

Careers Advice and Work Experience Opportunities for Young People in Central Bedfordshire

PURPOSE

1. The report provides a briefing on progress to meet the aspiration in the Children and Young People's Plan for partners to:

'Provide early high quality independent career advice and work experience opportunities so that young people understand what their career options and choices are'

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That Board Members acknowledge the briefing and current position in Central Bedfordshire.
3. That Board Members promote the recommendations of the report into Work Experience by the Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament, in particular:
 - To meet with Director of Children's Services at Central Bedfordshire Council and the portfolio holder for Education and Skills.
 - Actively promote the benefits of undertaking work experience to young people, schools and employers.
 - For CBC to lead by example and offer work experience placements in all departments.
4. That the Board requests that the briefing is shared with the Secondary/Upper Heads Forum with a request that all schools/academies are signed up to the Central Bedfordshire Careers Education Minimum Standards.
5. That Board Members receive a further briefing on Careers Advice and Work Experience Opportunities by April 2016.

PUBLIC/EXEMPT: Public

CONTACT: Peter Fraser Head of Partnerships, Community Engagement and Youth Support

BACKGROUND:

6. National Policy:

There are a number of key responsibilities held by partners in relation to Careers Education and Work Experience:

The local authority:

The council holds a number of statutory duties that support the provision of Careers Education and Work Experience, including:

- Local Authorities should ensure that Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is considered in the delivery and planning of services for young people – particularly those with the most complex needs. (*Education Act 2011*)
- Local Authorities should promote, encourage and assist participation in education and training of 16 and 17 year olds in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training. This includes the provision of additional support to assist the most vulnerable young people and those at risk of disengaging with education or work. (*Education and Skills Act 2008*)

Schools:

The duty to deliver high quality Impartial Careers Education and Guidance for Young People sits with Schools. These duties are outlined in recent statutory guidance 'Careers Guidance and Inspiration in School' (March 2015). This guidance highlights that:

- Schools should help every pupil develop high aspirations and consider a broad and ambitious range of careers.
- Schools require a Careers Strategy that considers links with employers and the use of external resources (E.g. Business Mentors).
- Schools need to work closely with local authorities to support vulnerable young people.

The guidance also highlights the need for strong leadership from schools around Careers Guidance and Inspiration, particularly an appropriate level of support from the governing bodies.

Destination Measures:

Schools are now expected to consider the success of their pupils in terms of their longer term prospects. One way in which schools are held responsible is via DfE Destination Measures data. This data highlights progress of young people after they have left school in terms of their participation in Education, Employment and Training.

Please note the current national offer of destination measures data is limited and often has a significant time lag in publication dates. The local authority is therefore currently working with schools to develop local destination measure reports to provide a more accurate reflection of the success of their pupils.

The role of Ofsted:

The new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework (September 2015) makes explicit reference to the provision of Careers Guidance in judgements that relate to:

- Securing better outcomes for pupils
- Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

It also features in specific grade descriptions for '16-19' provision that will relate to schools/academies, further education and training providers.

There are also a number of emerging national developments that may have implications for Careers Education and Work Experience, including:

- The creation of a new national Careers Enterprise Company to support Employer Engagement in Schools

- National Area reviews of Post-16 provision to help determine the future focus of Further Education and Training provision – particularly how they meet the needs of the local labour market
- An enhanced role in Careers Education for Job Centre Plus

7. **Local Aspiration:**

As noted above, there is a clear aspiration in the Children and Young People's Plan to:

'Provide early high quality independent career advice and work experience opportunities so that young people understand what their career options and choices are'

This aspiration is also reflected in the recent Partnership Vision for Education, including a commitment to:

- Support high aspirations throughout every pupil's learning journey
- Strongly encourage all middle, upper and secondary schools to sign up to the Minimum Standards for Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), and review the effectiveness of this
- Carry out analysis of Post 16 learning provision with schools and FE Providers to inform whether we are making the best use of resources to meet the needs and aspirations of young people and the emerging requirements of the local labour market.

