describe their role in the school with regard to work-related learning and education business links, and about who else in the school was involved in forming links with employers and/or training providers. The visits were limited in terms of both time and the number and range of people interviewed and therefore the findings cannot be represented as a comprehensive picture of the different “models” in operation. However, enough information was gathered to give an indication of the wide variety of ways in which schools are organising and managing their EBL activities. These range from a relatively small number of schools which take a fairly coherent, holistic approach to WRL/EBL, as evidenced in some by the WRL Excellence Award, to others where some departments and staff were said to have taken it on board much more than others. Indeed, several of the key stakeholders observed that in some schools EBL activity is “in a silo”, with perhaps just a few teachers actively involved in one or two specific, long-standing employer links. However, there is no doubt that with the high profile afforded to work-related learning over the last few years, and the attention being paid to the 14-19 reforms, the situation is evolving.

There appeared to be a range of “models” in operation:

- Some schools have a dedicated WRL/Enterprise/EBL coordinator who is a non-teacher. Whilst this might have advantages in terms of the greater time available to support staff who do not have teaching duties, some of those coordinators feel isolated and lacking status, with some feeling that a lot of the teachers do not understand their role or attach much importance to it. In addition, though they do not have teaching duties, often they are part-time and find they have insufficient time to carry out the tasks required, which vary from one school to another eg
 - a) In two schools, the support staff coordinator organises the IFP (including work placements) and block work experience, plus Y9 options
 - b) In another, the same functions plus being the Connexions coordinator, responsible for arranging interviews with the Connexions PA
 - c) In another, the support staff member has the title “Flexible Learning Coordinator” and coordinates IFP plus a vocational sixth form programme (organising their work placements), but a teacher who is the WRL coordinator organises work experience
 - d) In one school, a full-time member of the support staff coordinates block work experience, other work placements, mentoring etc and carries out monitoring visits
- In a number of the schools visited, several people had EBL-relevant responsibilities but, though a member of the SMT may have oversight, there appeared to be no other structure for coordinating their activities,

and given teaching duties often not a great deal of time to carry out the allocated functions. Some examples are:

- a) The head of business and enterprise is the school's enterprise coordinator, assisted by a deputy who helps with enterprise activities. A teacher in another department is the school's WRL coordinator. In addition, the school has a full-time member of the support staff who finds work placements and is the coordinator for the IFP but who does not report to either of the two coordinators
 - b) The head of pre-16 organises business mentoring, extended work placements etc, the head of careers coordinates work experience, and the director of the sixth form arranges work shadowing opportunities
 - c) The head of faculty for humanities and citizenship has responsibility for WRL, enterprise, careers and links with employers for vocational courses, plus management of the work experience coordinator
 - d) The head of vocational faculty covers WRL and related placements, enterprise activities, visits and speakers, and also line manages the head of careers who in turn manages a non-teaching work experience coordinator
 - e) A class teacher is the careers and work experience coordinator and there is a separate WRL coordinator but the two have very little contact
- In other schools, a deputy or assistant headteacher has overall responsibility for WRL, with several different teaching and support staff responsible for work experience, other work placements, mentoring etc

Five Norfolk schools have, with support from The Exchange, been through the Work-Related Learning Excellence Award which is coordinated by the Centre for Employment and Industry at the University of Warwick. Three achieved the "Best Practice" standard and two the level 2, "Developing". Four more are at the consideration/initial planning stage. The first stage of the process involves self-assessment with consultant auditor support funded by The Exchange. Each department within the school explores what it does in terms of work-related learning, including how it is organised and managed.

During the 14-19 Pathfinder in West Norfolk, four schools had a joint Business Link team which worked on their behalf to recruit employers for EBL activity. Since the end of the Pathfinder period, each school has instead employed its own 14-19 individual. In the Kings Lynn area, where the Post-Inspection Action Plan highlighted the need for better links with employers, two Business Links people, who both work part-time, were appointed to work on behalf of the schools in the area, but during the fieldwork a certain amount of dissatisfaction was expressed at how that was working out in practice.

Taking on board some of the lessons learned from those two initiatives, "Open Opportunity", the 14-19 Partnership of five Norwich schools plus City College

Norwich, has agreed to appoint and jointly fund an EBL Manager who will work on behalf of the five schools and in close cooperation with CCN's main broker. The intention is that they should be seen as the natural "port of call" for the recruitment of employers and for employers wanting to be involved in EBL activity. They will also be the link with the main EBL organisations.

Synopsis on how schools organise and manage EBL activity

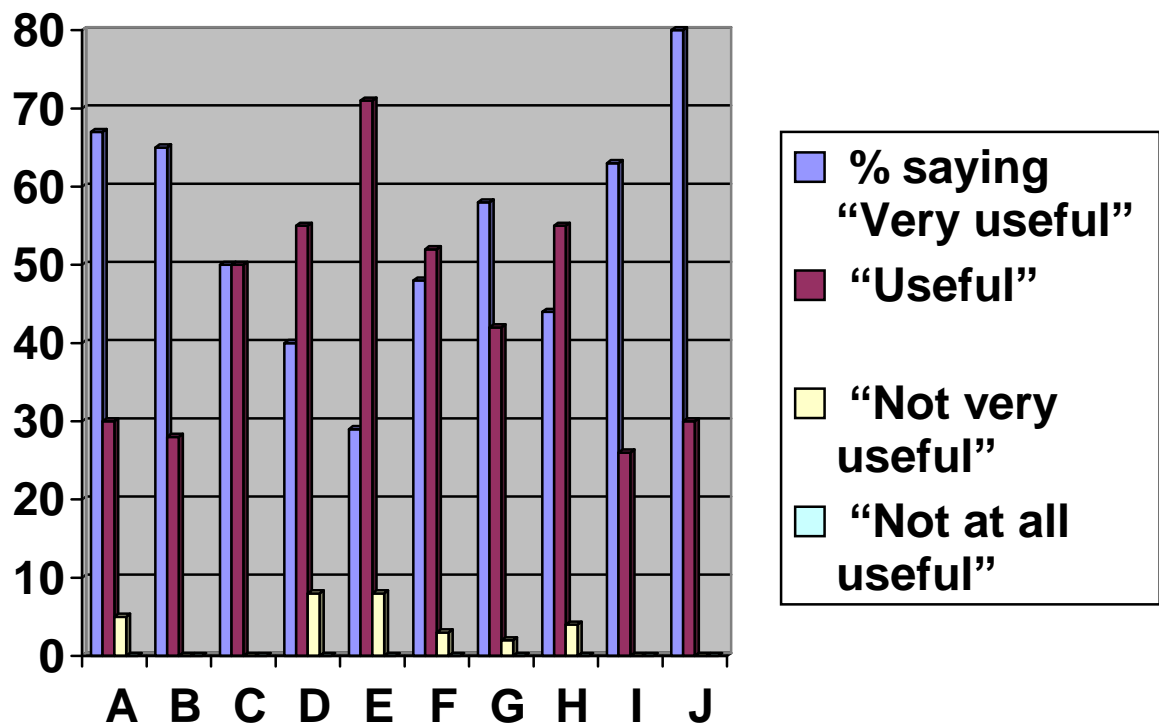
The findings in this chapter relating to how schools organise and manage their EBL activity can in no way be represented as a thorough, comprehensive picture of the different "models" in operation, mainly because of the limited time available to the review team to look at those issues, given all of the other questions to be addressed. However, enough information was gathered to give an indication of the wide variety of ways in which schools are organising and managing their EBL activities. These range from a relatively small number of schools which take a fairly coherent, holistic approach to WRL/EBL, as evidenced in some by the WRL Excellence Award, to others where some departments and staff were said to have taken it on board much more than others, and where responsibilities are spread between a number of people without necessarily much coordination or communication between them. It was clear though from the fieldwork, that the high profile afforded to work-related learning and the attention being paid to the 14-19 reforms means that the situation is steadily evolving.

7. THE VALUE OF EBL ACTIVITIES

7.1 Perceptions of schools/colleges

The diagram below shows how schools and colleges responded to the question in the postal survey, “Please tick the boxes in the table below which best describe how useful you think the different types of EBL activity are in delivering work-related learning to young people 14+”. (The next chapter explores in more detail the benefits and added value of work experience in particular). As this question was about perceptions, the results are presented in terms of respondents rather than institutions since the respondents in the nine institutions which submitted two completed questionnaires may have held different opinions about the value of an activity. The bars show the % of respondents giving the relevant answer as a proportion of those stating that their institution took part in that particular activity.

Figure 7.1: Proportion of school/college respondents describing individual activities as “very useful” etc



NB Percentages do not add to 100 because some respondents did not tick a box for an activity in which their institution was involved, and some respondents ticked both “very useful” and “useful” – in both cases it was evident that some had done this because they felt that the answer could range from “very useful” to “not at all useful” depending on the relevance and quality of the placement.

A = work experience; B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employers; E = employer/provider presentations in school/college; F = work-related problem solving; G = enterprise activities; H = mentoring; I = Increased Flexibility Programme; J = Young Apprenticeship.

It is evident from figure 7.1 that almost all respondents viewed all of the activities they were involved in as either “very useful” or “useful”, with Young Apprenticeships gaining the largest proportion of “very useful” ratings, followed by block work experience, other work placements and the Increased Flexibility Programme. Visits to employers and employer presentations were both rated as “not very useful” by 8% of respondents who use them, and block work experience by 5%. No respondents awarded any activity as “not at all useful”.

Comments made about the usefulness of activities not listed in the table were as follows:

- Workwise – very useful (three mentions)
- “Preparing for Opportunities” – *“very good preparation for work experience”* (three mentions)
- Stock Market Challenge – very useful.

A number of respondents explained why they had rated some activities as “very useful” or “useful”:

- *the excellent quality of provision increases motivation (Young Apprenticeships)*
- *extremely motivating, boosts staying-on rates (IFP)*
- *motivates our learners to be independent and use their initiative (enterprise activity days)*
- *all of our activities are very useful because we target our learning around the specific needs of individuals (several special schools mentioned this).*

During the school and college visits, interviewees were asked to say which EBL activities they considered to add the most value, and why. The responses, with some individual comments, can be grouped as follows:

- Extended work placements (several mentions) – *when tailored and properly organised, give young people a tangible feel for what the world of work is about; but not block work experience eg construction work is not the same in winter as summer; they provide a more realistic experience which has not just been manufactured for the individual for two weeks*
- Block work experience (several mentions) – *see a big difference when they get back to school, in attitude, aspirations etc; the issue with extended placements is timetabling; acts as a motivator for the final year of GCSEs*
- A few identified both work experience and extended placements as having the biggest impact on attitudes to/perceptions of work and a few also identified IFP

- Hands-on activities (several mentions) - *even if it is an employer visit to the school, or vice versa, still need to make it hands-on*
- *Training provider presentations outlining all their opportunities, as long as they are good at presenting*
- *PDPs are very useful for collecting/producing up-to-date materials/resource packs for using in the curriculum rather than having to take pupils on a visit or getting employer to come into school, and for getting contact names for other employer help.*

Respondents were asked, for any activities where they answered “not very useful” or “not at all useful”, to explain their answer. The explanations included:

- *not always possible to find the most suitable placement (block work experience)*
- *students learn more by doing rather than being spoken at (employer presentations)*
- *dubious quality of visits to employers*
- *disappointing quality of mentors.*

