



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER



Leading learning and skills

## Yorkshire and the Humber 14-19 Challenge and Business/Enterprise

### Follow up to the launch conference workshop

#### Introduction

At the launch of the Yorkshire & Humber Challenge on 25 January 2008 a Business & Enterprise sub group was held which aimed to capture feedback from participants in the conference on

- The key issues to be tackled at regional, local and institutional level
- Suggested strategies and process to be used or established to add value and improve outcomes
- Identified areas of good practice
- Suggested strategies/processes to be used or established to disseminate good practice
- Actions that the challenge needs to develop/put into place to add value

The sub group began with a presentation which provided an overview of 14-19 education reforms and in particular 14-19 Diplomas, as well as an overview of the context of the current situation in the region and outlining a number of issues and options for consideration by the groups.

The context and issues are outlined below and the feedback from the conference participants is then summarised in preparation for prioritising challenge activities.

#### Context identified in advance of the conference

The success of our region in terms of prosperity and economic success depends on ensuring that education and business work together to close the skills gap and improve educational attainment

Whilst the regions schools are delivering significant improvements in the number of young people reaching Level 2 (5 GCSEs at A\* to C or equivalent) and progression onto other learning or training at age 16 is also improving, much more needs to be done – and businesses very often have difficulties in recruiting young people with the right skills and knowledge meaning that many vacancies can be left unfilled.

- NVQ Level 2 qualification in Y&H = 67.7% (National 71.4%) 2005-06
- The number of young people not in employment, education and training has fallen, but it is still too high at 9.0% (or 11,582 16-18 year olds) in July 07, compared to the national figure 7.7%.

A number of recent education reports and evidence – for example, new Diplomas – identify that employers need to be involved to ensure successful delivery. There is also a need to extend the apprenticeship programme and develop an enterprise culture in Yorkshire & Humber.

In developing educational opportunities it is therefore critical that businesses are involved to ensure that we are training people with the skills that employers need.

This challenge is not asking you to solve the educational problem. It is recognising that we have a regional problem and it is hoped that your ideas, views, experiences can assist the challenge to the benefit of all

Action

- The theme group will discuss the 14-19 reforms and identify areas where businesses need to get involved and identify issues and concerns that often prevent employer engagement.
- The group will also share some examples of best practice relating to employer engagement.
- The group will also consider new ideas and innovative ways to help improve education which will inform the 14-19 Challenge, and in particular priorities for the Business & Enterprise theme.

### **Feedback from the workshop – a summary**

The workshop participants recorded a large number of comments and a full summary of the issues raised by delegates as well as ideas to improve and add value has been produced and is available in a separate document. The full list is, however, detailed and requires lengthy study as well as mapping to the other workshops feedback in order to identify key themes. The summary which follows has therefore been produced in order to encapsulate some of the key themes that emerged and to summarise examples of good practice. Inclusion in the summary does not imply that all challenge members were of agreement about the issue. The aim is, however, to identify issues which were raised by several delegates and to group these into a number of clear themes. These are listed below along with a selection of typical comments.

#### *1. Collaboration & information*

All of the groups were concerned that there was a lack of joined up thinking, and indicated that there was not enough information sharing, collaboration and value add. Comments included

“A need to join up existing employer support organisations and using good/existing practice – e.g. Business Link, EBP’s, etc”

“Lack of to help small orgs to get involved”

“Lack of information and practical support/advice re how small employers should/could get involved e.g. consortia for businesses – not just the usual suspects. Employers do not know who to contact and information is often inconsistent”.

#### *2. Impact, evaluation & best practice*

“Impact and evaluation of activities are often inconsistent and this makes it difficult to identify and share good practice. Some activities do not identify impact and outcomes”

“Many activities are being duplicated, and some activities stop being supported even though they are effective – we need a central repository of information and consistency”

#### *3. Funding & Resource Issues*

Comments included:

“There is a lack of funding support/incentives for employers to get involved – is there any ? Should some be made available ?”

