Heathrow Community Fund

NEEDS ANALYSIS OF TRANSITION SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – NEET RESEARCH

ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019

Learning to Work
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SL2 5AY
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Learning to Work

ABOUT THE RESEARCH ORGANISATION

Learning to Work is a not-for-profit organisation with charitable status; set up to facilitate links between education and the world of work. We have been offering work-related learning provision in the local area for 25 years and business engagement is at the heart of everything we do. It is this business engagement that sets our activities apart when it comes to giving students an insight into the world of work and what employers will expect of them when they enter the workplace. We are extremely passionate about the work we do and the impact we have on the lives of young people.

We work closely with a wide range of partners to ensure that our offer changes and develops to meet the needs of employers, schools and colleges. We pride ourselves on delivering a high quality, value-for-money service that all of our stakeholders value and trust.

We work with and deliver for a large number of partner organisations including Adviza, Business in the Community, Mosaic, Prince's Trust, National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), Barnardo's, World Skills UK, Skills Training UK, Education Business Partnership West Berkshire (EBPWB), Bracknell Forest Council, Slough Borough Council, Slough Aspire, Elevate Berkshire, Bracknell Forest Partnership.

About the research team

The team has a wealth of experience in working with schools and young people, and through their collective experience they are skilled at determining the appropriate approach needed for individual schools to ensure their maximum engagement with projects and initiatives. This experience has been crucial in attaining the data and impact information necessary for this research.

Acknowledgements

This report has only been made possible by the participating schools and teaching staff who have taken the time to provide their data.

INTRODUCTION

Heathrow Community Development Fund has commissioned Learning to Work along with Spark! and SATRO to carry out Needs Analysis of Transition Support for Young People, with each of the three organisations focusing on different groups of students. The aim of this research is to assess the gaps in employability services in Hounslow, Surrey and the South East and East Berkshire.

Specifically, the project will hear from teachers and young people, to identify:

1. The demand for employability-related activities locally
2. The gaps in provision, including for students with special educational needs and disability (SEND)
3. Recommendations for the future.

Participants were engaged through an online survey, interviews and focus groups. The sample schools were selected to form a mix of:

- Geographical spread
- Ofsted results
- School type, such as academies, free schools and SEN schools
- Those who have a working relationship with the provider or not.

The focus for Learning to Work (LTW) is students who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) at the point that they leave compulsory education, in the three Local Authority areas of the Slough, South Bucks and Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead.

The aims of LTW's study are to:

- Bring together current interventions
- Facilitate the sharing of good practice from a variety of schools
- Gather thoughts and feedback from young people to ascertain the most effective provision
- Create a guide to free resources available to schools to support their students
- Create a "Provider Map" detailing local support provision (Item 1 – *Provider Map of NEET Support* – in the Appendix).

In order to achieve this we worked with our school partners in two ways:

1. Comprehensive Partners

Nine schools from across the three local authorities (LA) were identified to take part in this phase of the project and participation involved three meetings:

- 1-2-1 meeting with a member of school staff and the Learning to Work Project Lead
- Group meeting with students from the school and the Learning to Work team
- Stakeholder meeting for school staff and the Learning to Work team hosted at a local corporate venue by one of our business partners.

2. Overview Partners

We also surveyed a range of schools in the three areas to ascertain an overview of their current provision.

The survey included a set of hygiene questions asked to schools by all three organisations (LTW, Spark! And SATRO). The answers to the hygiene questions were used by the third party organisation, MyKindaFuture, to create a consolidated picture of current provision across the three local authorities. These are questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the survey (Item 2 – *NEET Research Project Survey* – in the Appendix).

The findings and conclusions of this research project will be presented in three sections, with each section focusing on one of the following actions:

1. Explore the current provision schools are offering to students who have been identified at risk of becoming NEET
2. Determine how beneficial current provision is for students and which programmes have the most impact
3. Identify what more can be done to support at risk students with their next steps after school.

BACKGROUND

Gatsby Benchmarks

In 2013 Sir John Holman was commissioned by the Gatsby Foundation 'to research what pragmatic actions could improve career guidance in England', and his research led him to develop the following eight Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance[1]:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

Current careers provision is being measured against the Gatsby Benchmarks which have been put in place this year, and must be met by all schools in England by 2020. The foundation recognises that high-quality careers guidance is vital to supporting students with their next steps after school. It is also recognised that good career guidance 'is a vehicle for social justice [because] those young people without social capital or home support suffer most from poor career guidance'.[2] A common factor of students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET is their social background.

We were able to measure this factor across our school partners by ascertaining the average percentage of students in KS3 & 4 who receive pupil premium (PP). This stands at 22%, ranging from 5% to 40% across the schools.[3] PP is defined as 'additional funding for publicly funded schools in England [… which is] designed to help disadvantaged pupils of all abilities perform better, and close the gap between them and their peers'.[4] Schools must use this funding to impact students who have been identified as PP pupils, or low-achieving students.

How much PP money is being used towards careers provision to help students who may be unable to rely on their parents/guardians to support their entry into the world of work? As stated by the Gatsby foundation, careers provision is especially vital for students from lower-income families as it is integral to raising aspirations and ensuring that students are aware of the opportunities available to them.

Labour Market Information (LMI)

Gatsby Benchmark 2 is centred on learning from career and labour market information: 'every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good-quality information about future study options and

[1] Good Career Guidance | Education | Gatsby. [online] Available at: http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance [Accessed 3 Dec. 2018].
[2] Good Career Guidance | Education | Gatsby. [online] Available at: http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance [Accessed 3 Dec. 2018].
[3] This figure has been obtained from 15 of our 16 school partners, as one school was unable to provide us with this information.
[4] Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings [Accessed 4 Dec. 2018].

labour market opportunities'[5]. More specifically, according to the National Careers Service, LMI 'describes the world of work – ranging from descriptions of different careers, their entry routes, promotional prospects, salaries paid, skills and qualifications needed etc. Crucially for young people, LMI also covers future demand – what kinds of jobs will be in demand after leaving school and what kinds of skills will be needed?'.[6]

We are drawing specific attention towards Benchmark 2 because it is clear from the survey findings that schools are experiencing difficulty when putting this benchmark in place. Question 5 in the survey (Item 2 in the Appendix) asked schools to indicate how well they are implementing the eight Gatsby Benchmarks when planning for careers provision. On average schools gave Benchmark 2 a rating of 5 which was the lowest rating across the benchmarks.[7]

This is important to note because it is evident that students need to be able to access up-to-date career and LMI to make informed decisions about their future. Students sometimes display an attainment-aspiration gap, but by being able to access LMI they will develop a clearer understanding of what is required for them to succeed in the world of work.

Identifying students who are at risk of becoming NEET

The National Foundation for Educational Research completed a research report in 2012 titled 'Developing Indicators for Early Identification of Young People at Risk of Temporary Disconnection from Learning'[8].

The report identifies that the lists of key indicators which local authorities are using can be 'termed 'hard' indicators (i.e. the characteristics of young people that can be measured)', predominantly because this information is readily available in schools' information management systems (SIMS). According to the report, the indicators vary considerably but may include the following:

- gender, ethnicity and English as an additional language (EAL)
- attainment at key stages 1 to 4
- attendance and exclusion rates
- eligibility for free school meals (FSM)
- special educational needs (SEN)
- looked-after children (LAC)
- traveller
- asylum seeker/refugee
- whether the young person has a Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- whether the young person has been referred to professional agencies
- medical conditions (if it affects learning/attendance).[9]

[5] Understand the Gatsby Benchmarks | The Careers & Enterprise Company. [online] Available at: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/understand-gatsby-benchmarks [Accessed 4 Dec. 2018].

[6] How to Use Labour Market Information (LMI) in Schools |National Careers Service. [online] Available at: https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/assets/file/2ce55da6-3010-426e-8a29-26c2983be81f/lmi-animation-hand-out.pdf [Accessed 4 Dec. 2018].

[7] A more detailed exploration of the survey findings is available in Section 1.

[8] Filmer-Sankey, C. and McCrone, T. (2012). Developing Indicators for Early Identification of Young People at Risk of Temporary Disconnection from Learning (LGA Research Report) | National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). [online] Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/INDI02/INDI02.pdf [Accessed 5 Dec 2018].

A number of our school partners confirmed that they use the above indicators to identify which students are at risk of becoming NEET, however we have been unable to obtain this information across all our school partners. We are able to confirm that in the schools we worked with students are identified as at risk of becoming NEET between Yr 9-11.

Learning to Work

LTW is currently a provider for 69% of the schools that took part in this research project. We offer a range of activities for these schools including:

- 1-2-1 IAG sessions delivered by Level 6 Careers Guidance professionals
- Work experience
- Careers fairs
- Work ready conferences
- CV Preparation workshops
- Mock Interview Practice with Business Volunteers
- Group Career Insight sessions

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

We have encountered several limitations throughout the course of the project which should be noted at this point:

- The amount of information required from schools was substantial, and recruiting schools to be involved in the project proved very difficult. As there were several stages to the study, teaching staff quite often had to be contacted frequently in order to have them return the documents or find the time to arrange both the teacher meeting and student focus group.

  When given the opportunity to participate in the study, some schools refused on the basis of the following reasons:

  - Other demands being made on the staff's time – e.g. heavy workloads within school, Ofsted inspection in the region during the research period
  - The requirement to pull together information from all different departments across the school to be able to provide a full picture of how careers provision is provided to students
  - SENDCO had informed them that there were no students at risk of becoming NEET in the school

  However, with the focus on Gatsby Benchmarks schools are looking to increase their employer engagement. This helped to ensure that our sixteen school partners were fully committed to supporting the study.

- Prior to beginning the research aspect of the project we identified that a large element of the project was dependent upon student interaction. As an organisation we are familiar with working with at risk students, and therefore understood the increased importance of being careful with how questions to students were approached, to ensure that the students would feel comfortable.

[9] Filmer-Sankey, C. and McCrone, T. (2012). | LGA Research Report. [online] Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/INDI02/INDI02.pdf, p.3 [Accessed 5 Dec 2018].