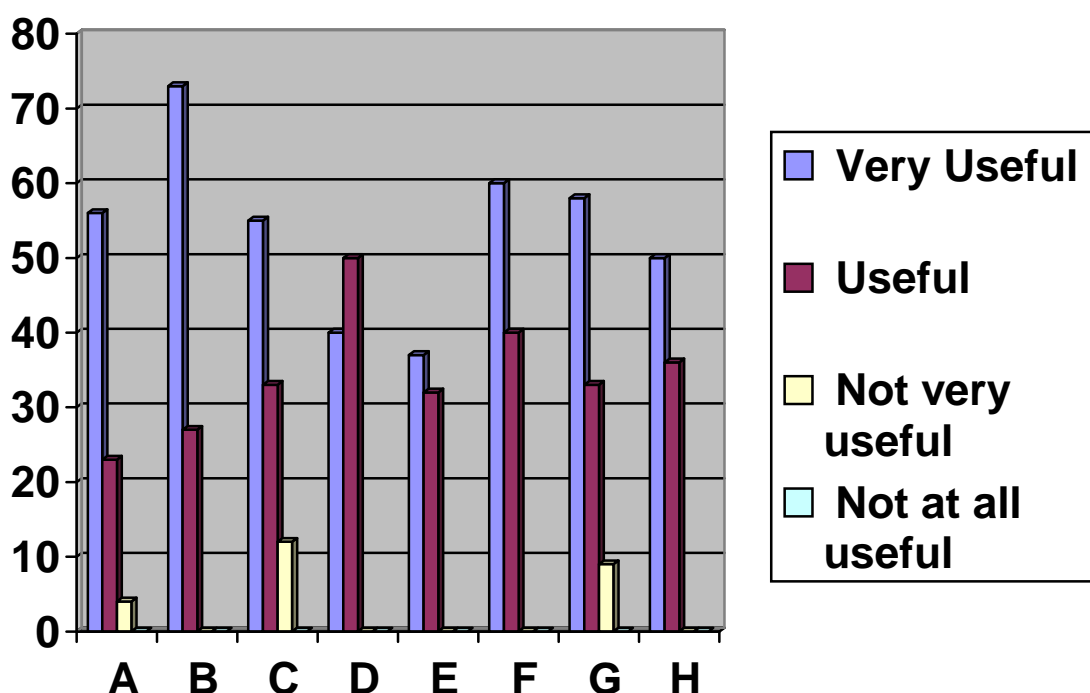
Explanations of why some EBL activities had been identified as not very useful were pursued further during the school and college visits. The range of responses provided can be summarised in a number of broad themes:

- *Block work experience – many who want placements in construction, motor vehicle etc end up in retail, particularly those who do not find their own placements; they are just getting used to it when they have to leave, so extended placements are better*
- *Work shadowing – much of it is just observing rather than doing anything so the young people get bored*
- *Work-related problem solving – OK if set up properly but needs a lot of preparation to secure involvement, especially of lower ability ones*
- *Employer presentations – most presenters do not have the right techniques for engaging with young people; they talk at them- and in rural Norfolk, not very relevant for big companies to talk to them; an hour’s input is not going to drastically change views of young people with low aspirations*
- *Workwise – good for participants but lot of work involved for the school and needs school representative there for the two days; it is expensive; we need to do it for the whole year group not just 25 of them*
- *NEICG enterprise days – pupils would take to it better if the presenters were younger, more dynamic and in-tune with their attitudes and interests*

7.2 Employer perceptions

Employers and training providers were asked a very similar question about the usefulness of different EBL activities, and the responses, as a proportion of those involved in the individual activities, are set out in the bar chart below.

Figure 7.2: Proportion of employers involved in individual activities describing them as “very useful” etc.



A = work experience (block); B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employer premises; E = employer/provider presentation in school/college; F = enterprise activities; G = mentoring; H = PDP

Columns do not always add to 100% because some employers said “it depends/ there is no one answer” (eg one in six made this point in respect of block work experience). Relevant comments included:

- *With block work experience, it depends on the attitude of the young person, whether they really want to be there/have a genuine interest or whether it was all that was left; can be very useful but it needs to be properly planned and varied*
- *With presentations/visits to schools, it very much depends on the help given by the school*
- *PDPs can be useful and most work well but sometimes teachers need to be better prepared before they arrive and should dress and behave appropriately*

Again, it is clear that the vast majority of employers view the EBL activities in which they are involved as either “very useful” or “useful” in delivering work-

related learning to young people 14+. Perhaps logic suggests that if they did not take this view, they would not be involved in them, but what is interesting are the reasons why the various activities are perceived in the way they are.

Some comments explaining why activities were rated as “very useful” or “useful” were:

- Young Apprenticeships - *the most successful programme we have ever come across, the young people coming on it are really motivated to do well*
- PDPs – *removes misconceptions which teachers had about the industry*
- Employer/training provider presentation in school/college – *we are told that pupils get a different perspective about work expectations when the message comes from employers*
- Enterprise activities – *helpful to work with different adults who harbour no preconceptions about them*
- Workwise – *completely different to anything else the young people experience, especially the underachievers*

The usefulness of EBL activities not included in the table was rated as follows:

- Careers fairs - 1 very useful, 3 useful and 1 not very useful
- Mock interviews – 2 very useful and 1 useful
- Workwise – 4 very useful
- Young Enterprise – 1 very useful
- Stock Market Challenge – 1 very useful, 1 useful.

A couple of more general comments were:

- *“They are all very useful in different ways but it can be much more influential working with the teacher, and not just on Teacher Placements”*
- *“Hands-on activities like placements and tasters are more useful than other types of activity”.*

Employers were asked, where they had answered “not very useful” or “not at all useful”, to explain why. Their explanations were as follows:

- Block work experience: *we struggle to keep them busy – 14/15 is too young for this kind of environment, we are going to restrict it 16+ in future; so much is done on computers these days and we are limited in what real work we can give them on computers because we cannot allow them to log onto the system*
- Work shadowing – *constraints (H&S, time) make it difficult to cater for school age pupils*
- Mentoring – *it needs better targeting – some need mentoring to boost their confidence and self-esteem but others are very competent anyway and don’t really need it*

- careers fairs – *the young people are often not “primed”, they show little interest; they ought to be more targeted.*

7.3 The perceptions of the key stakeholder organisations

Stakeholders were asked what kinds of EBL activities they believed are the most and the least effective in delivering work-related learning, and why. Two general points made by most of the key stakeholders about what made for the most effective EBL activities was that they should: a) be hands-on/experience-based, or where young people can interact with the employer/employee eg work placements, tasters, mentoring ie not, for example, where an employer just talks at them b) be based around a programme which has been agreed between schools and employers, with clear objectives and roles etc, and with proper support from school (eg *“teachers not disappearing to the staff room”*).

The least effective were perceived to include the one-size-fits-all, traditional talks/ presentations to school assemblies or full year groups, particularly if they involve the use of “tired”, out-of-date, old-fashioned materials. It was observed that this can be rather delicate as some employers will only offer a ‘talk about their company’. They can however be made more effective if they have a clear focus and purpose, with both school and employer being clear what they are trying to achieve with the talk or presentation. The importance of avoiding the use of “old-fashioned” materials point was said to apply equally to other activities, and some enterprise activities in particular were heavily criticised for being led by people to whom the pupils had difficulty relating to and who seemed to have out-dated views of workplace norms and expectations.

7.4 The views of learners

The focus groups of learners were asked, apart from block work experience, what other kinds of contact with employers or training providers their school had organised for them, and which of those kinds of activities are the most and least helpful in preparing them for the world of work. A sizeable minority of the learners either did not respond or said “none”. However, the types of activities that were mentioned most frequently as having been organised for them were: mentoring, other work placements in conjunction with a college course, enterprise activities and careers fairs. Work experience and other work placements were clear front-runners in terms of being viewed as the most helpful, though a number of learners also said that visits to, and presentations in class by, employers can be very helpful if they are made relevant to, and linked in with, topics being covered in the curriculum. Activities identified by some of the learners as not being very helpful were:

- mentoring – an observation made in several of the groups was that mentoring involves too much time out of the classroom, requiring work to catch up, though others did not make this kind of comment
- enterprise activities – though not a majority view among the learners overall, one group had done an enterprise day and some had found it

“boring, not a lot to do, the business people didn’t do much”, and in another group most seemed to agree with an observation that enterprise lessons “seem a lot of the time to be used for just catching up on other work”.

When asked what else could be done to prepare for the world of work, suggestions made by learners and generally supported by those around them included: start it a lot earlier eg in Y7; more placements with a better variety of tasks within them; bring in more employers to talk about jobs in different industries; more interview practice; more information about apprenticeships/better balance in advice about options.

7.5 Views of parents/carers

The questionnaire for parents/carers focused largely on work experience and that feedback is reported in the next chapter on the value of work experience. However, to ascertain what value parents/carers attach to preparation of young people for the world of work, apart from work experience, it also asked them, if the young person was or had been involved in other ways of preparing for the world of work, how much they thought that he/she was benefiting from that. 17 of the 28 responded to this question and 15 of them felt that it offered “some” (3) or “a great deal” (12) of benefit. The two who felt it offered no benefit did not explain why they felt that way, but typical responses from those who saw “a great deal” or “some” benefit in preparing for the world of work were:

- *He likes practical stuff and can see how it will help him*
- *He is trying to gain as much experience as possible and show enthusiasm for trying different things*
- *Increased understanding of what is expected in the work place*
- *She is doing one day a week at college through the school – doing a junior course at what she wants to do, so gives her a great insight.*

When asked a related question, “Schools are starting to develop more ways for young people to learn about the world of work. Do you agree that this is a good idea?” 26 of the 28 respondents agreed. There was a range of suggestions in response to the follow-up question, “What do you think would be the best way to do this?” They included:

- *The three days at school, one day at college, one day work experience which starts in Y9 is an excellent opportunity for some children. My niece has done this and it has been very good for her*
- *Business/enterprise projects which create a work environment*
- *Some children should finish education earlier and go for an apprenticeship. In some cases the last two years of education is wasted trying to get unwilling teenagers to toe the line*
- *Team Building exercises, learning to work together regardless of how you feel about someone.*

7.6 Part-time jobs

During the school/college visits, interviewees were asked what role they felt that part-time jobs can play in work-related learning, and whether they try to realise that potential. Most, though not all, felt that they can have a part to play, and several that they can bring significant benefits, similar to but not the same as formal work experience, in terms of learning about the world of work. Wider benefits could be realised as well: for example, class or group discussions of work-related issues can make use of the experiences of those with part-time jobs eg in citizenship/PSE/ career /business studies lessons, sharing their views on what it has taught them about such issues as employee rights, responsibility and accountability, reward /sanction systems, dealing with people, attitudes and social skills, use of technology etc. However, several made the point that those with part-time jobs seem to be in the minority in KS4 (and very few in Y10 for age reasons), and so thought is required as to how to effectively involve the majority who do not. Some said that they could probably do more to realise the potential offered by part-time jobs but others were not convinced of the value, and emphasised the issue of pupils finding the right balance between the demands of the job and their school work.

The focus groups were also asked about part-time jobs, and whether the school/ college asked how they helped preparation for working life. Overall, about 1 in 3 had part-time jobs and could see what they taught them about the world of work, but the majority of them said that they are not asked about them at school or college.

The questionnaire sent to parents/carers asked how useful a part-time job is in preparing the young person for the world of work. 20 of the 28 respondents to the survey answered this question and 19 of those said either “very useful” or “quite useful”. The main benefits related to: budgeting and money management; increased confidence, greater understanding of work values/ work expectations, and more focused career choice.

7.7 Summary of main findings on the value of EBL activities to young people

Nearly all of the school/college personnel and employers taking part in the review work viewed all of the activities in which they were involved as either “very useful” or “useful” in delivering work-related learning to young people 14+. Most of the key stakeholders believed that the most effective EBL activities are those that are hands-on/experience-based, with clear and agreed objectives and roles for those involve, and that the least effective are the one-size-fits-all, traditional talks/presentations to school assemblies or full year groups, particularly if they involve the use of “tired”, out-of-date, old-fashioned materials.

Learners see work experience and other work placements as the most helpful EBL activities, though a number of learners also said that visits to, and presentations in class by, employers can be very helpful if they are made

relevant to, and linked in with, topics being covered in the curriculum. The great majority of parents/carers who took part in the survey actively supported the idea of preparing young people for the world of work and made a number of suggestions about how that should be done, apart from by work experience which is the subject of the next chapter.