“Lack of development/action after the work experience within schools – not maximising employer resources”

“Vol/comm. sector could help schools but there is an issue about how the sector is funded”

“Lack of parental engagement – extended services, etc talks about parents and family learning – but no additional £ to make this a reality”

#### *4. Delivery Issues*

Comments included:

“It shouldn’t just be about 14-19 – you need to start with much younger learners – e.g. primary”

“Pupils are ill prepared to come into the workplace for work experience and/or employment and sometimes a lack of commitment by teachers whilst young people are on placement”

“Work experience is not long enough to change perceptions of the workplace and/or inspire young people (e.g. just 2 weeks)”

“Enterprise is not build into teacher training or curriculum development – it should be embedded in all ITT courses, and within all curriculum areas (and at all stages – not just 14-19)”

“Lack of bridging courses for those young people who have not achieved the right level/number of GCSE’s at school in order to start and apprenticeship – e.g. “second chance” – this will require investment and trained staff/locations, etc”

### **Good Practice**

Further presentations during the workshop included examples of good practice and an overview on Corporate Social Responsibility provided by :-

- Dr Paul Salveson – Northern Rail
- Jim Fox - Coca-Cola Enterprises Ltd
- Gail Papworth - Sunrise Radio
- Sally Spawforth – Leeds Chamber of Commerce
- Suzy Alderson – Young Peoples Enterprise Forum

Amongst other examples of good practice highlighted by delegates was:

- Business Ambassadors Programme; Enterprise Exchange Network; EBP Intelligence re schools/business activities – Education Business Partnerships
- Business Forum in North Yorkshire NYBEP
- Task group in Leeds made up of leading business, HE, Education Leeds Business executives...to take stock of EBP activity and realign resources to promote/extend best practice. In future this will be extended and become “Alliance for Learning” which will include LA, Skills board, HE, FE, business, schools, colleges to sponsor activities (e.g. engaging more businesses, curriculum planning, enterprise, skills, entitlement) – Education Leeds
- Homeless awareness activities with young people, jobs/careers information and advice, extensions for work placements/mentoring in future; and, “Worker of the week scheme” in primary schools – developing the beginning of relationships with children as they become young people and future tenants – West North West Homes, Leeds
- NHS working with Education Business Partnerships/LSC and 14-19 teams to support 14-19 agenda
- Employer boards – development of centres of skills excellence e.g. hair and beauty uniformed services
- NHS provides a wider range of employer engagement activities which could be better harnessed and channelled to support the 14-19 agenda, but this needs to be better organised – e.g. like the employer engagement team work
- Employers involved in Mentoring programmes and support for staff to do Right to Read, with incentives for staff – e.g. during work time or providing some “time back” e.g. up to 2 days per year for staff who are governors/mentors – Yorkshire Forward; Wakefield & District Housing
- Various Community & Young Leadership Programmes and other activities with Education Business Partnerships, work experience, etc - Wakefield & District Housing
- Supporting young people with disabilities to access employment through skills development, work placements directly supported by one to one –The Children’s Society
- New apprenticeship programme working across 4 different council depts and doing NVQ in business admin – City of York Council
- 14-19 task groups in each of the North Yorks districts – including redefining the curriculum and putting the learners first – Jane Waller
- 4 Diploma Gateways from 2008, including 100 companies engaged in the support of the diplomas already – Diploma Capital fund has enabled new build of centres in community locales to support SME’s to attend and support 14-19 – Sheffield College
- Workfield Homebuilder (Junior Homebuilder) which engages with young people – Groundwork
- Development of a progression map that can be linked to Personal Learning and Thinking and the curriculum - Northern Enterprise Education Programme

### **Suggested strategies and processes to be used/established to improve outcomes**

The delegates discussed in detail and identified a wide range of both strategic and practical solutions to increase effective employer engagement, reduce duplication, and improve quality/outcomes. The full list is lengthy and needs further analysis, and the following summary includes key points which many delegates shared:-