We created a group setting through focus groups which occasionally led to some students taking this as an opportunity to remain silent as others answered the questions. Regardless of this, due to the small group size, all students felt comfortable enough to share their opinions surrounding the careers provision they receive from the school and how they felt they could be better supported.

METHODOLOGY

We initially utilised existing relationships with secondary schools to consolidate our list of comprehensive and overview partners, but also found that we had to create new relationships with several schools to ensure we had a relatively equal sample size across the three boroughs.

Key stages of research:

- Primarily an introductory letter was sent to the nine schools we had identified as prospective comprehensive partners. The letter detailed the project's aims and the ways in which we would ask the school to support us. Please refer to Item 3 – *LTW Letter to Schools* – in the Appendix. Initial communication was by direct email to the Head Teachers, which was followed up with phone calls to all schools and additional contact made with key contacts within each school.
- Following this we sent an email to an additional 29 schools across the three boroughs, where there was no existing relationship with the school, detailing the project and explaining how they could become an overview partner. We identified the relevant member of staff using the school's website; initial communication was via email, followed by a phone call to each school.
- Collection of data and information from schools using the survey formed the basis of our research as it primarily identified the careers provision that schools offer, and enabled us to create the teacher meeting and student focus group questions. Several of the findings from the survey were consolidated by MyKindaFuture as part of the 'hygiene question analysis', which created a framework across all three EBPs thus enabling Heathrow to more easily compare the data across a larger area. Item 2 – *NEET Research Project Survey* – in the Appendix.
- Design and creation of a mapping template to map current careers provision across schools on employer engagement activities delivered for the academic year 2017-2018. Please refer to Item 4 – *Mapping of Employer Engagement Template* – in the Appendix.
- Once the data had been collected, it was collated and analysed in order to determine the usefulness of the current provision and the activities and events that schools can offer to further support students. All of this has been set against the Gatsby Benchmarks that will be one of the main tools schools use to frame their careers provision against moving forward.
- We then conducted teacher meetings and student focus groups with our nine comprehensive partners that provided a much more detailed idea of the provision available, and enabled us to explore how useful both students and teachers consider this provision to be. Please refer to Item 5 – *Teacher meeting questions* – and Item 6 – *Student focus group questions* – in the Appendix.
- Finally, we conducted a stakeholder meeting with our school partners to further explore current provision and facilitate the sharing of good practise, as well as determining where any potential funding would be most beneficial. All sixteen school partners were invited to participate, of which seven were able to attend.

Contact with schools

As previously described, introductory letters were sent to the Head Teachers of the nine schools that we had identified as potential comprehensive partners; as we have working relationships with these schools we sent the same information to our main contacts in the school.

The introductory letter, survey and mapping template were then sent to another 29 schools inviting them to become overview partners. All schools were then contacted via phone in order to elicit a response where we had not received one. We continued to chase schools for a response by email and phone as we wanted to involve as many schools as possible in order to paint a clear picture of the provision available across the three boroughs.

For those schools that expressed an interest in supporting the project, we asked them to return the survey and mapping template in the summer term. It soon became clear that this was not going to be possible for a number of schools due to the busy summer term, so we modified our process to allow a staged return of the information, i.e. we requested the survey to be returned by the end of the summer term with the mapping template to follow at the beginning of the new academic year in September.

We were able to complete the teacher meetings and student focus groups with four of nine schools during the summer term, and the remaining meetings were completed in the new academic year. The final stage involved inviting all sixteen of our school partners to the stakeholder meeting in October; the original invitation was sent via email in July, followed by phone calls made upon the return to school in September. We chased schools by email and phone, and of our sixteen partners, seven schools were able to attend the stakeholder meeting.

Analysis of data

There were four stages involved in the collection and collation of data:

- Key questions from the primary survey formed part of the 'hygiene question analysis' compiled by MyKindaFuture; the other questions formed the basis of our research and from these we were able to create the questions for the teacher meeting and student focus group. The survey also provided us with a brief overview of the provision available across all schools, and enabled us to develop a better understanding of which information we needed to obtain from schools during the two meetings.
- The mapping templates were collated to create an overview spreadsheet detailing which year groups take part in which activities and events (Item 7 – *Overview Mapping of Employer Engagement* – in the Appendix). This was then broken down to explore how provision varies across the three local authorities, and which activities/events were considered to be the most popular. The number of students at risk of becoming NEET varies across the schools, meaning that the data was analysed against which schools participate in the activities, and not the number of students impacted by the activity or event in question.
- The teacher meetings and student focus groups involved collecting a large amount of qualitative data. This was primarily analysed by comparing the data by local authority and then drawing on the general consensus, and similarities between the schools.
- The stakeholder meeting largely focused on exploring what is available to students and facilitating the sharing of good practice. This was then developed into an exploration of how students could be supported further with their next steps after school.

SECTION 1

What provision are schools currently offering to students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET at the point that they leave compulsory education?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study has been commissioned by the Heathrow Community Fund to establish a clear picture, across the three boroughs of Slough, South Bucks and Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead of the support available to young people with additional needs who are at risk of becoming NEET at the point that they leave compulsory education.

The data gathered will inform potential funders, such as Heathrow, of the level of support students receive from schools and how schools can further support students with their next steps after they leave compulsory education. This will enable potential funders to identify the most effective and most in demand programmes for future investment.

Information was collected from 16 schools, interacting with 23 teachers and 53 students. The initial stage involved all partners completing a survey, Item 2 – *NEET Research Project Survey* – in the Appendix, and mapping template, Item 4 – *Mapping of Employer Engagement Template* – in the Appendix, which provided the foundation for our research. Once this information was collected, it was collated and analysed to produce a comprehensive map of the careers provision currently on offer across the three local authority (LA) areas. By creating a consolidated overview of how students are being supported with their next steps after school, we were able to compare our findings in order to determine how provision differs, and is similar, across the LA.

The analysis of the data highlighted the four most popular activities that schools offer to students as follows:

- IAG sessions
- STEM events/activities
- team building activities
- apprenticeship events.

External providers were identified as delivering careers provision to 81% of schools, with the second most popular choices being form tutors and teachers with learning responsibilities. It is evident from this that students at risk require a more focused amount of support from teaching staff when it comes to determining their next steps, and it is important that this support be tailored towards their needs in order to create the biggest impact.

The findings also determined that careers provision is primarily tailored by year group, despite the varying difference in ability often present across a cohort, with only 20% of schools saying their provision is tailored by those at risk of being identified as NEET. This encourages us to ask the question, how well prepared are schools to support students at risk of becoming NEET, and how do they feel they could be better prepared in order to tailor their provision not by year group, but by ability and special educational need?

RESULTS

The research conducted explores current provision, how useful the provision is viewed to be by both teachers and students, and what can be done to further support students. In section 1 the results will focus on the current provision.

There were several stages involved in determining the current provision that schools offer; primarily we asked schools to complete a survey (Item 2) which offered an insight in to the foundation of the school's offerings. Schools were also asked to complete a mapping template which more clearly identified the activities and events they offer to their students. Both of these documents were used to inform the teacher meetings and student focus groups with our comprehensive partners.

Key findings

The data provides a wealth of information and can be manipulated in different ways to provide comparison between different types of schools and local authority areas. For the purposes of this study the following analysis has been undertaken to highlight key findings from the data:

- Percentage of schools participating in each type of employer engagement activity
- Employer engagement activities in school by local authority
- Breakdown of activities by local authority

Key findings – survey

Five hygiene questions were asked across the three boroughs in order to find comparative data, which was then collated by MyKindaFuture. Please find the report under Item 8 – *Hygiene question analysis*. The remaining questions on the survey were created by LTW, and informed our teacher meeting and student focus group questions.

The analysis of the hygiene questions highlighted that external providers deliver a majority of the careers provision for schools. Although all but one of the respondents chose multiple options, the feedback indicated that 81% of schools use external providers to deliver careers provision to their pupils, notably their alternative provision students. The second most popular choices were form tutors, and teachers with learning responsibilities.

When asked how schools tailor their careers provision to different students, the most common answer was 'by year group', then 'by educational need', with 20% saying 'at risk of NEET'. Following on from this, when asked how careers provision is delivered to students in their school, the most popular choice was 'on a specially designated day or event', with 81% of respondents choosing this answer.

When looking at how teaching staff felt their school was implementing the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, respondents gave an average ranking across all benchmarks of 3.53. The highest rated were: 'a stable careers programme' and 'personal guidance' both with an average of 2.71. The lowest-ranked benchmark was 'learnings from career and labour market information' with an average of 5.