8. THE BENEFITS/ADDED VALUE OF WORK EXPERIENCE

The specification for the review included the question, “What value is being added by work experience in the view of young people and their carers, teachers, lecturers and employers?” This chapter brings together information about perceptions of the benefits and added value of work experience which has been gleaned from all of the various sources involved in the review.

8.1 The perceptions of schools and colleges

The postal survey of schools and colleges asked recipients to outline the two most important ways in which they believe work experience benefits young people. The two most frequently mentioned types of benefit (each mentioned by one in three respondents) were:

- Provides an awareness of the work environment, procedures, systems, relationships etc
- Demonstrates the importance of key skills, punctuality, reliability, self-presentation, personal organisation etc.

The next two most frequently mentioned benefits (mentioned by 1 in 4) related to:

- Providing experience of “real “ situations/a reality check (clearly some link with awareness of the work environment above)
- Helps them to start thinking about, or think more about, their future career/widens their horizons/ reinforces or changes their perceptions about particular types of job.

Other benefits, again related to the above, were:

- Provides a sense of their own worth/boosts their confidence/self-esteem/ independence (mentioned by 1 in 6)
- Raises aspirations/increases motivation/seeing school as useful/wanting to do well in GCSEs (1 in 6)
- Learning to be part of a team (1 in 10)

The discussions during the school visits largely confirmed these perceptions. In addition, many interviewees volunteered comments about the relative merits of block work experience and extended placements, and though opinion was clearly divided on that, a majority of interviewees seemed to favour the latter. One interviewee, for example, said that the school had stopped doing the two week block work experience because “*it was all shops*”, another that it will drop it next year and instead spread the two weeks across KS4, with the timing, sector etc tailored to individual learning pathways, and another that extended placements can be matched more effectively to the needs and aptitudes of the individual and provide “*a more realistic experience which has not just been manufactured for the individual for two weeks*”.

8.2 The views of learners

The focus group discussions with learners which gathered their perceptions of what work experience had added to their school experience (those who had done it) or what they hoped to gain from it (if going this year), corroborated what the school postal questionnaires had suggested. 4 out of 5 of those who had been on work experience said that they had gained either some or a lot of benefit from it. Comments about its added value (often made by just two or three in the group but supported by nods of the head etc) can be summarised as follows:

- *Helped me decide/gave me ideas about what I want/do not want to do after school (the most responses)*
- *Removed the stereotype of what particular industries/jobs are like*
- *Learned that in any work, there's a wide range of occupations and range of tasks*
- *Lots of variety, saw different jobs being done*
- *Made me realise that I have to work hard to get good qualifications otherwise I will end up there*
- *Made me focus more on the subjects required to get the job I want*
- *Gave a sense of independence and a taste of adult life*
- *Increased confidence*
- *Experience of working with customers and in a team*
- *Trusted to handle money and use the till.*
- *Practice for interviews*

Comments from those who had not found the experience beneficial included:

- *A place I didn't want to go to eg wanted construction but couldn't get it, ended up in a shop/working with old people*
- *Given jobs that they wouldn't give to the employees eg cleaning out the stock cupboards, given menial jobs; just stacking shelves all the time*
- *Wanted to use equipment/machinery but not allowed because of health and safety*
- *Boring, nothing to do, repetitive, treated like slave*
- *You didn't know what you could and couldn't do, nobody told you*

The focus groups were asked what could make work experience more useful. Most provided no response but the suggestions from those that did can be grouped as follows:

- *Make it paid!*
- *A wider choice of placements*
- *More information about the placement before deciding*
- *Better preparation*
- *Make it longer to give more time to get into it*
- *Make the length optional*
- *Several said "if it has to be two weeks, then do two different things eg one in a shop, one in a factory"*
- *More variety in the tasks involved*

- *Keep you occupied all the time, more work to do*
- *School staff should have visited earlier, too late to change what I was doing*

Those who were due to go on work experience later in the year, in some cases just a few weeks after the focus group, were asked what they wanted to get out of doing it. The comments were mainly on the lines of:

- *Hope it will increase confidence*
- *Responsibility, independence, maturity.*
- *Experience of outside life, adult environment*
- *Help in working out what job to do/find out if I would like the area I feel I am interested in*
- *Find out how work compares with school, what's expected of me at work, see if I can handle pressure*
- *Skills of working with customers and in a team*
- *See how companies work/see different jobs in action*

8.3 The views of parents/carers

The survey of parents/carers asked whether they had been happy with their child's placement, and if not why not. (It is important to bear in mind when looking at the results from the parents/carers survey that, though the overall percentage response rate was above average for a postal survey, the absolute numbers returning completed questionnaires were small and the findings should be treated with a degree of caution). Of the 23 parents/carers whose children had been on work experience, 21 were happy with the placement and two were not happy. The reasons given by the two who were unhappy were that:

- a) the pupil had not been able to carry out any tasks of importance due to insurance reasons and
- b) the daughter had been placed with a hairdressing salon where the full time staff did not speak to her, where people were not pleasant or encouraging, and where she felt she wasn't taught anything.

In response to the question, "Afterwards, was there any difference in their attitude to school, behaviour etc", of the 23 who responded three said there had been a great deal of difference, eight had seen some difference in attitude, three "a little difference" and nine no difference at all. In other words, about half said that they had noticed "some or "a great deal of difference" in attitude to school, behaviour etc following the young person's work experience.

The three parents/carers who had noticed "a great deal" of difference explained: *he had become more focused and confident about his future; it made him realise how important it is to get qualifications to pursue a career; he had hated school and was now prepared to try more in year 11.* The eight who had noticed "some difference" said: *applying himself more in different subjects; maturity; she could now see a point in taking her exams; gave her a*

reason to get on and get the grades she requires for college; more confident (3 mentions), improved social skills. At the other end of the scale, of the 11 who said that there had been little or no difference, only five gave a reason for their answer. The most common response was that they considered that the young person already had a good attitude.

Parents/carers views were also sought on what value they feel work experience can add to a young person's education. 26 of the 28 respondents thought that it added "a lot" (19) or "some" value (7). Of the 19 who relied "a lot", the typical responses were:

- *Gives experience of a genuine working environment*
- *Prepares the student for the world of employment, if organised properly.*
- *Helps them decide whether this is something they want or do not.*
- *Enables them to see what is expected of them in the workplace*
- *Teaches the importance of punctuality, respect and communicating with people of different ages*
- *Gives some the impetus to try harder at school.*

The few parents/carers who thought that work experience added little or no value commented:

- *Little to none for bright students. Due to Health & Safety they can do very little and not the job they intend to do*
- *There are not enough placements. There is shelf-filling at the local supermarket. It would be better if they had a wider range of placements, to give a good perspective of the work available.*

8.4 Employer perceptions of benefits to young people

Employers were asked to outline the two most important ways in which they think that work placements benefit young people. Inevitably this question attracted a wide range of responses but a number of underlying themes were apparent, each mentioned by a number of respondents as being the most important benefits:

- *provides young people with a better understanding of the working environment, knowledge of how business/industry operates*
- *an opportunity to learn about the type of environment they may/may not want to work in after school*
- *helps them grasp expectations about standards of behaviour etc in the workplace –punctuality, being organised, time management, team working, interaction with customers, dealing with the challenges/ pressures of working a full week*
- *builds their confidence/ self-esteem, gives a sense of achievement*
- *being treated like an adult, often for the first time*
- *helps them see why school is important, what qualifications they need, makes them want to do better.*

Overall there was divided opinion about the usefulness of block work experience – the majority said it was very useful/effective in influencing young people’s aspirations etc but several made comments like “awful as it is currently delivered” or a “lost opportunity” eg often not tailored to interests/aspirations, employers needing better briefing on its importance, what it is designed to do, what they are expected to do etc.

8.5 Summary of main findings on the benefits/added value of work experience

4 out of 5 learners who had been on work experience said that they had gained either some or a lot of benefit from it, but a number of negative comments were also made about lack of choice etc. The vast majority of the parents/carers whose children had been on work experience reported that they had been happy with the placement, (as reported later, about half were “self-generated”) and about half said that they had noticed “some or “a great deal of difference” in the young person’s attitude to school, behaviour etc following work experience.

Overall there was divided opinion among employers about the usefulness of block work experience – the majority said that it was very useful/effective in influencing young people’s aspirations etc but several clearly believed that there was a lot of scope for improvement.

The main ways in which work experience is believed to benefit young people, in the eyes of the young people themselves, their parents/carers, schools, employers and key stakeholder organisations relate to:

- Providing an awareness of the workplace environment, procedures, relationships, expectations etc
- Demonstrating the importance of key skills, reliability, personal organisation etc
- Improving confidence and self-esteem
- Helping young people to start thinking about their future, influencing aspirations and widening horizons
- Seeing the relevance of school, Increasing motivation to achieve qualifications.

9. BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS OF EBL ACTIVITIES

Employers were asked “How much does your own organisation benefit from taking part in EBL activities?” The vast majority (29 out of 33, or 88%) said that their organisation benefits either “a great deal “ or “some benefit”, as shown below.

A great deal	13	Of little benefit	2
Some benefit	16	Not at all	2

Examples of the reasons given for saying “a great deal” or “some benefit” are:

- *I can see a great deal of benefit but some Directors have difficulty because there are no instant returns to helping 14-15 year olds*
- *We want to do more of it, to get the company better known to help with our shortages but also to improve our image in the community*
- *The industry has a relatively bad press and EBL activity helps raise the profile in schools and gets more young people interested in us; enables the company to counteract the bad press that we get*
- *Strategically it is about positioning ourselves at a time of skill shortages, providing maximum exposure of the sector within schools with minimum impact on resources*
- *Opens pupils’ and teachers’ eyes to the wide range of jobs/opportunities in the industry, much wider than they think*
- *Our staff have gained a lot from the training provided which would cost a lot more if we went outside for it*
- *Good publicity, capturing customers when young, and recruiting some of them later*
- *Good community relations, part of the recruitment process, and we also use it as a coaching and training tool for developing our own staff*
- *We use it as a means of introducing variety into the work and increase staff motivation*
- *Helps us complete the necessary work.*

Reasons for saying that EBL activity delivered little or no benefit included:

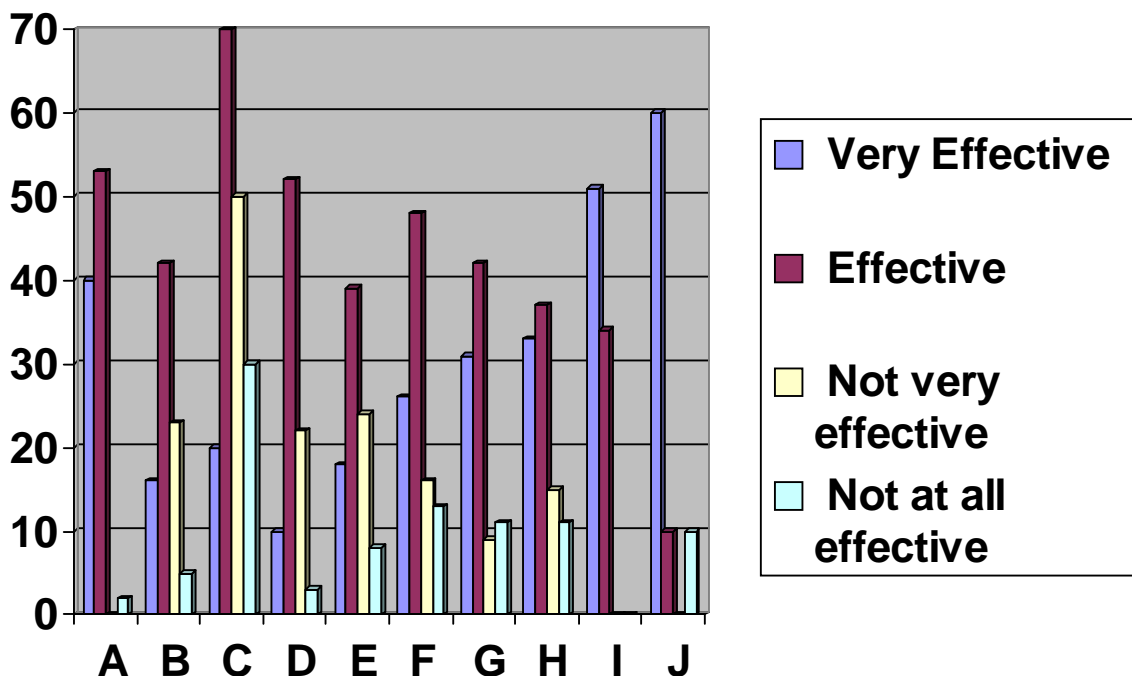
- *We have to supervise them closely all of the time, it diverts focus away from getting the job done*
- *Always have to be thinking what we can give them to keep them busy*
- *A little benefit, putting something back into the community, but it’s quite labour-intensive*
- *Not much really, though it might give junior staff a feeling of responsibility.*

10. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EBL SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

10.1 School/college views on the effectiveness of EBL support arrangements

The postal survey sent to schools and colleges asked respondents to state how effective they think the support arrangements are for organising the different types of EBL activity in which they are involved. As in the chapter on the usefulness of EBL activities, the numbers in the bar chart below are percentages and relate to respondents rather than institutions.

