

Employer Engagement

Date of issue	January 2009
Audience	Council
LSC office	National Office
Publication intent	Public
Agenda item	11
Paper	LSC 07/2009

Purpose

- 1 This paper provides the Council with a report on recent developments in employer engagement policy in young people's learning. It focuses particularly on one aspect of employer engagement, the DCSF Employer Engagement Strategy "Building Stronger Partnerships". The paper invites members to consider and comment on the implementation of the strategy and the role of the LSC to improve work related learning.

Recommendation

- 2 Members of the Council are recommended to:
 - a) Consider and to comment on the strategy and the role of the LSC in its implementation.
 - b) Consider the strategy and its long term implementation post LSC.
 - c) Comment on the NCEE priorities (Para 7) and consider how the LSC can inform the Employer Taskforce.
 - d) Consider each regional council nominating an employer champion.
 - e) As an exemplar employer consider encouraging every part of the organisation to get involved with schools and to offer new Apprenticeship opportunities within the LSC.

Background

- 3 At its meeting on 30 July 2008, Council agreed a programme of reports it wished to receive over the coming year on issues around young people's learning and skills.

Employer Engagement

Overview

- 4 The LSC has a statutory power to secure the provision of facilities for the gaining of work experience by young people receiving education. This directly relates to the £25m in funding that DCSF makes available through the LSC for Education Business Partnership activity.
- 5 However, employer engagement is much broader than this relatively narrow interpretation and the core funding is used as leverage to draw in other funds and impacts on other areas including:
 - **Education Business Partnerships** - Although mainly considered only to facilitate Work Related Learning and Work Experience their role is to bring employers, schools and colleges together.
 - **Young Apprenticeship** - A period of extended work experience, a minimum of 50 days, is a core requirement of the Young Apprenticeship programme.
 - **Apprenticeships** – The “Building Stronger Partnerships” strategy seeks employer support to double the number of apprentices.
 - **Diplomas** – Employer based work experience is at the heart of Diploma delivery.
 - **Key Stage 4 Engagement / NEET Reduction** – Employers are being requested to become more involved with reengagement programmes.
 - **FE Employer Responsiveness** – a measure of college success is the effectiveness of the response to employers needs.

As a result of direct involvement the LSC has helped facilitate employer engagement in all of the above.

Building Stronger Partnerships

- 6 On 11th December 2008 the DCSF published its strategy for employer engagement “Building Stronger Partnerships - Employers: How you can support schools, colleges, children and families”. The aim of this strategy is to encourage all employers to get involved in education particularly in the current economic climate.
- 7 The DCSF strategy builds on the recent National Council for Educational Excellence (NCEE) recommendations on how businesses can work with

schools and colleges. The business leaders on the NCEE made five recommendations to improve education business links:

- The development of a National Framework which sets out the areas where business involvement can make the most difference.
- That schools and colleges should identify a member of the leadership team to be responsible for creating, managing and developing relationships with business
- Business support should be mobilised to deliver all areas of the National Framework in every school, and in order to put greatest effort into schools that need it most there should be a particular focus on schools in the National Challenge – the Government's strategy to secure higher standards in all secondary schools
- Good practice in partnerships between education and business should be identified, promoted and celebrated
- Government and Local Authorities should ensure that there is access to high quality education business brokerage in every area.

Employer Taskforce

- 8 Both the NCEE recommendations and the DCSF strategy require a step change in the way schools and colleges link with employers. This is a move from simple engagement with employers to one of a greater level of employer involvement with education.
- 9 Coinciding with the publication of the strategy the Government announced a new top-level Employer Taskforce to boost education by bringing more business expertise into the classroom. The Taskforce will be co chaired by Bob Wigley, the senior Vice President and Chairman of Merrill Lynch Europe and Anthony Salz, Executive Vice Chairman of NM Rothschild.

Education Business Partnership Transition

- 10 From April 2009, Local Authorities (LAs) take responsibility for commissioning education business partnership services in their areas. Although LAs will have this responsibility the funding will continue to flow through the LSC and the LSC will maintain all of its statutory responsibilities
- 11 This is the first area of responsibility to transfer to LAs and will provide something of a test bed for the 16 to 19 transfer.

Issues for consideration

- 12 Currently the LSC provides guidance in order to ensure consistency and coherence across these fragmented and compartmentalised areas. There is a risk that provision may not be consistent across England, with an ever greater number of organisations trying to engage employers for different support.
- 13 The LSC Council is a platform to ensure that employer needs are voiced at a national and regional level. It is not yet clear how employers can continue to lead the learning and skills agenda post LSC.
- 14 The strategy also highlights the need, particularly with the economic downturn, for all employers, including the Public Sector to get more involved with education and apprenticeship delivery.

Clearance

- 15 This paper has been cleared by Rob Wye, National Director of Young People's Learning and Skills.

Communications

- 16 No external communications necessary.

Impact assessment

- 17 The various initiatives and activities described in this paper are intended to have a positive impact on the learning opportunities of young people, and in particular of disadvantaged young people.

Resources

- 18 The costs associated with the initiatives and activities described in this paper are within existing plans for increased participation by young people.

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Date created	January 2009
Document ref.	