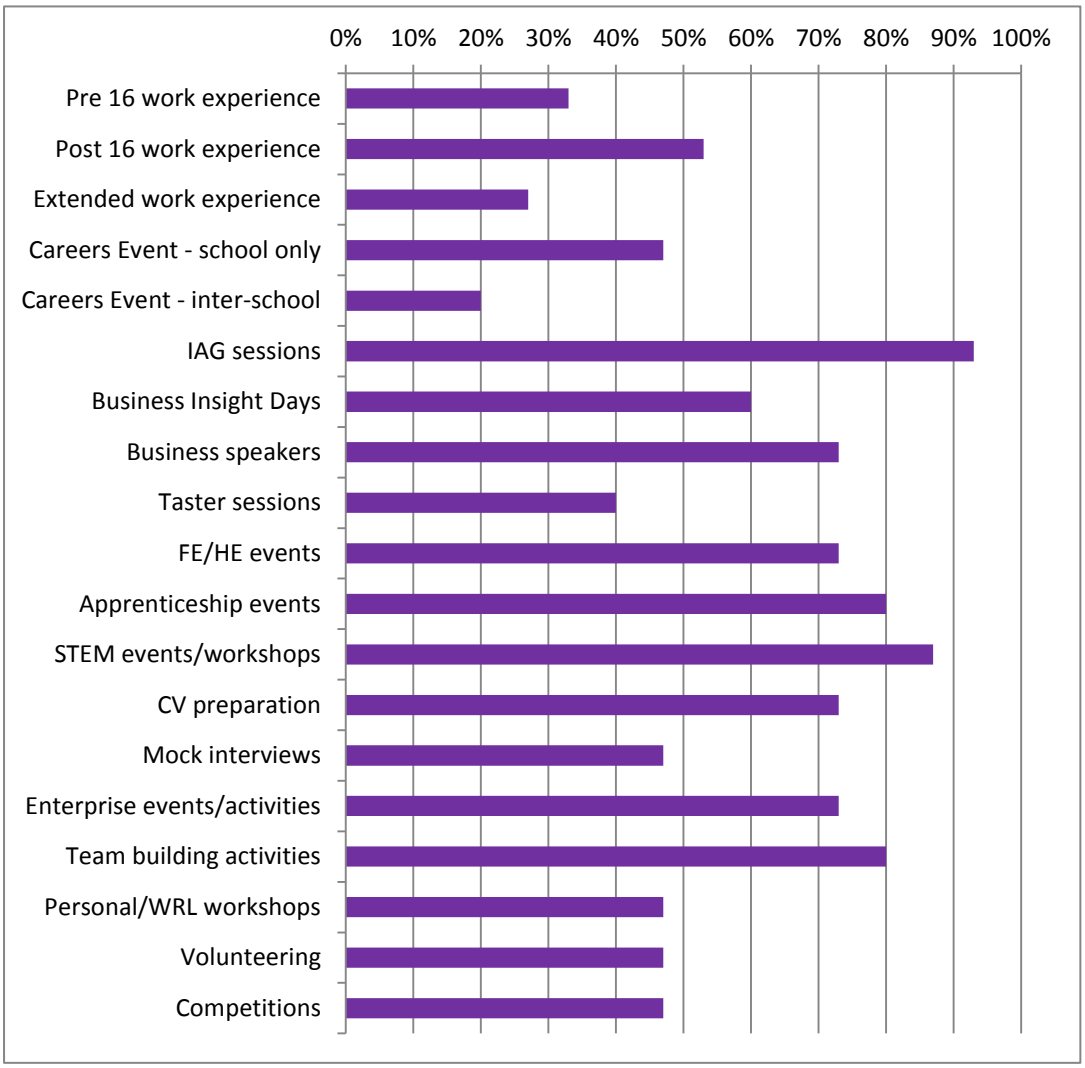
Other statements that received low ratings were:

- 'Linking curriculum learning to careers' (3.71)
- 'Experience of workplaces' (3.71)
- 'Encounters with employers and employees' (3.50)

The research found that there were improvements to be made in providing more encounters with employers and employees.

Results – mapping template

Percentage of schools participating in each type of employer engagement activity

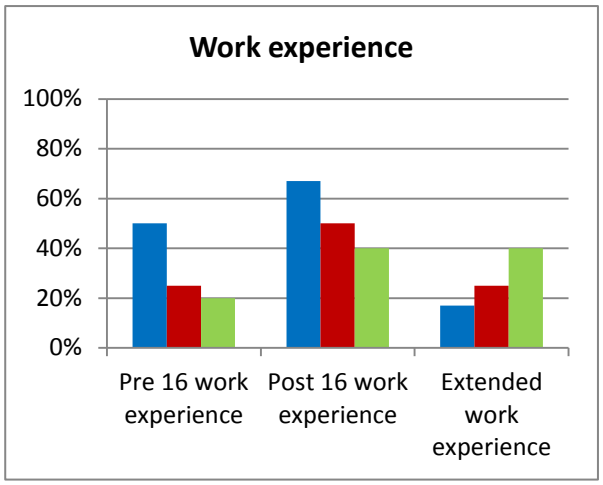


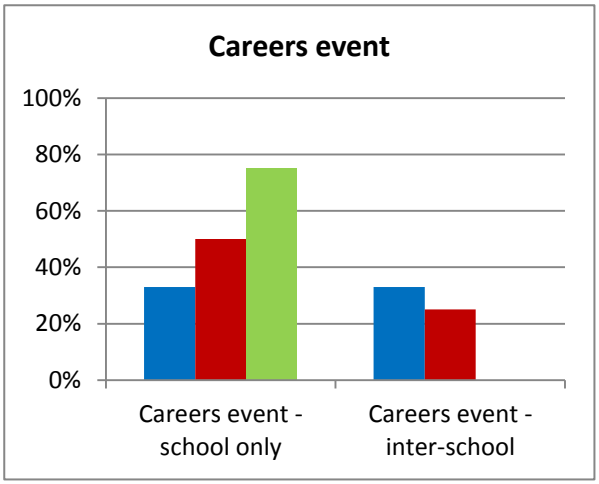
Employer engagement activities in school by local authority

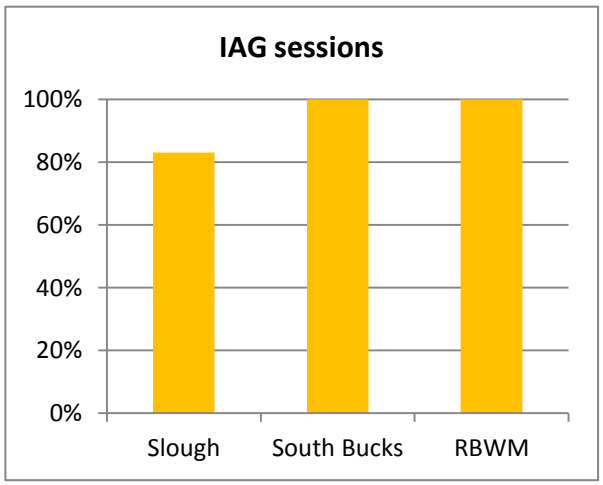
Area	Total number of schools	Pre 16 work experience	Post 16 work experience	Extended work experience	Careers event (school only and inter-school)	IAG sessions	Business insight days	Business speakers	FE/HE events	Apprenticeship events	CV preparation	Mock interviews	Enterprise events/activities	Personal/WRL workshops	Volunteering	Mentoring
Slough	6	3	4	1	3	5	4	3	4	5	2	1	4	3	2	4
South Bucks	4	1	2	1	3	4	1	4	4	4	4	2	3	2	2	3
RBWM	5	1	2	2	3	5	4	4	3	3	5	4	4	2	3	4

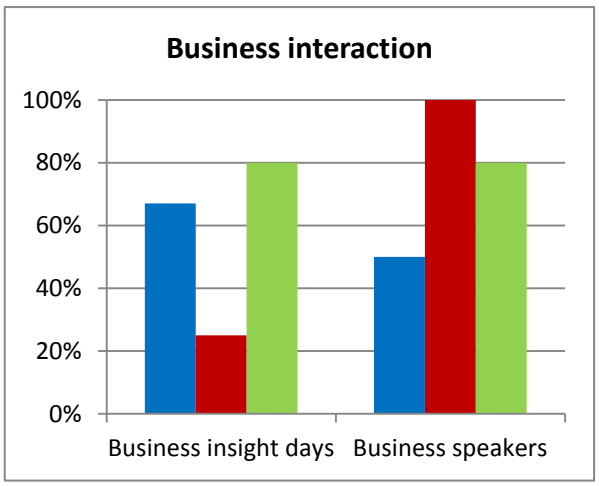
Breakdown of activities by local authority

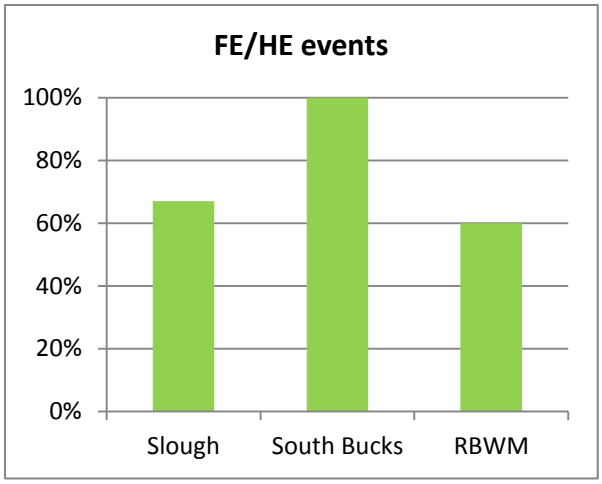
Slough **South Bucks** **RBWM**










FE/HE events
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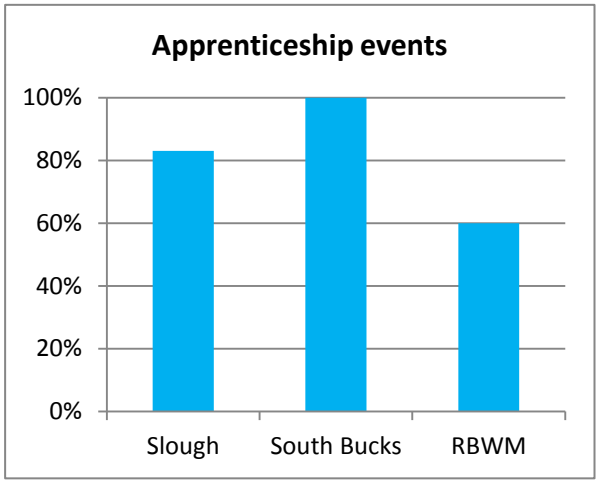
Apprenticeship events
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South Bucks
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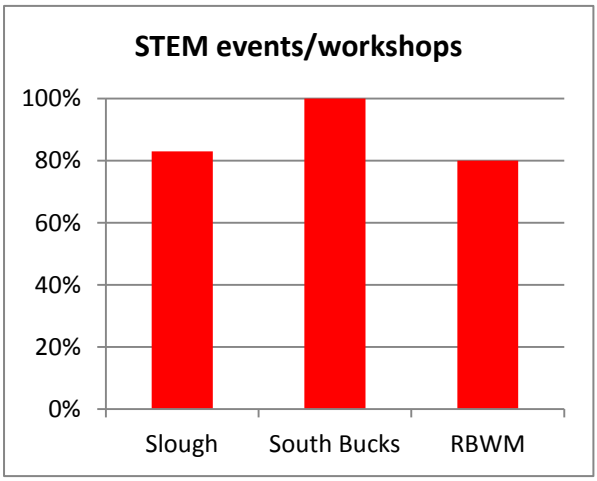
STEM events/workshops
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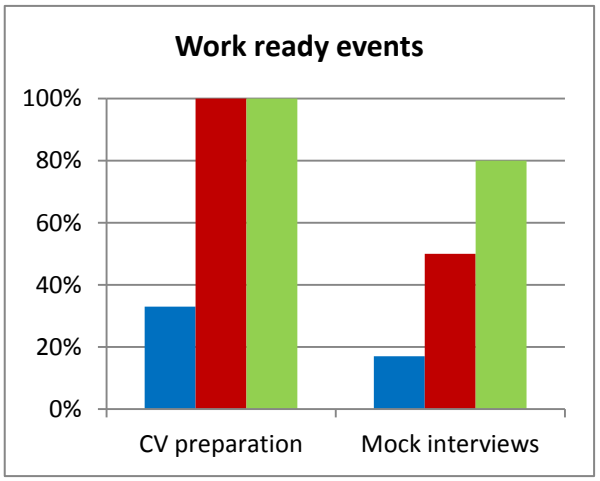
Slough
South Bucks
RBWM