Figure 10.1: Proportion of school/college respondents describing the support arrangements for individual EBL activities as “very effective” etc.



NB: Numbers do not add to 100 because some respondents did not answer for all of their activities, and some respondents stated a view though their institution does not engage in that activity.

A = work experience; B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employers; E = employer/provider presentations in school/college; F = work-related problem solving; G = enterprise activities; H = mentoring; I = Increased Flexibility Programme; J = Young Apprenticeship.

As shown in figure 10.1, the majority of respondents viewed the support arrangements as “very effective” or “effective” for all activities, with block work experience (93%) and the IF Programme (85%) gaining the highest scores with lower numbers, though still a significant majority, for work-related

problem solving (74), enterprise activities (73), mentoring and Young Apprenticeships (both 70). The figures for work shadowing look odd, with large percentages saying “not very effective” or “not at all effective”. Only nine schools/colleges are involved in work shadowing, but a lot of respondents who do not offer it provided a rating of the effectiveness of support arrangements. Part of the explanation could be of course that some respondents would like to offer that activity but do not, attributing this to lack of support in trying to set up such arrangements. Other activities awarded relatively high “not very/not at all effective” scores are “other work placements”, employer presentations and work-related problem solving, at about one third of respondents each. Not far behind were visits to employers, mentoring and enterprise activities.

Respondents were also asked to explain their answer if they had described support arrangements for any activity as “not very effective” or “not at all effective”. Explanations included:

- *Nobody has responsibility for setting up “other placements”, no help from outside in finding placements; very difficult to find a variety of work placements in a rural area*
- *It takes far too long, and a lot of “hassle”, too many forms etc, to set up “other placements”*
- *Connexions is now much better and providing relevant good quality placements for our pupils but they just do not react quickly enough when we need H&S checks (recurrent theme) or seem capable of providing placements on individual basis which meet the specific needs of the individual*
- *No external support in setting up work shadowing, doing H&S checks etc*
- *The EBLO is becoming less effective as its funding is reduced*
- *I’m given just one hour a week to organise it all (clearly some respondents were describing internal as well as external support arrangements)*
- *There is a lack of support in arranging visits to employers and employer presentations in school, it is left to the initiative of individual staff*
- *We have to make all the arrangements ourselves, takes a great deal of time*
- *We need more help from outside in finding employers willing to respond favourably to our special needs pupils*
- *Two special schools said that no EBL organisations are used to access any of their activities*
- *One college said “don’t know” to all “because we don’t get any support”.*

Comments made by those describing support arrangements as “very effective” or “effective” included:

- *Connexions support in finding employers for block work experience and doing H&S checks etc is very helpful*

- *The Connexions link person is very knowledgeable about our students (special school)*
- *Support from Connexions in relation to PDPs is "fantastic" but their PAs should link with employers more to become more knowledgeable and up-to-date about the labour market*
- *The Exchange is very helpful in providing contacts for employer visits*
- *The WRL and Enterprise coordinator meetings are very useful for sharing ideas/experiences, networking etc (though one respondent felt too much time was spent "going around the table" and not enough on proper networking)*

During the school and college visits, where interviewees had indicated in their completed postal questionnaire that the support arrangements for a particular type of activity are not as effective as they would like them to be, to explain what they meant. The range of responses was wide but something of a pattern emerged:

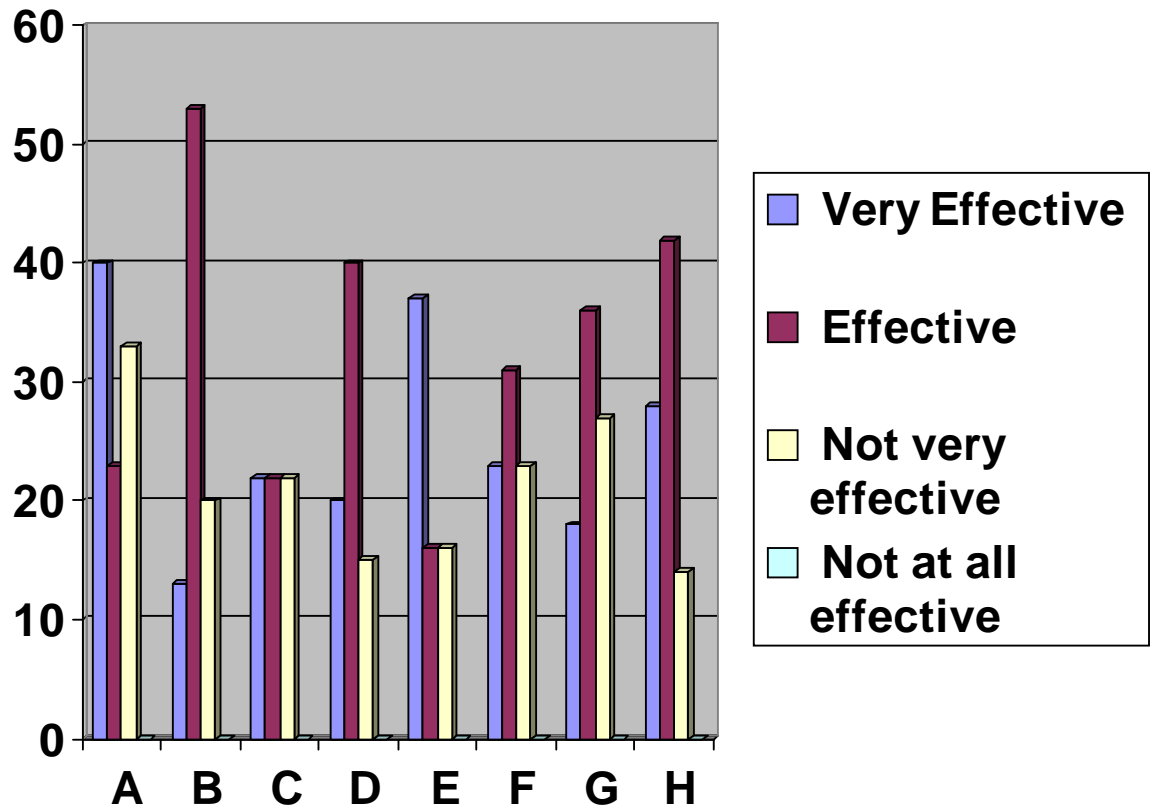
- *Our school seems to be bottom of the pecking order eg we have never been invited to take part in the Stock Market Challenge (a number of schools felt that intermediary organisations worked with some schools more than others, even those next door to each other, and in particular that schools in the Norwich area seemed to receive more help)*
- *Transport in a rural area – money seems to be the main issue rather than distance/time*
- *The people running it (an enterprise programme) are too old-fashioned in their attitudes and approach and they would not tell us in advance what the programme was going to be so we could not tell the employers what they were being asked to give up a day to do*
- *We are having to drop the two days a week with employers for next year because we can't find suitable work placements – it has been a very successful programme but making it available to more and more students, including higher ability ones, has made it more difficult to find placements*
- *The Exchange used to run days on interview techniques etc using employers but it struggles to now because of reduced resources*
- *The two West Norfolk Business Link officers do not seem clear about what their role is; they have delivered very little for our school (several mentions)*
- *There is too much top-slicing of the limited funds available*
- *Far too much "junk mail" about enterprise activities which goes into the bin*

10.2 The views of employers on the effectiveness of EBL support arrangements

Employers and training providers were asked a very similar question ("How effective do you think the arrangements are for managing and organising the different types of EBL activity in which your organisation has been involved?"), and the responses are set out in the table below. The figures in the bar chart

represent the percentage of respondents who gave that rating to the different activities.

Figure 10.2: Proportion of employers describing the support arrangements for individual EBL activities as “very effective” etc.



NB: The numbers in some cases do not add up to 100% because several respondents said “do not know” because they were not the contact person for that activity in their organisation and some said “it depends”.

A = work experience (block); B = other work placement; C = work shadowing; D = visits to employer premises; E = employer/provider presentation in school/college; F = enterprise activities; G = mentoring; H = Professional Development Placement.

For all activities in the table, the percentage of employers saying that the arrangements for managing and organising the activities are “very effective” or “effective” exceed those saying that they are “not very effective”, with PDPs gaining the highest overall “satisfaction” rating. In some cases, it was clear that respondents were taking into account the effectiveness of their own arrangements for organising activities, as well as those of external bodies. This was particularly the case in large organisations which had developed their own EBL programmes.

The proportion who said “not very effective” was about 1 in 3 for block work experience and from 20-27% for other work placements, work shadowing,

enterprise activities and mentoring. When respondents were asked to explain why they had answered “not very effective”, their explanations included:

- One respondent who said “not very effective” for all of the activities explained: *“We are approached by endless schools, it’s difficult to keep up with it all. It needs to be centralised”*;
- Another said, *“We very much miss the brokerage services which used to be provided till a few years ago, staff who used to help organise activities and ensured that they ran smoothly – smaller employers than us must find it very difficult, and 70% of businesses in Norfolk have five or less employees”*
- Block work experience – see the next chapter on “work experience”
- Careers fairs – *“There needs to be more coordination because we get a lot of direct approaches from schools and problems arise if several decide to have them on the same day”*;
- Mentoring – *“It has become too bureaucratic – every time we visit a school we have to fill in a form, describe the outcomes etc, too much paperwork”*
- Enterprise days – *they try to cram too much into one day and for too many pupils (the whole year group – it gets very noisy!); we do not get enough briefing on what help is going to be expected from us, needs clearer objectives on what is expected from employers and what the school and the pupils are trying to achieve – we spend too much time giving out pens etc; schools are very variable in their attitude/involvement on enterprise days – at one school, not one member of the school staff stayed in the hall with the employers and the youngsters were not interested so we didn’t get very far and the event was brought to an early close – as it was the full year group, where were the teachers?*

Perceptions of the effectiveness of arrangements for managing and organising EBL activities not included in the table were as follows:

- Careers fairs – 2 effective, 3 not very effective
- Workwise – 3 very effective, 1 effective
- Stock Market Challenge – 2 very effective

Some comments from those rating the organisation of activities as “very effective” or “effective” were:

- Block work experience – *Connexions put a lot of work into it, they give us lots of options in terms of dates, numbers etc; would rather deal with one body than lots of individual schools; have always felt able to ‘phone Connexions and ask for any problem to be sorted out – they clearly want it to work and they make sure that it does*
- PDPs – *Connexions support is brilliant!*