- Establish a repository of information, a single point of informed contact, to which everything going on is inputted and can be referenced. This will reduce duplication and stop the wheel being reinvented.
- Ensure that when an initiative happens there is dissemination through this repository (see above) - too often dissemination either doesn’t happen or is poorly/inadequately done. The funding body has to ensure that effective (and consistent) impact evaluation is undertaken and appropriate dissemination takes place.
- Improved communications re the business case for engagement (case studies, etc)

- Information from GO, LSC, SSC's re what diplomas will be delivered – how employers can get involved, and more information for parents
- A shared/regional marketing campaign re 14-19 aimed at employers (not just diplomas)
- Recognise that to increase/improve 14-19 attainment you have to provide more support and programmes pre 14 (primary school)
- Need to recognise that different sectors require different solutions – and the same for geographical areas – get different case studies for each and share these far and wide (a regional pot of case studies)
- Every school should be linked to one large, one small and one public sector employer. Every schools governing body should have “community governors” who are employers – and provide incentives for employers to do this
- Think creatively – e.g. education needs much better links with “sexy” providers/centres – e.g. Leeds United. Increase incentives/funding for business to get involved – e.g. tax breaks, etc linked to specific targets, increased apprenticeships employed – especially for small organisations who would struggle to have well trained/equipped staff to support the apprentices
- Public sector targets for employing young people/NEETs would be useful
- Fund the development of workforce in schools and inform them how to engage/work with businesses
- Invest in new/better facilities and local centres so that more SME's can get involved – e.g. Diploma Capital funding and Sheffield College model
- More flexibility by schools (and funding for additional staff) – e.g. open schools evenings/weekends to encourage more business, parents/families to get involved (e.g. not just opps to do this 9-5 Monday to Friday)
- More private/public partnerships to deliver diplomas
- Fund more literacy support at primary (not just more/better teachers, but free books, mentors, right to read, etc, etc) – if children cannot read properly they will never achieve anything at any age beyond this – how can they learning at 14-19 without the right reading, writing and communication skills
- Streamline activities/have one contact – too many people are knocking on doors asking businesses to do A,B,C,X,Y,Z – one organisation should lead on that business/school activities
- Better skills assessment – we need a coaching skills and framework to help provide a language and measures for young people in the skills areas – the framework then needs to be “owned” by business/employers and have a national acceptance/status across employer and education provider sectors
- Fund/support 6 week work experience placements during the summer holidays – not just 2 weeks
- Pay for employer liability – e.g. CRB checks (this would be simple and practical support)

### **The next steps for the challenge**

It is clear that there is much to be done to increase collaboration, joined up thinking and ultimately increase effective employer engagement and business/enterprise activities. Most delegates stressed the need for strategic and funding organisations to improve co-ordination and target the right types of activities (using consistent and robust impact & evaluation measures) – and not just at aimed at 14-19 learners.

There are some very good examples of effective practice within the region. One of the first steps should be to identify areas of activity which need to be better disseminated and to ensure that there is less risk of activities being duplicated by the 14-19 Business & Enterprise challenge. It is important that where activities are already taking place that are having a significant and positive impact these are sustained and possibly rolled out further, and especially in areas where they can make the biggest difference.

Simplification - There is already a lot of activity and businesses supporting education. Businesses are bombarded with requests to support education in a variety of ways, from mentoring to enterprise days, interview practice, diplomas, apprenticeships and so on. We need to make it easy for businesses to get involved and provide them with a simplified menu of how they can support education. Part of this process will involve helping education institutions engage more effectively with business by understanding business objectives and the business benefits. Schools and colleges need to improve their levels of customer service with businesses if mutually beneficial long term relationships are to be developed.

Young Peoples Enterprise Forum, one of the workshop partners agreed to undertake further discussions with all the workshop delegates after the conference – and this information will be added to the

conference feedback and collectively this will act as a useful starting point for a more detailed mapping exercise.

There were a range of other strategic and practical ideas provided which need further consideration, and these will help to develop the priorities for the Business & Enterprise challenge.

**Alison Fender**  
**Learning & Skills Project Manager**  
**Yorkshire Forward**  
**February 2008**