Work ready events
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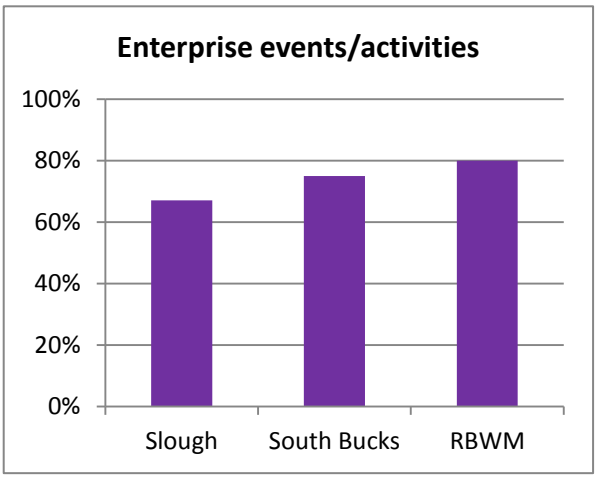
CV preparation
Mock interviews


Enterprise events/activities
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Slough
South Bucks
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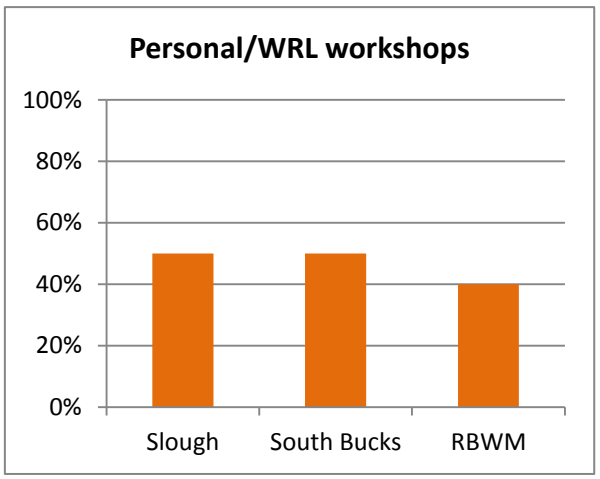
Personal/WRL workshops
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Slough
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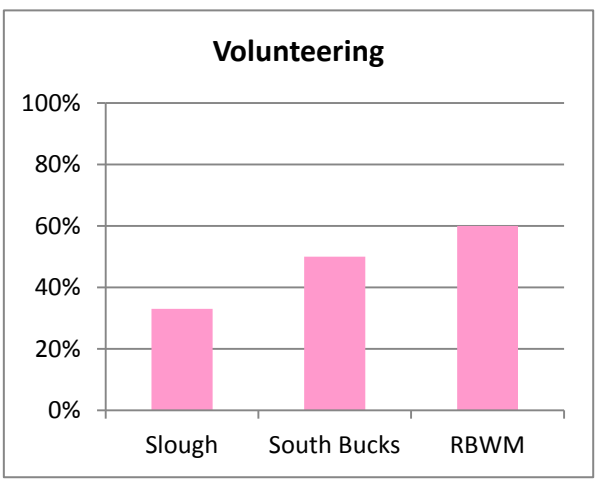
Volunteering
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South Bucks
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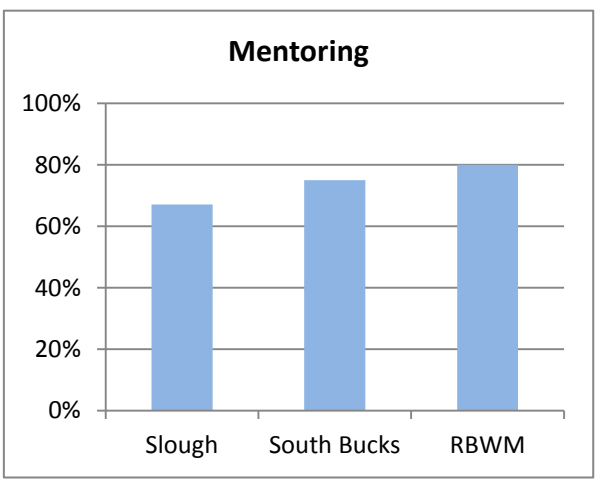
Mentoring
100%
80%
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Slough
South Bucks
RBWM

Key findings – teacher meetings

We held teacher meetings with eight of our nine comprehensive partners (four from Slough, two from South Bucks and two from RBWM).[10] Generally across all three local authorities students at risk of becoming NEET seem to receive the same provision as those students who are not at risk. This section will be explored using three of the questions in the teacher meeting document (Item 5).

1. **Please describe all current provision (i.e. additional support) for young people most at risk of becoming NEET in your school.**

   The most common activity to be mentioned was 1-2-1 IAG sessions, a mixture of internal and external. This activity provides the baseline for careers provision as it is offered to entire year groups (please see Item 7 for details of which year groups participate in this activity).

   When breaking the data down to compare the provision across the three local authorities the following comparatives can be made:

   - Slough schools mentioned employer interaction through careers days, CV workshops, mock interview, apprenticeships talks and work experience. These were aimed towards entire year groups and not specifically those students who are at risk of becoming NEET. One school in Slough participates in Adviza's 'Captain of my Ship'[11] programme which is aimed towards developing confidence and personal drive in young people.

   - South Bucks schools offer IAG sessions, but they expand on this and offer the most alternative provision for at risk students across the three local authorities. One school in South Bucks has an entire Learning Support team who provide further support to students, including offering them more help with their work experience, and monitoring students during employability skills days.

     The second South Bucks school also offers Adviza's 'Captain of my Ship' programme as well as Johnson & Johnson's 'Bridge to Employment'[12] which is aimed towards building skills and confidence. The school also referred to employer interaction activities (across entire year groups to include at risk students) and a school initiative called 'Life Lessons' which is used to deliver a whole series of topics surrounding careers, and employability skills.

[10] We were unable to conduct a teacher meeting with one school from RBWM, despite numerous calls and emails, therefore we have only been able to include the teacher meeting findings for two schools across RBWM.

[11] Captain of My Ship is a programme delivered by Adviza and funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC). The programme is designed to support young people in school aged 12-15 who are not achieving their potential for a variety of reasons. By matching these young people to skilled adult mentors, each young person is encouraged and enabled to identify their barriers. Students are said to engage and develop important employability skills.

[12] Johnson & Johnson's Bridge to Employment initiative aims to inspire young people (14-18 year olds) from disadvantaged communities to stay in school, excel academically and elevate their career aspirations. Through academic enrichment activities, career readiness and exploration opportunities, and higher education preparation, BTE students are exposed to various careers and motivated to pursue higher levels of academic progress and take the steps necessary to build a better future and achieve their full potential.
Who We Are | FHI360 - Bridge to Employment. [online] Available at: https://www.bridge2employment.org/who-we-are/ [Accessed 17 Dec. 2018].

- Similarly to the other schools, those from RBWM indicated that they offered a mix of internal and external IAG sessions to all students, and this was developed for students who need slightly more help with their next steps through follow-up internal IAG sessions and meetings.

Aside from the careers days and other employer interaction activities listed above, all provision is offered through 1-2-1 programmes, which will be explored further in Section 2 (Determine how beneficial current provision is for students and which programmes have the most impact).

2. Are all young people at risk of becoming NEET given the same support?

- 50% of Slough schools said that students receive the same support, with the other 50% commenting that although the foundation is the same, the approach and type of support is individualised according to the needs of the student.

- Both South Bucks schools answered yes; one school expanded to comment on the Learning Support team they have in place (mentioned above) to support students further. The second school said that all students receive opportunities; however they also focus specific support on certain groups within the school community who need extra support or a tailored approach. They find different ways to engage students that may lie outside of the traditional curriculum.

- Both RBWM schools also answered yes, with one school saying that students are not given much support but this is something that the school is looking to develop.

3. Is there a clear link made for students between what they are learning in school and potential careers?

As one of the focuses of the Gatsby benchmarks, it is important for schools to be creating links between the curriculum and potential careers (Gatsby Benchmark 4).

- All Slough schools indicated that this was something they were working towards. Two Slough schools said that this was up to the teachers to implement in their lessons and indicated that there was nothing set in the curriculum to promote this. One school said that the link was made during enrichment sessions and that they would soon be introducing careers boards in classrooms. It had been stressed in their Continued Personal Development (CPD) that teachers should start to emphasise this area; the school recognised the importance of this as an engagement strategy. The fourth school said that the link was made in the options booklet for options evening.

- Both South Bucks schools indicated that they try to make the link but it is not made as explicitly as it should be. However, this is something they are both working to develop.

- Both RBWM schools commented that the importance of creating this link had been discussed in CPD and in SLT/leadership meetings.

Key findings – student focus group

We held student focus groups with all nine of our comprehensive partners (four from Slough, two from South Bucks and three from RBWM). The careers provision provided by the school will be explored against how confident students feel in their work ready skills and knowledge about their

next steps, as well as how much support they feel they have received from the school, through four questions.