10.3 Key stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness of EBL support arrangements

Stakeholders were asked what they perceived to be the key issues with regard to education business links in the county. Much of what they said is discussed in the later section on improving the effectiveness of EBL activities but some of the key “negatives” were identified as:

- (most made this point) - a key weakness is the confusion caused by the plethora of organisations approaching *business* (“*every school in Norfolk writes to Norwich Union*”); too many EBL organisations doing similar things; “*101 similar but not linked initiatives muddy the water, stop businesses getting involved*” ; “*The big issue is that there is no single point of contact: brokerage organisations have not been allowed to flourish – “the first death knell was telling them that they had to focus on 14+ and the second was enterprise money going to schools”*; “*Most recently, EEDA and ESF have funded “Work With Schools” to offer mentoring, help in finding employers etc – but where they are supposed to fit in, and who knows about them?*”
- *The main EBL organisations have insufficient resource to provide sufficient support to schools and employers –they are spread too thinly* (The Exchange’s field force consists of 1.8 full-time equivalent project workers based in Wymondham and one full-time project worker based in King’s Lynn)
- *Health and safety regulations have been very important in producing an excellent safety record on work experience but they do place significant constraints on what young people can do in work placements*
- (most made this point) - *the shift of emphasis and funding away from KS1-3 was a retrograde step; 14 is too late – we cannot expect young people to be suddenly switched on by EBL activity at 14+*
- *Databases of employer volunteers are held by partner organisations who are unwilling to share data for fear of losing “their” employers*
- *There is little quality assurance, absence of clear objectives, inadequate evaluation of impact etc eg with mentoring programmes, there are no set standards for experience and expertise required, training to be provided to volunteers etc.*

10.4 Summary of main findings on the effectiveness of EBL support arrangements

The majority of respondents in schools/colleges viewed the EBL support arrangements as “very effective” or “effective” for all activities, with block work experience (93%) and the Increased Flexibility Programme (85%) gaining the highest scores, but there were also a good number of negative observations made. Though for all activities, the proportion of employers saying that the arrangements for managing and organising the activities are “very effective” or “effective” exceeded those saying that they are “not very effective”, the

proportion who said “not very effective” was about 1 in 3 for block work experience and from 20-27% for other work placements, work shadowing, enterprise activities and mentoring. These relatively high proportions were reflected in the large volume of complaints about organisation etc and the number of suggestions made on how it could be improved.

Key stakeholders made a large number of comments about how the EBL support arrangements should be improved and these are set out in the next two chapters.

11. ORGANISATION AND RESOURCING OF WORK EXPERIENCE

The specification for the review included the question, “Is work experience being effectively organised, resourced and evaluated?” This chapter looks at what those consulted in the review said about the organisation and resourcing of work experience. Evaluation is discussed in a later chapter.

Many of the relevant points about the organisation and resourcing of work experience have already been made in the previous chapter on the effectiveness of support arrangements. However, additional relevant material came out of the learner focus groups, the parent/carer survey and interviews with employers.

11.1 Learner observations

The key relevant points were about:

- A wish for more discussion/preparation in advance
- Ensuring a better match between individual preferences and placements available, with a greater variety of interesting, meaningful tasks within placements
- The need for earlier visits by school staff to individuals on placement to allow discussion of issues etc.

11.2 Views from parents/carers

The parents/carers survey asked if they felt that the young person’s work experience had been effectively organised, and also whether it had been arranged by school or by the parents/relatives/family contacts/the young person themselves. Of the 24 who responded to the first question, 20 felt that it had been effectively organised. When asked “Why do you say that”, typical responses were:

- *He had a programme which was set up daily and had many different attachments to different people to see different aspects of the workplace*
- *Everything ran smoothly and we all knew what was going on*
- *Details of the work experience were provided prior to the work placement taking place, including a detailed job description and telephone number in case of an emergency.*
- *Supervision was very good*
- *Paper work was clear and simple, and the placement organiser very helpful.*

Of the three who said that the work experience was not effectively organised (one other answered “don’t know”), only one suggested that the school could have improved on what it did. The responses were:

- *It was a first work experience placement for the company*
- *Self-generated place, a waste of time*
- *The companies we applied to sent their replies to the school but they were not passed on to us. Some companies we applied to do not take youngsters below age 18 and the school must have known that already.*

21 of the 28 parents/carers people responded to the question about whether the placement had been organised by the school or by themselves, relatives, family contacts or the young person themselves. 10 of the 21 said the placement had been arranged by the school and 11 “self generated” by themselves, relatives etc.

11.3 Employer feedback

Feedback from employers on the effectiveness of EBL support arrangements generally was reported in the previous chapter, but the most common points made by them about the organisation of work experience in particular can be summarised as follows:

- *Schools should ensure the placement is of value and that they will learn during the placement; it sometimes seems just a numbers game with little thought for what the youngster is interested in (1 in 4 employers made this kind of point)*
- *Health and safety is a big issue; cut down on the bureaucracy – “it is crazy to have to go through the H&S thing three times for three pupils last year, I was sitting there filling in three sets of the same form; surely it be could organised it so that once the check has been made we can be classed as an approved supplier”; it all used to work very well, but destroyed it by regulations, paperwork etc (1 in 4)*
- *Is any post-placement work done about whether it has been effective; employers are not given any feedback which they could use to improve in future; got no idea what pupils do with their experience when they get back to school (1 in 5)*
- *Young people should be better prepared, about what and how they can learn in the placement, and including some prior research on the industry/company (1 in 6)*
- *Young people should visit the placement before their work experience starts to help them and their placement manager (1 in 10)*
- *There is no consistency in the degree of interest shown by schools during work experience - some visit, some do not: it is good for pupils if they can see their school taking an interest (1 in 10)*

Other relevant comments included:

- *Afterwards there should be ongoing contact for a few months to offer help with CVs, other advice etc*
- *Perhaps it should be for a longer period because the youngsters are just getting into it after a week or two when they have to leave*
- *Spread work experience out through the year*
- *Schools should inform us in advance if work experience youngsters have any special learning/social needs so that we can discuss/be prepared for the level of supervision etc needed*
- *We are an engineering company but we get very few enquiries and we could offer a range of work experience opportunities, not just engineering-type jobs but admin, marketing, personnel etc – intermediaries could communicate all this better to schools, pupils, parents*
- *Training providers ought to have a bigger role in setting up and delivering links - they spend a lot of time in employers' premises talking to them about their needs, and they already have to do H&S checks with employers for their Young and Student Apprenticeships*

11.4 Summary of main findings on the organisation and resourcing of work experience

Taking the input from all of the various interests who contributed to the review together, it is evident that there are a number of key concerns about the organisation and resourcing of work experience, primarily:

- A need to identify many more placements in the light of, not only the forthcoming specialised diplomas, but also expansion in numbers on Young and Student Apprenticeships, the Increased Flexibility Programme and other pupils going on extended placements
- Employers facing too many approaches from individual schools and “self-generating” requests
- Too much concentration of work experience demands in a limited time period of 10-12 weeks
- Partly as a consequence of the above, many young people have difficulty finding desired placements, with sufficient variety of worthwhile tasks, producing knock-on effects on young people’s enthusiasm etc
- Inadequate preparation of pupils with setting of clear objectives etc
- Health and safety regulations have been very important in producing an excellent safety record on work experience but they place significant constraints on what young people can do in placements
- The need for more streamlined H&S vetting procedures
- A need for more and better briefing of employers in advance about the purpose of work experience and their role in it, and a greater input by employers into discussions about how it should look and how it should be organised
- More and better feedback to employers afterwards to facilitate improvements and sustain their commitment and enthusiasm.

12. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EBL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR ORGANISATION/DELIVERY

12.1 Views of schools/colleges

Respondents to the postal survey of schools and colleges were asked two questions relating to how the effectiveness of EBL activities could be improved. One asked them to outline the two most important things which could be done to improve the effectiveness of EBL activities in contributing to the work-related learning of young people 14 + in their institution, and the other to outline the two most important things which could be done to improve the organisation/delivery of EBL activities in a) their own institution b) their local area/the county.

Given the nature of both questions, they inevitably prompted a wide variety of responses, but some patterns emerged. A small minority of respondents did not answer either one or both of the questions. The more common suggestions relating to the first question can be grouped into:

- Persuading staff that EBL activities are a valid and useful activity which provide real benefits and should be a part of the remit of all staff; the need for a whole school approach so that it has real value in the eyes of both staff and students alike
- Providing staff with advice/training in the use of EBL activities: *“we expect staff to be involved in EBL activities without any training”*
- Providing more help in recruiting employers/securing a wider range of placements, especially in rural areas
- Facilitating better contacts with training providers, not just employers.

The responses in relation to the second question can also be grouped, into eight significant themes, plus a number of other proposals.

The eight themes were:

- The need for more time to plan and organise EBL activities, and to talk to other staff about their relevance and associated issues (1 in 3 respondents mentioned this as one of the two most important things that could be done)
- The need for a senior manager in schools to lead on EBL and to be responsible for promoting, organising and coordinating it
- An area expert/coordinator to work on behalf of a group of schools in order to provide a more streamlined, coordinated approach to employer contact, and to be the conduit to those schools for organisations offering/delivering EBL activity - *“we need to make it all a good experience for schools and employers”*
- The provision of a central source of information and advice about employers willing to be involved in EBL activity (1 in 6) – *and we should sign up employers to particular activities at particular times and then give them a guarantee that nobody else will bother them, and this should be flagged up on a central database as “do not contact”*

- Tackling the health and safety issue which was mentioned as a major obstacle by a lot of schools (and confirmed by others in the school visits) – by speeding up the checks and ensuring that employers do not have to go through the same process every year
- More work with employers to promote the benefits to them of engaging in EBL activity (1 in 7)
- 1 in 7 respondents suggested providing employers with incentives to be involved in EBL activity, including cost offsets eg assistance with the costs of “viewing platforms” in areas where H&S etc restrict access
- Transport is clearly a major issue in rural areas and 1 in 10 respondents identified the provision of adequate funding for transport as one of the key actions which could be taken.

Other points to emerge included:

- The provision is too disparate: *“at a minimum, bring it all together in one document which lists activities, their purpose, target audience etc”*
- *Too much activity seems to be concentrated in the Norwich area—needs to be more links with employers outside*
- *Develop a forum where business and education can meet to discuss the way forward* (several mentions) – several schools already attend meetings of their local Chamber
- *Charges for some activities (eg enterprise days) are very expensive relative to our budgets* – inhibits/prohibits participation
- The need to be creative in meeting the needs of schools in rural areas eg more use of videoconferencing, DVDs of workplace environments/situations
- More attention needs to be paid by organisations involved in EBL activity to the needs of special schools.

During the school/college visits, interviewees were asked to expand on their postal response about things which could be done to improve the management/organisation or delivery of EBL activities, and if there was else anything else which could be done to maximise the effectiveness of EBL activities in supporting WRL for 14-19s. Suggestions not already covered above were:

- LSC needs to be more aware of how schools work, their needs, issues etc – and schools do not understand what the LSC is, where it fits into EBL – it needs to get into schools to learn about pre-16, the different factors that need to be taken into account in what schools do, how etc (this was mentioned several times)
- Need to give employers something in return eg one school offers SMEs conference/meeting facilities that otherwise they would have to do without or pay for
- Pay employers to do a good job eg *to guarantee a good quality placement, or if an individual company or presenter is identified as doing a very good job, pay them, use them more and share them between schools (“there is currently no mechanism to identify or to share them”.*

A number of interviewees who had suggested in their postal response a local “broker” to work on behalf of a small number of schools, or had considered it later, emphasised that though such a third party would “take away much hassle”, they would need reassuring on a number of important points. In particular, the “brokers/coordinators” would need to:

- Be expert at what they were doing, with a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the role of WRL, and a flexible, innovative approach to securing effective employer input
- Know the local schools and local employers - they would need to be familiar with, and responsive to, the characteristics and needs of the individual schools
- Gain the respect and confidence of employers
- Demonstrate that they were as committed to achieving the best for the pupils in each school as the schools themselves
- Guarantee that schools would be treated equally – there would need to be trust that no school would receive disproportionately more or less attention
- “Deliver the goods” when they were needed.