There is also now a commitment to work across directorates to deliver the Employment and Skills Strategy, supporting employer engagement in schools, the development of Apprenticeship/Traineeship opportunities and improving access to support for our most vulnerable young people.

8. **Current Position in Central Bedfordshire:**

Better Work Experience – From Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament

In 2014, 5,976 or 23.76% of the Youth Population (13 – 19 years old) in Central Bedfordshire were supported to participate in the national 'Make your Mark' campaign. This enabled Young People to vote on their priorities for their local communities and identify specific campaigns that would form the focus of the Youth Parliament. One of the 3 key priorities identified by Young People in Central Bedfordshire was the provision of high quality work experience.

The work of Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament and the 'Better Work Experience' campaign is outlined in **Appendix A**. In summary:

- The Youth Parliament surveyed 270 Young People to establish their understanding and experience of work experience
- Of the participants, only 61% have been able to participate in work experience
- Of those who have participated, 59% found their work experience to be useful
- 68% of participants believed work experience should be 'mandatory'

A number of key themes were also raised by Young People in the survey, including:

- The need for work experience to be more tailored to career aspirations
- The benefits of work experience being planned and built into the wider curriculum with Young People
- The timing of work experience and it not being offered in the run up to exams

Minimum Standards – Careers Education and Impartial Information, Advice and Guidance

The Central Bedfordshire Youth Audit (2013) identified that Young People in Central Bedfordshire did not receive sufficient quantity and quality of Careers Education in their Schools. It was subsequently agreed with Young People and Schools that we would develop a set of Minimum Standards for Careers Education and Impartial Information, Advice and Guidance. These standards provide a framework for both secondary and upper schools and will enable all to assess and benchmark progress against what is deemed nationally to be 'best practice'.

The standards were launched in Autumn 2014. To date, nine schools have verbally agreed to sign up to the IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) standards and six schools have formally signed up (including commitment from the governing body). Plans are now in place to:

- Visit all outstanding schools to formally encourage participation in the scheme
- Agree with young people a quality assurance mechanism to assess the quality of CEIAG – By Dec 2015

This will also be supported by a new Careers Education Network for Central Bedfordshire Schools that aims to promote collaboration between schools and share the best possible practice.

Strengthening Employer Engagement in Schools – The role of the Local Authority:

There are a number of resources available for schools to promote the engagement of employers in Careers Education. This includes organisations such as 'inspiring the future' which seeks to link employers with local schools. However, the local authority also has a role in facilitating appropriate links between agencies.

From Autumn 2015, the local authority will be piloting a new brokerage service for schools that aims to link local employers with schools. This will be a partnership arrangement between employers, the Business/Regeneration service and the Youth Support Team. The initial focus will be on making stronger links around construction. The scheme will be evaluated and subject to the findings will be extended to other sectors in 2016.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

9. The provision of Careers Education and Work Experience opportunities remains a high priority at a national level and is reflected in Ofsted standards. It is also a very high priority at a local level. However, the 'Better Work Experience' campaign of the Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament highlights that the quality of opportunities for Young People vary significantly across the local authority.

10. The 'Better Work Experience' report highlights some key recommendations that could make a significant difference to the offer for Young People – in particular the role of the local authority in setting an example to other employers.
11. There has been recent progress made in Central Bedfordshire with regard to meeting the aspiration in the Children and Young People's Plan. This includes the introduction of minimum standards for Careers Education and emerging practice around the brokerage of employer engagement in schools. This work will take time to embed and enable the impact of these measures to be evaluated.
12. There remain significant financial and resource pressures on secondary/upper schools and academies in Central Bedfordshire which will impact on the capacity to offer meaningful and relevant Careers Education and work experience to Young People. Currently work experience opportunities for young people vary dramatically depending on their school/academy. This should be considered in further detail by the Secondary/Upper School Heads Forum and the new Employment and Skills Board.
13. It would be beneficial for Board Members to receive a further briefing on Careers Advice and Work Experience Opportunities no later than April 2016.