Student participation across the three local authorities is as follows:

- Slough: 20 students
- South Bucks: 14 students
- RBWM: 19 students

1. **Do you have any aspirations or areas of interest for when you leave school?**

   - **Slough:**
     - 1 x not sure
     - 5 x employment (car mechanic; electrician; trades; computer science; police officer)
     - 1 x college
     - 3 x apprenticeships
     - 9 x university
     - 1 x undecided between university and an apprenticeship.

   - **South Bucks:**
     - 3 x not sure
     - 5 x employment (sport, personal trainer, music, accounting, teacher)
     - 1 x apprenticeship
     - 5 x college or apprenticeship

   - **RBWM:**
     - 4 x not sure
     - 1 x sixth form
     - 6 x college
     - 1 x college or sixth form
     - 2 x college or apprenticeship
     - 5 x apprenticeship

2. **Do you feel confident in your knowledge of: what colleges there are locally; course options; apprenticeships; salary expectations for different jobs; which jobs/sectors industry experts think will provide the best future opportunities; which careers best match your best/favourite subjects?**

   <u>Slough</u>

   - Three out of four Slough schools felt confident about local colleges, but there was a varying opinion surrounding how they had developed this knowledge. One school indicated that it was through personal research, one school mentioned that local colleges attended their school careers fair, and the third school said they explored this during their IAG sessions in Year 12.

   - One school felt confident about course options through support they had received from the school during open evenings and taster lessons. Two schools said they had some knowledge surrounding course options through school (options evening and Unifrog),

but they did not feel confident about this.[13] The remaining school said they had a relatively good idea through their own personal research.

- Two schools feel confident about apprenticeships through attending a talk and support from their form tutors. The other two schools said that they have not been given much information about apprenticeships, and are expected to carry out their own research.

- Three schools felt fairly confident in their knowledge of salary expectations for different jobs through personal research. All four schools said that they did not feel confident about the following two areas, as no help had been provided by the school and they had not done their own research:

    - jobs/sectors industry experts think will provide the best opportunities
    - which careers best match their best/favourite subjects.

South Bucks

- Both South Bucks schools felt confident in their knowledge of colleges, through both local knowledge and their school (talks, careers fairs, speaking to Heads of Year). One school had a clear idea of course options as they had specific interests, but one school had no knowledge on course options.

- Both schools had a fairly developed understanding of apprenticeships through the school; one school had participated in an apprenticeship workshop, and the other school had a talk during one of their assemblies.

- When asked about salary expectations, one school said they did not feel confident about this but were interested in finding out more. The second school had a good understanding through personal research and commented that the school offer them no help with this.

- Both schools had no knowledge about where the best opportunities are, and which careers best match their best/favourite subjects.

RBWM

- All three RBWM schools commented that they had a good understanding of local colleges through local knowledge. In terms of course options, two schools had a limited understanding of the options available to them. One school had a good understanding through open evenings and options evenings where they are given booklets on what they would be studying in each course.

- Two of three schools were not entirely sure about what an apprenticeship involves but had some idea through personal research. One school had a good understanding of apprenticeships but commented that the school focuses on universities and does not support other pathways as heavily. Nonetheless, they said that if they ask for help then the school will support them and they feel comfortable speaking to the Careers Lead.

[13] Unifrog aims to provide a one-stop-shop where students can explore their interests, then find and successfully apply for their best next step after school.
About - Unifrog. [online] Available at: https://www.unifrog.org/about [Accessed 19 Dec. 2018].

- One school had a limited understanding of salary expectations through jobs that they hold, but the remaining two schools were not sure how much they could be expecting to earn in the future. Two schools had no knowledge on which jobs/sectors industry experts think will provide the best future opportunities; one school said they had received two talks from a college and university which explored career pathways and entry level requirements.

- In terms of which careers best match their best/favourite subjects, one school said they had no knowledge on this. Two schools commented that links had been made across some subjects but this had not been replicated across the entire curriculum.

3. **Which of the following have you received help with, and do you feel confident about these things: completing an application form; creating a CV; interview preparation; using online resources for college/apprenticeship information?**

Slough

- All four Slough schools said they received no help with application forms; when asked about CVs one school said yes (through workshops and during PSHE), but three schools said they had received no help.

- Two schools participated in mock interviews but commented that a yearly follow up would be beneficial. Both remaining schools said their school had given them no advice about how to prepare for an interview.

- Three schools have received help on using online resources for college/apprenticeship information; one school had a company come in to deliver a talk on apprenticeships, and they taught students how to log on to the national apprenticeship website. The other two schools were given the information for Unifrog; there was no follow up across any of the three schools to check progress. The fourth school said they have knowledge on online resources through their own research and not through the school.

South Bucks

- No schools from South Bucks had received help with an application form; when asked about CVs both schools informed us they had received help through a workshop. One school initially forgot to mention this workshop, and only mentioned it when reminded by their teacher. One school had recently taken part in mock interviews with business volunteers interviewing the students; the second school had received no help with interview preparation.

- Both schools had received online resources for college/apprenticeship information. For one school this was during their apprenticeship workshop (they received an email with further information following the session), and for the second school this was through their Connexions meetings.

RBWM

- Two schools from RBWM said they received no help with application forms, and the third school said they had received some help through family, but not the school. All

three schools had received help from the school with their CVs, two through practical workshops, and one through an assembly. All schools also said they had received no help with interview preparation from the school.

- In terms of using online resources for college/apprenticeship information, two schools said they had received no help with this from the school, and the third school had received the links to two websites and were pointed towards the information on UCAS.

4. What interaction have you had through school with local employers?

Slough

- All four Slough schools had participated in a careers fair at some point during their school education (mostly Year 9). Three of four schools complete work experience through the school, and the fourth are provided the opportunity to complete work experience if they source their placements themselves.

- When asked about if they had received talks from local employers/companies, two schools said yes and mentioned a range of activities and events; one school mentioned talks from O2 and a university admissions officer; the second school mentioned generalised talks about apprenticeships. The third and fourth schools did not mention any talks from local employers/companies.

- No schools mentioned visiting an employer's premises or having a business volunteer as a mentor.

South Bucks

- Both South Bucks schools have taken part in a careers event, with one school taking part in two (one held in-school and one held at Wycombe Wanderers stadium). When asked about work experience, one school said they complete their placements in Yr 10 and they are sourced by the school. The second school does not complete work experience as a year group, but are allowed time off school if they source their own placements.

- One school did not mention any talks from local employers/companies; the second school mentioned an apprenticeship talk, and Johnson & Johnson who delivered a session on their roles in the company and job opportunities in the organisation. Neither school had visited an employer's premises.

RBWM

- One RBWM school had attended a careers event to Reading College as a history trip. One school completed work experience in Yr 12.

- Two of three schools had local employers/companies come in to deliver talks; one school had received talks from BA about customer service, apprenticeships and Camp America; the second school mentioned talks from Reading University, Radley College and Honda.

- When asked about if they had visited an employer's premises, one school said yes (the same school who had not received in-school talks from local employers). They

mentioned attending trips to O2 for an apprenticeship talk, and an organisation in Langley where they learnt about different job opportunities.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the mapping template (Item 7) that schools across all three local authorities have a range of activities and events put in place to support students at risk of becoming NEET with their Post 16 and 18 options. The survey highlighted that 81% of schools use external providers to deliver careers provision to their pupils, notably their alternative provision students. External providers offer access to a broad range of employers and a wide range of activities; however providers charge schools for their services which need to be allowed for in the school budget.

It is clear that students at risk require a more focused amount of support from teaching staff when it comes to determining their next steps, as demonstrated by the survey findings – the second most popular choices for who delivers careers provision were form tutors and teachers with learning responsibilities. It is important that this support be tailored towards their needs in order to create the biggest impact.

The survey identified that careers provision is primarily tailored by year group, despite the varying difference in ability often present across a year group, with only 20% of schools saying their provision is tailored by those identified as at risk of becoming NEET. This encourages us to ask the question, how well prepared are schools to support students at risk of becoming NEET, and how do they feel they could be better prepared in order to tailor their provision not by year group, but by ability and special educational need?

The new Gatsby Benchmarks that are now in place ask that all schools incorporate careers provision into the school curriculum. Teaching staff need to relate their curriculum to jobs available in that sector; schools are asked to have an understanding of labour market information and how this will impact their students, and need to provide students with this information. This again lends itself to the question, just how prepared are schools to deliver careers provision in general, and how can they ensure that they deliver an individualised focus for at risk students?

Implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks was given an average of 3.53 across the schools. This suggests that although schools are incorporating the criteria into their careers provision there are still targets that they need to work towards. The lowest-ranked benchmark was 'learnings from career and labour market information' with an average of 5. When asked about LMI during the teacher meetings generally the schools indicated that they received this information from various sources and it was available either via their website or delivered to students in assemblies.

The survey also indicated that more encounters with employers and employees need to be provided which ties in with the feedback received from the student focus groups.[14]

From the data we collected, the four most popular activities that schools offer to students are as follows:

1. IAG sessions
2. STEM events/activities
3. Team building activities
4. Apprenticeship events

[14] This will be discussed further in Section 3 where we identify what more can be done to support students.

The usefulness of these activities will be explored in Section 2. The four activities identified above will have been chosen for a variety of reasons which could include but are not limited to: the outcomes required for students from frameworks such as the Gatsby Benchmarks; the availability of activities; if there is funding available for specific programmes.

Upon collating the results to the survey questions, it became evident that South Bucks offers the most alternative provision for at risk students across the three local authorities. All three areas offer IAG sessions; Slough expands on this through a number of work ready events, however these events are not tailored specifically towards students at risk of becoming NEET. This provision is developed further by South Bucks; one school has a Learning Support team who help students on a one-to-one basis, and the second school offers a number of mentoring programmes as well as generalised activities similar to those offered by Slough.