12.2 Views of employers

Employers were also asked to outline what they thought could be done to improve a) how effective EBL activities are in contributing to the work-related learning of young people 14 +, and b) the management, organisation or delivery of EBL activities. The main points arising in relation to a), (apart from those relating to work experience and PDPs which are reported elsewhere in the report) with an indication of frequency of mention, were:

- *Schools are not playing their part, they need to take their links with business more seriously. They do not adequately prepare pupils for EBL activities. They need to be more aware of the time and effort put in by employers eg “even with mentoring, some students don’t turn up”; “presentations have been wrecked by disruptive pupils, we are not prepared to do any more” (1 in 6 employers made this kind of kind of point)*
- *Need more input/direction in advance of activities taking place about what they want the pupils to do, what the learning experience should be, and what the role of the employer is (1 in 7)*
- *More schools should make use of our (training provider) facilities*
- *We are willing to do more but we don’t get the schools approaching us (several employers said this, including a medium-sized engineering company)*
- *Ensure that H&S etc is not such a major issue for employers*
- *Better and more effective advertising to raise the profile and awareness of the different EBL activities, and of the benefits for young people, employers and the wider community*
- *Schools should attend business networking meetings if they want to be business-focused and have more links.*

The main points arising in relation to b) on how to improve the management, organisation or delivery of EBL activities, (apart from those relating to work experience and PDPs) with an indication of frequency of mention, were:

- *It all needs coordinating in one place, too much duplication and not enough communication between all the organisations involved; needs a formal link between the key players to thrash out the issues, approach etc; different organisations offer different activities (eg enterprise days) but in reality they are virtually identical in what they are trying to achieve (about 1 in 4 made this kind of point)*
- *Needs to move away from being education-managed -needs a balance of education and business backgrounds in the EBL management positions; needs more business focus and input; need to find out what business wants out of the relationship or it will not work (about 1 in 6)*
- *Always helpful to be able to go through a broker rather than individual schools; we don't want lots of schools approaching us; needs proper brokerage: both schools and business need it (1 in 4)*
- *Intermediaries need to be provided with more resources to do the job effectively (1 in 8)*
- *Schools ought to have somebody who has time to manage and organise things properly, one person responsible for liaison with employers (1 in 8)*
- *Needs to be a coordinated response from employers about how they might relate with schools but there is no one employer body that can communicate with all Norfolk employers about what might be done, no one body to take the lead*
- *Focus on 14-19 is wrong; need to get them younger, otherwise only fire-fighting (1 in 7)*
- *Need to offer an incentive to smaller employers eg if, because of H&S etc, it's difficult to find placements on construction sites etc, then pay them to come to schools (1 in 10)*

Three employers said that they are content with the way things are: "it's organised very effectively, the paperwork is good"; "we have a contact person and everyone knows what has to be done" (retail); "it all runs smoothly" (construction).

12.3 Key stakeholder views

Stakeholders were asked what else needs to be in place/to be done for EBL activity to fully support the current and future 14-19 agenda. Most of the suggestions were in a similar vein to those made by schools/colleges and employers. The key points which came across in a number of the discussions were:

- The need to give EBL activity a higher profile in schools. Several said they would like to see an EBL strategy in each school and a change of "mindset" amongst some members of staff as to the benefits of EBL activity, and when employers do get involved, treating them in a way

which recognises the commitment being made (*“some schools are brilliant, some are awful”*)

- The need for a single, over-arching body which promotes and articulates EBL activity in the county to schools and employers and coordinates strategy and delivery - most agreed on the need for local support if a regional infrastructure were to be introduced
- It was believed that this was the vision when EBLO Consortia were first established but that it did not happen because the removal of government funding for EBL activity in primary schools (several said that 14 is “too late to start”) and the introduction of “different pots of money” for different activities made coordination very difficult. As a result there are too many bodies involved and it is all too complex for schools and business to understand: *“There is lots of activity, and lots of money spent, but what are we all actually achieving for our clients, the young people of Norfolk?”*
- Related to the above, competition between the different organisations involved for the attention of schools/colleges and employers makes it very difficult to achieve even the minimum form of coordination. *“All of the organisations concerned, whatever their funding arrangements, should be at least sitting down at the same table and sharing information about their programmes, levels of business, schools and employers involved etc”*. It was acknowledged that this would not be easy to achieve in the face of concerns that some might misuse the pooled information, and in some cases jeopardise successful, long-established relationships
- A key feature of greater coordination should be a reduction in the variety of separate but similar programmes and agreement on a limited number of activities with a clear purpose, target group etc presented in a way that is attractive to schools and employers, and makes it clear how the programmes relate to each other, and how businesses can contribute and what their commitment would be
- Another key feature should be a bigger role/louder voice for employers in setting the EBL agenda – *“There is huge potential support from business, employers are very keen to get involved (SMEs do a lot proportionate to the time and resources they have available) but we need to see it from their perspective much more and make it simpler for them”*; *“employers have been given a key role to play in setting up the diplomas and they should have a lot more influence in deciding how EBL activities should be organised to make sure they are delivered”*
- Several stakeholders said that making it all much simpler should include setting up a “one stop shop”, an 0800 number/website available to employers who want to get involved and want to know how, where, the implications/commitment involved etc – schools could inform the

contact point what input they are seeking (eg mentors) and the centre could then provide “a dating service”

- Part of the “package” for some stakeholders would be people specifically employed in localities to broker links between schools and employers – they would need to be dynamic, innovative people with the proper expertise/ background who understand both schools and employers – combining this with an 0800-type service would reduce the number of local brokers required and ensure that employers could access or provide information at a time of their choosing

- More links between schools and training providers.

12.4 Summary of main findings on improving the effectiveness of EBL activities and their organisation/delivery

The overall conclusion from this chapter is that there is considerable scope for improvements to the organisation, management and delivery of EBL activities in Norfolk to deliver higher quality, increased effectiveness and better “value for money” for the very large amounts of time and other resource currently being invested.

The various groups consulted made a wide range of suggestions on what those improvements might look like, aimed primarily at schools/colleges themselves and at key stakeholders. They are too numerous to summarise succinctly in this section, but a number of them are reflected in the list of recommendations at the end of the report about how education business links in Norfolk might be strengthened in the future.

13. AWARENESS OF THE 14-19 REFORMS

13.1 Schools/colleges' perceptions of levels of awareness

As a lead-in to the issue addressed in the next chapter of how EBL activities are perceived to be supporting staff in developing their ability to deliver the 14-19 agenda, respondents to the postal survey of schools and colleges were asked how aware they and other staff in their institution are of the new 14+ reforms. 51 of the 59 respondents answered the question. 23 of them said that they themselves were "very aware" and 24 "aware". The remaining four said that they were "not very aware". Only five thought that other staff in their institution were "very aware" of the reforms, with 23 believing that they were "aware". 21 of the 51 respondents thought that other staff were "not very aware" of the reforms.

During the visits, those interviewees who had said that staff in the school/college were not very aware of the 14-19 reforms were asked what could be done to improve that situation. Most explained why they thought that staff are not very aware but did not offer any real suggestions on how to make them more aware. Comments included:

- *The school gives WRL low priority – nearly all go on to university, but it's hard on the few who want to follow another path, they get forgotten*
- *The head has no strategy for making staff aware*
- *Staff are not being told about the 14-19 curriculum because we are just doing it because it is what our pupils need. A very high percentage of our staff link work to what they teach because the staff know the disadvantage our pupils have in the world of work.*
- *Need to make it part of an INSET - staff just don't read bits of paper in their pigeon holes – they make decision about relevance and significance to them, and if think it's of low relevance to them, they take little notice*
- *We involve staff on a need to know basis. They need to be shielded from the stream of initiatives.*
- *Staff are aware of the reforms/requirements. The head "pumped" all the staff for a long time about the need to change, but we didn't do anything else. A small percentage engage with WRL and employers.*

13.2 Key stakeholder perceptions of levels of awareness

During the discussions with stakeholders, they were asked about their perception of the level of understanding in schools/colleges of current and future 14-19 agenda/ requirements, and about enthusiasm and commitment. The majority view among stakeholders was that schools generally are positive, though somewhat confused and uncertain about the future, and grasping at the implications of it all. Much information though seems to be retained within Senior Management arenas and has not yet filtered down to subject leaders and classroom staff. A point made by many stakeholders was that the WRL/EBL agenda is still seen by many teachers/lecturers as separate

and not relevant to, for example, their history curriculum. Some interesting comments were:

- *A lot of heads can't be bothered with it. Some have just delegated it to their WBL person*
- *Staff understanding varies enormously– commitment and enthusiasm are lacking - a lot still see WRL as for lower ability*
- *Heads know that WRL needs to be higher profile but some are not convinced about its contribution to GCSEs etc, especially if OfSTED etc are breathing down their necks*
- *Some heads feel their curriculum and way of working suits their current purpose and delivers good results, and they need to be fairly confident about benefits of moving before making the decision to get involved*
- *There is to varying degrees an attitude of “diplomas are a long way off, we have other things to do now” - they know that it is the direction of travel but are ambivalent, cautious about getting too involved at early stage*
- *Some think that diplomas etc will be overtaken by events - “it might all change when there's a change of ministers/government”*
- *Teachers in Norfolk are seeing Increased Flexibility as a great success – that is a good preparation ground for diplomas.*

13.3 Summary of main findings on awareness of the 14-19 reforms

A large majority of the school/college participants in the review work said that they themselves were “very aware” or “aware” of the 14-19 reforms but almost half thought that other staff were not very aware of the reforms. Most explained why they thought that staff are not very aware but did not offer any real suggestions on how to make them more aware.

The majority view among stakeholders was that schools generally are positive, though somewhat confused and uncertain about the future, and grasping at the implications of it all.

14. DEVELOPING THE ABILITY OF STAFF TO DELIVER WORK-RELATED LEARNING

One of the questions in the specification was about how employer links are supporting teachers and lecturers in developing their skills to deliver existing and proposed 14 – 19 curricula. This section looks at responses to relevant questions put to schools/ colleges and key stakeholders.

14.1 Schools/colleges

The postal survey to schools and colleges asked respondents to state which EBL activities, if any, had been particularly useful in improving their ability to deliver work-related learning. Responses included:

- *The Enterprise coordinator network is very useful for hearing about what other schools have tried, what worked/did not work etc, hearing what organisations have to offer* (this was mentioned several times)
- Several respondents made the same point about the Work-Related Coordinator network – though one WRL coordinator who already works “very long hours and do not want yet another twilight session” suggested more use of videoconferencing eg at lunchtime - saves travel time and costs, especially in rural area (the West Norfolk network is apparently less well-attended than the one based around Norwich)
- Monitoring visits as work experience coordinator; *“visiting extended placements is a good way to learn – employer and school both learn about what each other needs, is looking for”*
- Attending local chamber of trade meetings.

They were also asked to outline the two most important things which could be done to improve the effectiveness of EBL activities in contributing to the development of the ability of staff in their institution to deliver the existing and proposed 14+ curriculum. Clearly many respondents approached the question from a broader perspective than the part which could be played by EBL activities. Two major themes emerged:

- Providing more INSET days/CPD/workshops/subject-based presentations (more than 1 in 3 respondents referred to these), and closely related to this
- Making more time available to staff to: develop their expertise; digest relevant self-study materials; build it into their lesson plans and plan what type of and which employers might be able to supply the expertise/make a useful input (1 in 7).

Other suggestions included:

- Outside experts going into schools to provide advice on subject areas and their relevance/application in the world of work

- Provision of a work-pack illustrating best practice and listing suitable resources
- Virtual tours of factories, different jobs etc – on CD or website
- Raise awareness about the extent to which many work-related skills are inherent naturally in what teachers do anyway e.g. communication, planning, problem solving occur naturally in their subject lessons a lot of the time - but staff need to know how and when to make reference to them and where and how to illustrate their appropriateness in work situations
- Regular work placements for teachers so that they can see where those skills are used in workplaces and make the links.

During the school visits, interviewees expanded on some of the suggestions they had made. The most common suggestion with regard to how links with employers could be better used was to increase the use made of PDPs:

- With exposure to employers, staff will start to teach in a different way
- Need more PDPs, but schools must give staff the time and cover to go on them
- Match subject teachers with employers with the relevant expertise for exchange of ideas on how current work practices/requirements etc could be built into the curriculum eg link media studies teachers/lecturers with a TV company where they could learn specific skills eg editing, adding sound tracks, slicing etc and they could experience the skills being applied in the work context
- One coordinator said that he does not disseminate information about PDP opportunities to other teachers because he was not fully convinced of their value and the school would probably find it difficult to give staff the time off

Other suggestions were:

- A WRL DVD for each subject area, perhaps including an introduction on the 14-19 reforms
- Identify good WRL integration practice in each subject area – *“staff know about the concept of relating lessons to work but need to know what it should look like, rather than hoping what they are doing is OK”*
- College tutors to work alongside teachers in delivering courses –this happens already in one school on a Finance course for Y10s – they learn from each other
- *“We need to convince, for example, Maths teachers that if they do a few modules at a local college (eg a surveying module, CAD course), they could teach construction and engineering diplomas. Most teachers will have some skills that could transfer”*

- One interviewee said that as more and more pupils opt for IFP and similar, the school would find it difficult to afford the college fees (plus pupils' transport costs), and the school is looking at in-house solutions eg paying local business people to come in and deliver hairdressing, construction, motor vehicle mechanics etc – it was recognised however that doing it in-house would not provide the same experience as going to college, where pupils would be exposed to different environments

14.2 Key stakeholders

Stakeholders were asked about what is in place to support school staff in developing their ability to deliver the existing and proposed 14-19 curricula, and how effective it is. The responses, with particular regard to the role of links with employers and EBL organisations can be grouped as follows.

- Consultancy support is available from members of staff at The Exchange, with contact details on the information sent to schools and an invitation to ask *“I have an idea, want to do X for my Y10s etc – can you talk to me about how, what help etc”*
- Showcase events for all schools publicising what schools can access via the Exchange in terms of consultancy, audits to help with WRL/EBL/14-19 curriculum
- Two Enterprise Networks and the WRL Network
- In addition, there are a number of other networks which have termly meetings: Creative and Media network in North Norfolk; ICT network; Business Education network for teachers of economics etc; Health and Social Care;
- In December 2006, a 14-19 day was arranged with a series of presentations to 30 senior managers plus teachers on what the curriculum might look like in 2015
- A whole range of INSET training
- *“Is there a danger that teachers of subjects not involved in diplomas (geography, history etc) will be forgotten?”*

14.3 The role of Professional Development Placements

The postal survey to schools and colleges asked respondents if they had been on a Teacher Placement/PDP during the last year or two, and if they had, to briefly describe what happened (eg whether an individual or group activity, duration etc). They were then asked how useful that PDP was in improving their ability to deliver work-related learning. About 90% of institutions have had somebody on the PDP programme during the last couple of years, and 13 of the 59 respondents said that they had been on a PDP: eight took part in a group activity and the other five in an individual placement. Three of the 13 commented that in fact the whole school (in two cases including support staff) had been involved in PDP activity on an INSET day. One respondent who had not been on a PDP commented *“we’re not allowed to go on courses: we’re only allowed one day off for CDP a year”*.

Six of the 13 who had been on a PDP (some had been on more than one) said that it was “very useful” and the rest that it was “quite useful” in improving their ability to deliver work-related learning. The reasons included:

- *Very helpful to see how companies operate (particularly if more than one is visited so that comparisons can be made)*
- *Always useful to get away from school and have exposure to other environments*
- *A lot of added value in being able to put together a resource pack for use back in the classroom*
- *Some staff were sceptical in advance but they all provided very positive feedback afterwards*

14.4 Summary of main findings on developing the abilities of staff

Schools/colleges were able to identify only a few ways in which EBL activities had been useful in improving their ability to deliver work-related learning and the 14-19 curricula, including the role of PDPs and of WRL and Enterprise coordinator networks. There seems to be scope for greater exploitation of the potential of EBL activity in developing the abilities of staff, and some interesting suggestions were also made about how to develop those abilities other than via EBL activity.

15. UNDER-REPRESENTED SECTORS

15.1 The views of schools and colleges

The postal questionnaire to schools/colleges asked if there are any sectors of employment to which respondents would like pupils to have some or significantly more exposure but cannot. The most common response (1 in 6 respondents) was about the need generally for more opportunities in rural areas, because of the difficulty in physically accessing those in larger towns and the costs of transport. Moreover, there is already competition for employer support between the local town schools and which tend to take up the available opportunities anyway. Sectors which were specifically identified as ones where more opportunities would be welcome (and clearly the scarcity in some of the sectors is more acute in rural areas) were:

- Construction and related trades, partly to do with H&S, employer liability insurance issues – it was pointed out that these are heavily-represented in colleges' IFP provision but that work placement opportunities are few and far between
- Engineering/motor trades
- Food industry – *H&S, hygiene are key issues*
- Medical/health – age restrictions inhibit opportunities in hospitals
- Childcare – *H&S clearance takes far too long*
- Finance – banks, building societies, accountancy etc
- Media/creative/graphics
- Industries with science-related careers

Several respondents said that they would like to see more opportunities and better links established with training providers as well as employers. Others identified the need for students to have more exposure to jobs with high earning potential in order to raise their aspirations: low aspirations, particularly amongst young people in rural areas, were a problem identified as a significant issue by a sizeable minority of respondents to the postal survey, and during the school/college visits.

15.2 The views of key stakeholders

When asked if they thought that there were any sectors of the Norfolk economy which are not involved in 14+ EBL activities, stakeholders said that all sectors are involved to some extent.

16. EVALUATION OF EBL ACTIVITIES

16.1 General observations

The review specification included a question about whether work experience is being effectively evaluated. Therefore, this section focuses largely on that programme but stakeholders were also asked a more general question about assessment of the impact and value for money of other EBL provision also, and it is worth looking briefly at the responses to that wider question. Much of the assessment that happens takes the form of a review of feedback forms/"happy sheets" completed by programme/event participants. For example, contracts between the Exchange and delivery partners always include a requirement for feedback forms to be issued to all programme participants (see later for individual programmes), and regular contract reviews include a discussion of any issues arising from analysis of the returns, a report on which is submitted to each review session.

A key aspect of programme evaluation should be an assessment of the extent to which the programme's aims and objectives have been achieved. An important part of this is about participants being clear before the start of the programme what they hope to achieve from it. It is evident from some of the employer interviews, as reported in the chapter on improving the effectiveness of EBL activities, that they are often not as clear as they believe they should be about the purpose and objectives of an event or programme in which they are being asked to take part or have taken part.

There seems to be relatively little evaluation of wider or longer-term effects. In some cases this was because this more systematic type of evaluation work is carried out at national level (eg the Young Enterprise Company Programme) and in others was attributed to a lack of sufficient resource to carry it out/commission it from elsewhere. The Exchange, for example, said that it used to take one programme each year and commission a full, external evaluation but in recent years the reduced resource available to it has meant that those funds have had to be allocated to delivery rather than evaluation. A recent example of external evaluation, carried out in collaboration with the local authority, was a research project which looked at business mentoring in Norfolk (see below).

16.2 Work experience

There have been several national evaluations of work experience over the years, the most recent being the March 2007 report by the CBI "Time well spent: Embedding employability in work experience" which employed a similar methodological approach to the one taken for this review. However, it is important for those responsible to know whether the results in Norfolk mirror national results or diverge significantly from them, and if so what the reasons for any divergence might be, how they relate to local delivery mechanisms etc. Hence, the question for this review of whether work experience in Norfolk is effectively evaluated.

The Exchange contracts with Connexions for the delivery of the work experience service and the contract requires Connexions to undertake evaluation work with schools and employers. Completed pupil feedback sheets are sent by schools to Connexions which then reports its analysis of those feedback sheets to The Exchange. The feedback from pupils covers a range of questions about whether they had, for example:

- a briefing session before going on work experience
- a clear induction programme
- been visited by a teacher during the placement
- received an employer report or reference
- a session in school after their placement

It also asks how satisfied they were with their placement and what were the important things they gained from their placement.

When carrying out its annual review of the contract, The Exchange asks to see samples of the raw feedback documentation. It asks to look at up to 10% of the responses from students, from schools representing a range of different backgrounds and location types. However, it seems that not all schools return completed evaluation forms to Connexions – one of the schools visited volunteered that it now uses and analyses its own feedback form, and does not send anything in to Connexions. Moreover, the return from those which do is often less than 100%: only 1000 completed feedback forms were returned in 2005-6, a small fraction of the number of young people going on work experience. Whilst this is a large absolute number, there must be concerns about the representativeness of the results given the high proportion of forms that are not returned. Certainly, some of the results do not reflect feedback gathered during the focus group discussions (though no claims are made about their representativeness either) eg 4.1% of the feedback forms said they were either “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with their work experience placement compared with 19% of focus group participants who said they had not found the experience useful.

For the first time, Connexions also issued feedback forms to all employers taking part in work experience during 2005-6 and reported the results to the Exchange in December 2006. The questions covered a range of issues including, for example, whether:

- schools had adequately prepared pupils in advance
- pupils were appropriately behaved, dressed, enthusiastic etc
- pupils were instructed in what tasks they were allowed to undertake
- the school visited the pupil.

Another group of questions asked the employers about the benefits to them of the placement, and their opinion of the work experience administration procedures. 0.8% of the employers replying said that the latter were “poor” and again this seems low in the light of the feedback gathered during the employer interviews carried out for this review, particularly about the health and safety and insurance checks.

As work experience is such a major programme, in order that pupil and employer feedback results can be considered reliable enough to base important decisions on them, consideration needs to be given as to how to ensure in the future that regular feedback is obtained from representative samples of both pupils and employers, including occasional analysis and reporting by independent evaluators.

There follows a brief look at evaluation of other programmes.

16.3 Professional Development Placements

All PDP participants are asked afterwards to complete an evaluation form which seeks feedback on a number of issues including what led them to take part in the programme, what impact the placement was expected to have on their teaching/work, whether they would recommend the programme to colleagues, what other placements they would like to see organised etc. Analysis of the results is discussed at termly review meetings between Connexions and The Exchange. Feedback from participants is generally very positive. There may be scope for some more analytical, in-depth work with a sample of participants to identify what impact it has in the longer-term, what the factors promoting and hindering impact are etc, However, whilst Connexions recognises that from the value for money point of view there should be more structured investigation of the difference which PDP participation makes to teachers (and other staff and managers) and pupil, this kind of evaluation work has not been carried out so far because it has been considered to be more important to devote the available resources to delivery).

16.4 NEICG

A similar picture to the other Exchange-sponsored programmes ie feedback forms issued to the pupils taking part in each event, and to their teachers, plus informal feedback by teachers. The teacher appraisal form asks a number of impact questions eg did the activity raise standards of achievement, improve pupil motivation and attendance, support the development of “your own management and leadership style and techniques as a result of being able to observe your students in new situations” and, “If you have experienced this activity before, please comment on any lasting impact the day may have had on the pupils involved”. These questions are clearly intended to try to provide a measure of wider, longer-term effects of the Enterprise Days. However, there must be room for some doubt about how soundly the responses can be viewed as a reliable measure of longer-term impact, particularly as the pupils involved, as opposed to the teachers, are only asked a group of much simpler questions about their views on how successful/helpful /enjoyable/intensive the day had been.