One South Bucks school also mentioned that they sometimes find the need to identify different ways to re-engage students, thus offering a tailored approach to their careers provision. This answer was mirrored by 50% of the Slough schools, who also commented that although the foundation of provision is the same for all students at risk of becoming NEET, the approach and type of support must be individualised according to the needs of the student.

Students were asked a range of questions focusing on the confidence they felt in their knowledge of their Post 16 and 18 options, and their work ready skills. On the whole the schools had a good understanding of their local colleges and the course options available to them.

When asked about apprenticeships we received very mixed feedback. In Slough 50% of schools felt confident; in RBWM 33% felt confident but mentioned that the school focuses more on the university pathway; in South Bucks 100% of schools had a developed understanding of apprenticeships. These figures are especially interesting when compared against the mapping template, which identified apprenticeship events as the fourth most popular activity. This leads us to question whether students are receiving the information they need regarding apprenticeships (what is involved and how to apply).

Students across all schools stated that they had little or no knowledge regarding which jobs/sectors will provide the best future opportunities and which careers best match their favourite subjects, which mirrors the feedback from teachers. When asked if there was a clear link made between the curriculum and potential careers all schools said that this was something that they were currently working towards that needed to be developed and made more explicit.

The support that students had received from the school with developing their work ready skills varied from school to school. With the exception of three schools from Slough all other schools had received help with their CVs, whether this was through a workshop or an assembly. Two of four Slough schools had participated in mock interviews; schools in RBWM had received no interview support; one of two schools in South Bucks had participated in a mock interview session.[15]

Students were also asked about the interaction they had through school with local employers through a variety of activities and events. All students identified at least one interaction with local employers, whether this was through a careers fair, work experience, business speakers or business insight days. The specific interactions which were discussed in the student focus groups will be discussed in further detail in Section 2 to determine whether they found the events impactful and useful.

[15] Some students expanded on their answers to include whether they thought any of these activities would be useful, all of which will be explored in Section 2.

SECTION 2

How beneficial is current provision for students, and which programmes have the most impact?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the previous section we explored the current provision available to students across the three local authorities of Slough, South Bucks and RBWM; in Section 2 we will determine how beneficial students find this provision, and which programmes have the most impact, to identify where potential investment would be best suited.

However, it is important to remember that schools have certain criteria which they need to implement to make sure they are meeting targets and required outcomes for students. The real question here becomes, how are the implemented programmes measuring up against what the students feel are the most valuable activities and events?

We primarily used the teacher meeting to explore how teaching staff feel the most effective form of support is delivered, and compared this to the feedback from the student focus group. We also used the results from the breakdown of the mapping template against the feedback from the student focus group to explore how useful they found the activities and events that had been identified as the most popular by teaching staff.

The analysis of the data highlighted that, across all three authorities, the most effective form of support is 1-2-1 and personalisation because teaching staff found that students respond best in 1-2-1 situations. Students identified the most helpful activities as work experience and careers fairs as they help them visualise the workplace. They also said that they find apprenticeship talks and workshops useful because they help them to explore their options, and they find work ready workshops (such as CV preparation and mock interviews) useful because they aid their entry into the world of work.

RESULTS

The research conducted explores current provision, how useful the provision is viewed to be by both teachers and students, and what can be done to further support students. In Section 2 the results will focus on how beneficial the current provision is for students.

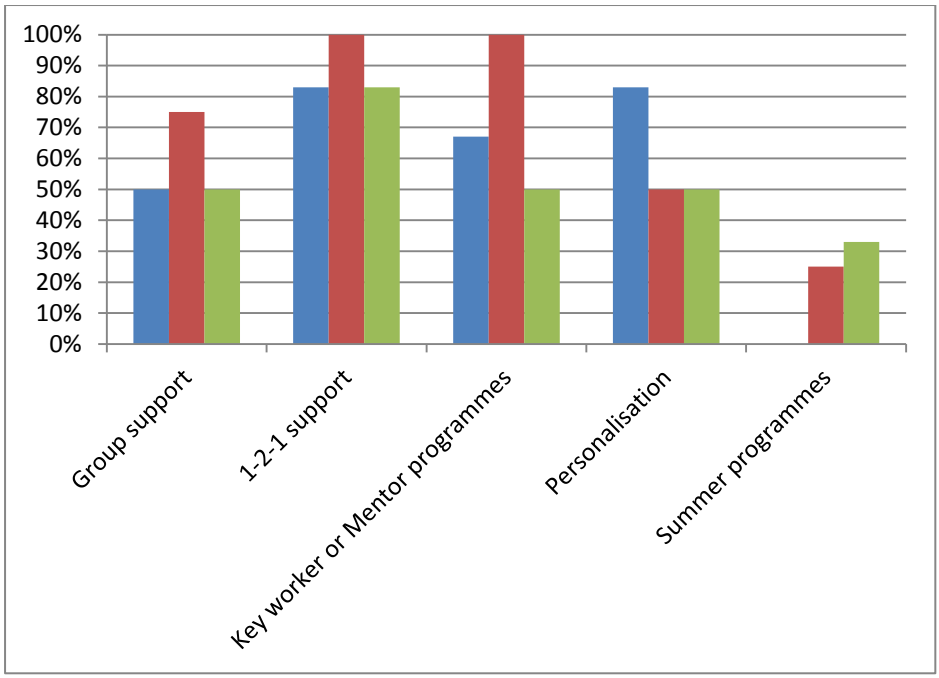
There were several stages involved in determining how beneficial the current provision is; primarily we asked schools to complete a survey (Item 2) which offered an insight into which type of support is thought to be the most effective, which was further explored in the teacher meeting. During the focus groups, students were asked to identify which activities and events they found to be the most helpful.

Key findings – survey

One question in the survey was aimed towards identifying which type of support teaching staff think is the most effective form of support for young people with additional needs. This enabled us to develop an overview from a larger number of schools, as the survey was completed by all comprehensive and overview partners.

What type of support do you think is most effective for young people with additional needs?

Slough **South Bucks** **RBWM**



Key findings – teacher meeting

We held teacher meetings with eight of our nine comprehensive partners (four from Slough, two from South Bucks and two from RBWM), enabling a more in-depth exploration of the most effective forms of support. This section will be explored using the following question: *'In your opinion, what is the most effective form of support? And why?'* (Question 2 in Item 5).

Slough

- One school commented that IAG sessions with Adviza provide the base support for all students, and this is then developed for students identified as at risk of becoming NEET through the support of a RONI worker.[16] They believe this is the most effective because at risk students also receive support throughout the summer holidays through the RONI worker which gives them someone to talk to outside of school.

- The second school directly referred to 1-2-1 and personalisation as the most effective forms of support. The school expanded on this to say that although there are common strains amongst those who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET, they are highly complex and every situation is different meaning you have to work with these students on a 1-2-1 basis.

[16] RONI worker - Slough Borough Council has implemented a Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI), which allows its Young People Service to help schools identify students most at risk of becoming NEET. Members of SBC staff that support schools and students through this process are known as 'RONI workers'.

- The third school also identified 1-2-1 support as being the most effective form of support as they felt that students appreciate the help more in this setting. The school mentioned two specific interventions that have been put in place to support those students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET, and believed that these interventions provide the most effective form of support: the first was an 'intervention booklet' which involves monitoring students on a daily basis and providing them with learning mentors. The second was 'target monitoring' which involves weekly monitoring and includes mentoring from the Deputy Head on a weekly basis.

- The fourth school identified personalisation as the most effective form of support because they believe it helps develop the student's sense of identity. The school said that, as a generalisation, students identified as at risk of becoming NEET do not have high aspirations already in place so the school believe that the most effective form of support is setting high expectations for students and helping them with their aspirations. However, the school recognised that the personalisation approach depends on the student because sometimes singling them out can make them feel like they are different to everyone else.

South Bucks

- One school identified the individual appointment either with Connexions or with someone who is able to guide the student as being the most effective and having the most impact because it is difficult for students not to participate in a discussion when they are in a 1-2-1 situation.

- The second school initially identified group support as being one of the most effective forms of support because individual students who face similar challenges can come together and receive the same support. The school then went on to mention 1-2-1 and personalisation, saying that this works better higher up in education (Yr 9 onwards) because the younger students may find a 1-2-1 situation intimidating. They referred specifically to the IAG sessions and general careers advice as being the most useful.

  The downside with this form of support is the time commitment which can often be difficult for teachers to provide. The school said that summer programmes are not helpful because there is no guarantee that students will attend and they are difficult to manage.

RBWM

- One school said that 1-2-1 and personalisation are most effective because they make the students feel most comfortable.

- The second school also identified 1-2-1 as being the most effective form of support because students are provided with the opportunity to go through their career plans and highlight what they need to do to achieve this. The school expanded on their answer to say that 1-2-1s work best because a large majority of students need social and economic support, and students are not as forthcoming in group settings because they are very vulnerable students.

Key findings – student focus group

We held student focus groups with all nine of our comprehensive partners (four from Slough, two from South Bucks and three from RBWM). In the previous section students identified which activities and events they take part in, and when doing so they also touched upon whether they

found the activities and events impactful, all of which will be detailed in this section. We will also explore the answer to the following question: '*Thinking about the different support/advice/activities you have taken part in, which have been the most helpful to you?*' (Question 8 in Item 6).

Student participation across the three local authorities is as follows:

- Slough: 20 students
- South Bucks: 14 students
- RBWM: 19 students

1. Expanding on current provision questions

Four questions from the student focus group were explored in Section 1 (questions 2, 3, 4 and 6 in Item 6). When answering these questions about current provision, some students expanded on their answer to include whether they found the activities or events to be useful. In Section 2 we will detail these findings to provide a brief overview of the provision that students identified as being helpful.

Slough

- One school said that they explored local colleges in their IAG sessions which they found useful because they helped students think about their options more than before. They also attended a careers fair at Heathrow and said that this helped as it provided them with a range of opportunities.

- The second school said that the talk they received on apprenticeships was useful because they developed a better understanding of what is available to them. The school attended a careers fair in Yr 9; all students found this useful because they talked to a number of companies on a 1-2-1 basis.