16.5 Mentoring

A review of business mentoring in Norfolk schools was commissioned in 2005 by Norfolk LEA and The Exchange. It identified benefits to both the schools

and the employers taking part but in particular to the pupils involved in terms of improvement in self-esteem, communication skills and levels of achievement. It also identified ways in which delivery could be improved.

16.6 Workwise

Every event is evaluated via the usual feedback mechanisms. The Chamber of Commerce which runs Workwise is very conscious of the need to demonstrate the wider impact of the programme (eg on examination performance) but the resources to do so are limited and the task itself a difficult one. There will be more assessment of the longer-term impact of "Ready for Work" because of EEDA support for the pilot.

16.7 Young Enterprise

All students taking part in the Company Programme fill in feedback sheets, as do the business volunteers and the relevant teachers. Wider evaluation is carried out at national evaluation but not below that.

16.8 Summary of main findings on evaluation of EBL activities

Attempts are made to gather feedback from participants in all of the main EBL programmes with a view to identifying areas for improvement but there would be some merit in looking at the representativeness and reliability of the results, and at the resources available to carry out more analytical, in-depth work and assessment of wider, longer-term benefits.

17. GOOD PRACTICE

In order to address the question posed for the review, “What models of good practice in linking 14 –19 year old learners with employers exist nationally?”, the review team consulted key players at national level and also asked the key stakeholders, schools, colleges and employers taking part in the review if they were aware of any particular examples of good practice. Not surprisingly, the examples of good practice suggested by stakeholders etc related very much to local experience, and some of those are set out in Annex A.

The 14-19 Pathfinders resulted in a number of examples of good practice being identified, which have all been written-up and are accessible on the DfES’ 14-19 website. Eleven of those examples related to “education and work” and it is assumed that the audience for this review is already familiar with those, one of which (“Communcate – E-mentoring in a rural area”) came indeed out of the Norfolk Pathfinder.

Apart from the Pathfinder examples however, the consultations with key players at national level produced little by way of examples of good practice in organising EBL activities at a strategic/coordinating level, which was the main focus of the review. When the original 47 EBL Consortia were established, LSC National Office decided not to specify an EBL support structure below but to buy the elements of support (in particular work experience and PDPs) and to allow local discretion in how that was arranged. Thus, there is no clear model which is considered to constitute good practice. However, it is generally accepted by the national bodies that there is a need at local level for an expert broker, primarily because schools by themselves are not best equipped to undertake the H&S duties which, as performed by trained staff in broker organisations, have delivered what is seen as an excellent safety record at KS4. Important also is the fact that brokers tend to have databases of employers which are much larger and more diverse than an individual school can manage, and the fact that a situation in which large numbers of individual schools were themselves carrying out most of the contact with employers could place undue burdens on employers and in some respects be counterproductive.

However it is also believed that schools need to retain a large degree of ownership in the EBL activities in which they engage, regardless of the particular services provided on their behalf by a broker. There are many aspects of EBL activity in which the only form of brokerage support is in help with finding employers. Enterprise is believed to be a good example, where the best work is often done by schools in schools, with support from brokers or other providers where helpful, but with ownership retained entirely by the school. A “good practice” model therefore would include a strategic, brokerage level in which school, college and employer preferences were given voice, together with a delivery mechanism which eased the pressures on both sides, while reassuring schools and colleges that the best interests of their students are being served. This kind of model is reflected in the recommendations in the next section.

18. RECOMMENDATIONS

In designing future policy and practices with respect to education business links, LSC Norfolk may, in the interests of delivering the best possible outcomes for 14-19 year olds in the county, find it helpful to consider with other stakeholders:

1. How to bring about the setting up of a single, over-arching body which promotes and articulates EBL activity to schools and employers in the county and coordinates strategy and delivery, and how it might operate within any regional framework
2. How such a body could secure the cooperation of all the organisations involved in EBL activity in the county, including those which currently compete for 14-19 business and those which work with younger age groups
3. How to ensure that a key feature of any such body should be a larger role for employers in inputting to the EBL strategy and design of delivery arrangements
4. How, as a first step in establishing such a body, agreement can be reached that all of the different organisations concerned will share information about their programmes, volumes of business, the schools and employers involved etc, and how to allay fears that the information which is shared may be misused to the detriment of successful, long-established relationships
5. Identifying as a priority task for such a body the reaching of agreement on a reduction in the number of separate but similar programmes and concentration on a limited number of activities with a clear purpose and target group etc, with a clear vision of how the programmes relate to each other and can be “knitted together”, and how businesses can contribute and what their commitment would be
6. Whether, corresponding to the over-arching body at strategic level, there should be a “front-line, one stop shop and dating service”, with a freephone number and website which is available to employers and training providers to advise them on how to become involved in EBL activities, the implications etc, and allow them to state what they can offer, and to which schools and colleges could furnish information about the employer input required (The Exchange website has a FAQ section which may provide a starting point)

7. Whether, in the light of concerns from employers about excessive contacts from individual schools and others, and from schools about their lack of capacity to arrange the number and quality of employer links that they would like, schools and colleges should be approached about the introduction into localities of a small team of expert brokers (perhaps one in each of the five Learning Systems Group areas) who would make links with employers and training providers on their behalf, in return for an understanding that individual contacts would be substantially reduced and a contribution to running costs. Combining this with a “one stop shop” service as described above would reduce the number of local brokers required and ensure that employers could access or provide information at a time and in the manner of their choosing. Consideration would need to be given as to how such an arrangement would sit vis-à-vis the development of Young Chambers as a vehicle for facilitating closer links between local businesses and individual schools.
8. How to ensure that the concerns of schools and colleges about equity of distribution of opportunities etc arising from the setting up of a local brokerage service could be met, and that the advantages perceived by schools/colleges in making direct contact with employers are understood and taken into account by the brokers when working on their behalf
9. The need for a senior manager in each school to lead on EBL, to be responsible for the production of an EBL Strategy in the school, for promoting and organising appropriate activities and, if local expert broker teams are established as above, to be the team’s main contact in the school, supported by a non-teaching coordinator who has the time, expertise and status to relate to staff in the school on a day-to-day basis about their needs for employer input
10. How to ensure that future activity designed to increase employer engagement in securing the success of the specialised diplomas does not result in a diminution in opportunities to engage in other EBL activities by students not doing diplomas or by diploma students in their non-diploma subject areas
11. Ways of disseminating information about the systems used by those schools which have achieved the WRL Excellence Award and consider whether more schools should be encouraged to achieve the Award

12. How best to improve the health and safety vetting procedures which were flagged up as a major issue by a lot of schools and employers, as described in the main body of the report

13. How weaknesses identified in the evaluation of EBP programmes and activities should be addressed

14. And finally, how the LSC can promote a better understanding amongst schools of its role in relation to EBL, and whether it needs to increase its own understanding of how schools work, their needs and issues etc, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4.

We have not included any recommendations about the mix of EBL activity or the future of individual programmes as the project did not set out to address those issues. However, some of those who took part in the review did express views about these questions which have been reported and LSC Norfolk will want to take these into account as part of wider evaluation in making decisions about which programmes to support.

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ANNEX A: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES (LOCAL)

During the course of its work, the review team was informed about lots of interesting examples of well-established links between schools and employers, some more innovative and embracing than others, and not all of them necessarily warranting the “good practice” label. However, some that are worth highlighting are:

- “Open Opportunity”, the 14-19 Partnership of five Norwich schools plus City College Norwich has agreed, in the interests of a more streamlined, coordinated approach to employer contact, to appoint and jointly fund an EBL Manager who will work on behalf of the five schools and in close cooperation with CCN’s main broker. As well as seeking employers to work with the five schools and the college, and giving employers a clear picture of what they are committing to (eg via a service level agreement), the two people concerned will be charged with seeking employers’ views on how education business links locally should be designed, organised and delivered. The intention is that they should be seen as the natural “port of call” for the recruitment of employers and for employers wanting to be involved in EBL activity. They will also be the link with the main EBL organisations.
- Schools in Norfolk which have achieved the WRL Excellence Award – Costessey High School and City of Norwich School (both “best practice”), and Notre Dame High School and Fred Nicholson School (both at “Developing Level”)
- The Norfolk PDP programme run by Connexions is cited as good practice by the National Education Business Partnership Network and has been the subject of presentations at national events. A group PDP event in cooperation with John Lewis in Norwich reached the last four in the National PDP Awards
- Norfolk Children’s Services’ Business Mentoring programme has been awarded the National Mentoring Awards’ “Approved Provider Standard” by the DfES and Home Office, which is the benchmark for organisations providing mentoring and seen as a reliable measure of good practice
- The Young Apprenticeship in Performing Arts organised by “Open Opportunity” referred to above and involving a partnership with a number of local Performing Arts employers is in its third year and is seen as a very effective partnership model. It has produced good results, student feedback is almost exclusively positive, and it has

encouraged many students to express an interest in this curriculum area post-16

- Broadland Training Services' Student Apprenticeship programme is also seen as a very good example of encouraging progression
- The East of England Cooperative Society's pilot enterprise programme, "Embedding Enterprise Capability" is working with two Norwich secondary schools to help them develop their capability to deliver the enterprise agenda, assisting with an audit of existing activities and developing a toolkit for teachers
- The NHS Ambassador Programme, funded by the East of England Strategic Health Authority, provides a "one stop shop", brokerage service for schools wanting to engage with NHS organisations in their local area: the programme offers schools four different "packages", including industry days and in-class curriculum support
- Norfolk is the only county where "WorkWise" is organised by the business community (Norfolk Chamber of Commerce) and is viewed as a successful programme at least partly because of that
- Each year The Exchange sponsors the Eastern Daily Press "Best Education-Industry Link" Awards and the schools and employers which win that could be seen as examples of good practice. The 2006 winner was the "Fair Play" scheme devised by a partnership between Flegg High School and Norwich City Football Club to promote active citizenship among young people and stamp out bullying, and the scheme is being "rolled-out" to other schools across the county
- DfES highlighted a "good practice" example in Norfolk of a secondary school which has worked closely with one of its primary feeder schools which is now basing the whole of its curriculum for Y5 and Y6 around enterprise, and which is impressed by the impact on the interest and commitment of the pupils concerned. The schools are cementing the partnership through peer mentoring: Y5s mentor the Y1s, Y8s mentor the Y5s and Y6s, the Y8s are mentored by KS4 students, and KS4 are mentored by KS5 students. In addition, they are all mentored by business mentors coordinated by a business adviser. Given the success of the partnership, the secondary school is now doing the same with its other feeder primaries.

ANNEX B: LIST OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES VISITED

Aylsham High School, Aylsham

Costessey High School, Norwich

Cromer High School, Cromer

Douglas Bader Centre, Coltishall

Earlham High School, Norwich

Eaton Hall School, Norwich

Fred Nicholson School, Dereham

Heartsease High School, Norwich

Hethersett High School, Hethersett

Hethersett Old Hall School, Hethersett

Hobart High School, Loddon

King Edward VII School, Kings Lynn

Reepham High School, Reepham

Springwood High School, King's Lynn

The Park High School, Kings Lynn

Wayland Community High School, Watton

Wymondham College, Wymondham

Fakenham High School, Smithdon High and Methwold High - a joint focus group of work experience/placement coordinators

The College of West Anglia, King's Lynn.

ANNEX C: LIST OF STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

The Norfolk Education Business Exchange

Connexions Norfolk

Norfolk Children's Services

Norfolk Chamber of Commerce

Norfolk Education Industry and Commerce Group

Young Enterprise Norfolk

Business in the Community, East of England

"Open Opportunity" in Norwich

The two 14-19 Learning Directors in West Norfolk.