- The third school commented that they did not find the careers event useful because they felt they were too young to take in the information given.

- Students from the fourth school found their Yr 12 work experience more useful than the work experience they completed in Yr 10 because they were given more responsibility and found they worked better in a team, whereas in Yr 10 they were mostly observing.

South Bucks

- A student from one school said their IAG session was useful because it identified a wide range of careers for them to choose from; however, another student from the same school said they did not find it useful because they did not remember what was discussed during the session. Students said that the careers event was useful depending on what you were interested in as there was nothing arts-based.

- The second school did not expand on their answers.

RBWM

- One school received a talk from Reading University surrounding entry level expectations which students found useful.

- The second school participated in a work ready conference in Yr 10; they found the Q&A with business volunteers and CV workshops to be the most useful. Students mentioned that they previously had 'learning to work' lessons in Yr 9 – 11 (once every two weeks), where they would develop their work ready skills; some students found this very useful, but they mentioned that how much they learnt often depended on who was delivering the session. When discussing their IAG sessions, some students commented that they found it very helpful to explore their options and others felt that they were too young to get the maximum impact because they were unsure of their future pathway.

- The third school said that their IAG sessions helped because they were able to explore their pathway in further detail, including searching for colleges and CV support.

2. Thinking about the different support/advice/activities you have taken part in, which have been the most helpful to you?

Slough

- The first school identified the most useful activities as the trip to a law firm and the talk they received from an admissions officer regarding personal statements.

- The second school highlighted the careers fair because they had the opportunity to talk to a range of business professionals; the apprenticeship talk; work experience because it is the most practical and allows you to visualise the workplace and speak to new people.

- The third and fourth schools said work experience has been the most helpful activity because it enabled them to get a feel for the world of work, and it helped them understand what the workplace looks like as well as improved their confidence.

South Bucks

- The first school said that work experience and the careers fair were the most useful activities.

- The second school identified a range of activities and events as being helpful: work experience; apprenticeship workshop; mock interviews; IAG sessions.

RBWM

- The first school said that the talk from Radley College about career pathways and the talk from Reading University about entry level expectations were the most useful.

- Students mentioned a variety of activities and events as being the most helpful: apprenticeship talk; Camp America talk; IAG sessions.

- The third school identified the IAG sessions, apprenticeship talk at O2 and CV support as the most helpful activities or events.

CONCLUSION

We developed our understanding of how beneficial current provision is from asking teachers what they believed to be the most effective forms of support, and by asking students to identify which activities or events helped them the most when it came to ensuring they were prepared for their Post 16 or Post 18 pathways.

It is clear from the survey findings across all three local authorities that teaching staff view the most effective form of support as 1-2-1s with students; when asked to expand on this during the teacher meetings it was mentioned that this is because although there are common strains between students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET, each student and situation is different, and must therefore be worked with individually.

Working with students on a 1-2-1 basis makes it compulsory for students to participate in a discussion as opposed to when they are in a group setting and are able to rely on other individuals in the group to participate. One school mentioned that 1-2-1 support is more impactful for Yr 9 students upwards as the younger years may find this setting intimidating. The only limiting factor with 1-2-1 support is the time commitment needed to make an impact which can often make it difficult for teachers to provide a good level of support. This ties into how well resourced schools are to support students; although they may have a clear understanding of how to impact students sometimes their commitment is limited by their lack of availability.

Summer programmes were the least popular; no Slough schools chose this form of support as the most effective; 25% of South Bucks schools viewed them as effective; 33% of RBWM schools chose summer programmes as an effective form of support. When asked to expand on this it was mentioned that summer programmes are not helpful because there is no guarantee that students will attend and they are difficult to manage.

It is clear which activities and events teachers find to be the most impactful for students from the current provision detailed in Section 1. From the data we collected, the four most popular activities that schools offer to students are as follows:

1. IAG sessions
2. STEM events/activities
3. Team building activities
4. Apprenticeship events

IAG sessions have been identified as the most popular activity, which aligns with the view that 1-2-1 and personalisation are the most effective forms of support. However, when students were asked about which activity they found to be the most useful only three of our nine comprehensive partners identified IAG sessions as being the most helpful activity.

Across all three local authorities, students referred to the following activities or events as the most helpful:

1. Work experience
2. Apprenticeship talks and workshops
3. Careers fairs
4. Work ready workshops (e.g. CV preparation and mock interviews)

Students said that they benefit from visualising the workplace through work experience and interaction with employers and employees. They also benefit from participating in activities that

feature an interactive or practical element which is why they identified work experience, careers fairs and work ready workshops as some of their most helpful activities. Finally, students benefit from hearing their options and receiving equal support with all Post 16 and Post 18 pathways, which is why they identified apprenticeship talks and workshops as one of the most helpful activities.

SECTION 3

What more can be done to support students at risk of being identified as NEET with their next steps after school?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the previous sections we have explored the current provision on offer to students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET, and determined which activities and events students find to be the most useful. In this section we will explore additional provision that can be put in place to further support students and ensure they are prepared for their next steps after school.

We determined this using the teacher meetings and the Stakeholder meeting, where we asked teaching staff what they would do differently in terms of provision if budget/funding was not an issue or limitation. We compared this against the feedback we received from students regarding what else could be done to help them achieve their aspiration and/or make their next steps, and how they preferred to be given information about careers and next steps.

Analysis of the data highlighted that although school staff and students identified a range of activities and events which they felt to be useful, generally these all involved stronger connections with employers and employees. Teachers want students to be fully aware of the range of jobs and opportunities available to them, and students want to be able to visualise the workplace and develop their work ready skills to ensure they are prepared ahead of their entry into the world of work.

RESULTS

Key findings – teacher meeting

We held teacher meetings with eight of our nine comprehensive partners (four from Slough, two from South Bucks and two from RBWM), enabling a more in-depth exploration of the most effective forms of support. This section will be explored using the following question: *'What would you do differently in terms of provision if budget/funding were not an issue/limitation?'* (Question 9 in Item 5).

<u>Slough</u>

- One school said they would look at developing work ready skills for Yr 12 as they start their courses (for example, CVs, job applications etc.). They would also create links with employers at the start of courses through workshops. The workshops would involve students identifying which career path they are interested in, and then someone from that field would come in and engage with the students on real-life scenarios enabling them to start visualising the workplace.

  The school also identified that more advice on alternative pathways is needed, and more support for those students who do not want to go to university. Finally they highlighted that in the sixth form careers guidance sits with tutors, and the consistency of the message varies depending on tutors. If funding was available they would create a consolidated programme to be delivered centrally which would incorporate career experts' knowledge.

- The second school stressed the importance of having stronger connections with employers and employees, and said that ideally they would want business professionals to be based in the school and run some of their curriculum in order to create strong relationships between students and the world of work. The school said that the earlier students are introduced to work ready skills the better as they need to be given time to become familiar with new skills or concepts such as CVs, job applications etc.

- The third school said they would offer 1-2-1 support with individual pathways; introduce teaching assistants to work with students in small groups; use any additional funding to participate in more events and create more interactions with employers and employees.

- The fourth school said they would want to create increased interactions with employers and employees through both work experience and having business professionals come in to school and lead sessions with students. With regards to work experience, teaching staff mentioned that they would want to remove barriers to work experience to make it more accessible for students who may find it difficult to approach businesses themselves.

  The school also spoke about the importance of having more representatives and examples of people who have achieved through hard work from a similar community or background as this provides students with someone to identify with. The school said that students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET lack familiarity with the world of work, and they need to be made more aware of the wide range of jobs and industries available to them.

  Finally, the school referred to a 'road-map' idea which would involve a step-by-step pathway guide for students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET. Students would identify a high aspiration and would then think of ways that they could achieve this. The school said that if students only have one path in mind it is easier for that path to become blocked, however if they identify three or four different paths then it may become easier for them to achieve their aspiration.

South Bucks

- The first school said they would offer 1-2-1 maths and English tuition as students' attainment in these subjects has an impact on their motivation with their next steps. The school identified that it is often difficult to get students off timetable which makes participating in activities and events harder as there is a more focused approach to their academic education.

- The second school said they would employ an assistant to support the Careers Lead because the Careers Lead also has teaching responsibility which makes it difficult to dedicate an increased amount of time towards careers provision in school. The school also identified that additional funding would help them to deliver more internal and external activities and events. Current participation in events is self-funded by parents meaning that student participation is low.

  The school said they would collate a printed or online development pack for all students so they could log their activities and the learning derived from it, from the time they first started thinking about their careers to the time they left the school.

Finally the school said they would employ a CEIAG specialist to offer personalised support to their students on a 1-2-1 or small group basis. Overall the school wants to spend more time embedding careers awareness and skills development in to the curriculum.

RBWM

- One school said they would provide work experience for students in Yr 10, and they would hire more transport to take students on trips because they currently have to charge students to attend trips.

- The second school said they would have increased business interaction; they think students would benefit from having guest speakers come in to deliver assemblies to give advice and information about their personal career paths, and how they got to their current position. They also said that students would benefit from having a full time careers adviser to support students with their next steps.

Key findings – student focus group

We held student focus groups with all nine of our comprehensive partners (four from Slough, two from South Bucks and three from RBWM). In this section we will explore what can be done to further support students with their next steps using two questions from the student focus group (Questions 7 and 10 in Item 6).

Student participation across the three local authorities is as follows:

- Slough: 20 students
- South Bucks: 14 students
- RBWM: 19 students

1. **How do you prefer to be given information about careers and next steps: booklets or prospectuses; group workshops or lessons in school; 1-2-1 careers guidance with a member of school staff or from an external careers adviser; presentations from people already doing working/doing the job you want to do; careers fairs; websites; social media?**

Slough

- One school said they would not like to receive information via booklets and said they would prefer to receive practical presentations/workshops from business professionals. When asked about careers guidance, students said they would feel more comfortable speaking to an external careers adviser than a school member of staff. Students said they would rather talk to someone than be given a website to look through.

- The second school said no to booklets because they would not use them. Students liked the idea of presentations/group workshops from people who are doing the job they are interested in. They said they would prefer careers guidance from an external adviser and specifically mentioned that they would respond better to someone they can relate to.

- One of five students at the third school said they would read a booklet/prospectus. One student said they prefer speaking to someone 1-2-1, and the remaining four students said

they prefer online resources and websites but would like someone to check in with them afterwards as they recognised that they need to be followed up on.

- The fourth school said no to booklets/prospectuses and group workshops because they prefer normal lessons to careers lessons. Students also said they would not benefit from 1-2-1 IAG sessions because they already know what they want to do, so giving them different options would not be useful. They would prefer to be provided with more information about their specific interest. They were interested in presentations from business professionals because they said it would help to receive information about day-to-day duties and tasks in the world of work.

South Bucks

- One school said no to receiving information through booklets and prospectuses, however they would benefit from being provided with a booklet to give to their parents/guardians to help them understand the different options available. Students said they would benefit from group workshops at the end of Yr 10 or in January of Yr 11, and they were also interested in receiving presentations from business professionals. When asked about careers guidance, students said they would prefer an external careers adviser because they feel that they can be more open and honest compared to if the session was with an internal member of staff.

- The second school liked the idea of group workshops as they are the practical option. Students said they would prefer external careers guidance to an internal member of school staff because they feel more comfortable talking to someone from outside the school.

RBWM

- Four of five students at the first school said they would benefit from being given information in booklets. All students said they would prefer to speak to an external careers guidance person, and they would specifically benefit from speaking to someone who is in the students' chosen career path.

- The second school said they benefit more from workshops than booklets as they are practical. Two of six students said they would prefer a careers guidance session with a member of school staff; four students said they would prefer an external adviser because they may have a more developed understanding of careers and pathways. Students also said they would be interested in receiving presentations from business professionals as long as it was related to their pathway and had information on both apprenticeships and university.

- The third school said no to booklets and prospectuses. They would be interested in group workshops, but said they would prefer to receive presentations about careers advice, entry level requirements and linking their favourite subjects to careers in order to create a clearer vision of the workplace and what it entails.

2. What else could be done to help you achieve your aspirations and/or make your next steps?

Slough

- One school said work experience; although all students agreed on this, the year in which the work experience should be completed differed for all four students and ranged from Yr 10 to 12, with Yr 11 and 12 being the most popular. Students also said they would benefit from help with which course to pick at university; they want to be told which subjects will be better paid after university and in which areas it is difficult to secure a job. Students want a stronger link between what they are studying and the world of work.

- Students at the second school said they enjoyed their work experience but would have benefitted from a 1-2-1 debrief session following their placement. They said they want to develop a better understanding of which jobs are right for them by exploring which subjects they are good at and the careers they could go into through these subjects. Finally they said they want to understand how to get in to a particular career (what employers are looking for and entry level requirements) and would find it helpful to understand this directly from established business people.

- Students at the third school agreed that a 1-2-1 session with someone from industry would be beneficial in order to create a link between school and the world of work. They also said they would like to receive support developing their work ready skills.

- The fourth school referred to a 1-2-1 careers guidance session because they want to be able to explore their options fully. Students also mentioned their interest in developing their work ready skills including yearly interview preparation so they can see how their interview style has changed over the years. Finally students said they want their subjects to be related to specific career pathways.

South Bucks

- One school said they would benefit from work experience based on the career they want to go into. They also mentioned 1-2-1 careers meetings with both internal and external careers advisers and a practical club where they can develop their work ready skills.

- The second school were interested in presentations from people who are already doing the job they want to do. They want to receive more information about how to get into college and/or an apprenticeship; students also mentioned that they want to develop their work ready skills so they understand how to get a job.

RBWM

- One school said they want to receive interactive workshops from people doing the job they are interested in. They also mentioned work experience and receiving an opportunity to visit an employer's premises as a way of helping them visualise the workplace.

- The second school said they want to receive more information on apprenticeships and work ready skills to include what they need to get into an apprenticeship/the world of work.

- The third school said they would benefit from work experience.

Key findings – stakeholder meeting

The final stage of our research involved inviting all sixteen of our school partners to the stakeholder meeting in October. We chased schools by email and phone, and of our sixteen partners, seven schools were able to attend the stakeholder meeting.

The meeting enabled us to expand our understanding of what more can be done to support students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET with their next steps after school, by drawing on the expertise of a number of careers leads.

The two primary observations made by school staff were:

1. It is difficult to take students out of their subject lessons for career intervention due to the focus placed on delivering the curriculum
2. As a generalisation, teachers lack knowledge about careers and industry therefore making it difficult to link the curriculum to potential career pathways.

However, due to the Gatsby Benchmarks that are now in place there is an increased emphasis on the importance of careers provision, meaning that teachers may find it easier to take students out of lessons and include careers as part of the curriculum and come up against less opposition within school.

We then moved on to explore the barriers faced by students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET. Our stakeholder partners said that these types of students often come from families where one or more of the parents are unemployed, which limits the support they receive from home. Additionally students are identified as at risk of becoming NEET in either Yr 9, 10 or 11 meaning there is a lack of careers provision and further support until later in school life.

It was recognised that it is important to build students' confidence lower down the school to ensure they have received support before they are potentially identified as at risk. Our partners said that it is often difficult to engage with Yr 7 and 8, and so a funded programme for KS3 would be beneficial to ensure students are supported regularly throughout their school life.

The importance of raising aspirations was also discussed. School staff said that at risk students would find it useful to visit workplaces, universities and organisations who offer apprenticeships in order to help them visualise the world of work. As mentioned above, generally students who have been identified as at risk often come from families where at least one parent is unemployed; offering them alternative insights into the world of work will help develop their understanding of the different careers available to them.

Following this we explored the different ways in which students could be further supported with their next steps after school. The two sets of people who are able to offer the most support to students are teachers and parents/guardians. Our school partners discussed the possibility of using part of a school INSET day to conduct research on LMI and the range of jobs available to students. Schools could then choose a career a week that they would explore with students in detail; this would link curriculum to careers and help students understand the transferable skills associated with different careers.

Our school partners mentioned the importance of promoting alternative qualifications such as apprenticeships earlier in school. They said they would want to educate parents about apprenticeships to ensure they are fully aware of what is involved. The school staff expanded on this to say that the majority of students are heavily influenced by their parents/guardians and that it may

be worth exploring the possibility of a careers programme for parents to help them understand the different opportunities and pathways available, in order for them to pass this knowledge on to their children.

We ended the meeting by asking school staff to identify specific programmes or measures that could be put in place to help support students with their next steps after school:

- Careers intervention lower down the school
- Getting parents engaged through workshops, and making them aware of the opportunities available in the local area
- Introducing an electronic portfolio for students to use as a skills passport throughout their education
- Supporting teachers with their understanding of careers through Continued Personal Development (CPD) and INSET days. This support would include:

    - Help with curriculum planning
    - Changing perceptions of alternative qualifications such as apprenticeships
    - Stressing the importance and implications of meeting standards (namely the Gatsby Benchmarks).

CONCLUSION

We developed our understanding of what more can be done to support students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET through teacher meetings and student focus groups with our comprehensive partners and a stakeholder meeting with our school partners.

When asked how they prefer to be given information about their next steps, the majority of students said no to booklets and prospectuses because they prefer to receive practical presentations/workshops from business professionals. The majority of students indicated that they feel more comfortable speaking to an external person about their future pathway as opposed to a member of school staff.

In the teacher meetings all schools mentioned that they would want stronger connections with employers and employees, although the way through which they would want this interaction differed across the schools. The following interactions were specifically mentioned:

- Business professionals participating in career focused workshops; these would involve students identifying which career paths they are interested in, and then business volunteers from those fields would come into school and engage with students through workshops
- Business volunteers to be based in the school to run some of the school curriculum in order to create stronger relationships between students and the world of work
- The importance of having more representatives and examples of people who have achieved through hard work from a similar community or background as this provides students with someone to identify with
- Guest speakers to come in to school and deliver assemblies to give advice and information about their personal career paths, and how they got to their current position.

A number of schools also identified that more advice needs to be offered on alternative pathways, and more support for those students who do not want to go to university. This was mirrored by many students in the focus groups. Students felt as though they were not being provided with enough information on opportunities other than university and were having to rely solely on

personal research to make their next steps after school. Students said they want a stronger link to be created between what they are studying and the careers available in these subject areas. They want to explore the range of jobs and opportunities available to ensure they are making an informed decision about their future.

Work experience was also mentioned in several teacher meetings as being an impactful activity, however due to a lack of funding many schools are unable to offer this service to their students. One school in particular mentioned that they would want to remove barriers to work experience to make it more accessible for students who may find it difficult to approach businesses themselves. Work experience also proved to be a popular activity in the student focus groups because it helps students build their experience and decide if they are suited to a specific role or industry.

In the teacher meetings two schools identified the importance of developing students' work ready skills through supporting them with CV preparation, mock interviews and job applications. Although this was only mentioned by two schools, students identified this as one of the most useful activities; students also referred to learning about entry level requirements and what employers are looking for, and presentations or workshops from people who are already doing the job they want to do. All three methods of support revolve around developing a clear understanding of what students need to do to make a successful entry into the world of work, and will help students clearly visualise the workplace.

The stakeholder meeting enabled a deeper exploration of what can be done to support students with their next steps. In order to determine this we initially discussed limitations that schools face when putting careers provision in place which ties in with how well prepared and resourced they are to support at risk students. They mentioned that due to the focus on academic education, it is often difficult to take students out of their subject lessons for career intervention. However, due to the Gatsby Benchmarks that are now in place there is an increased emphasis on careers provision and ensuring all students are supported. Our school partners said that it would be beneficial for students to receive career intervention lower down the school to ensure they are fully supported throughout their entire school life.

Our school partners also said that, as a generalisation, teachers lack knowledge about careers and industry therefore making it difficult to link the curriculum to potential career pathways. It was decided that this issue could be solved by using part of a school INSET day to conduct research on LMI, the range of jobs available to students and developing a more complete understanding of the alternative pathways available to students, such as apprenticeships.

It was also decided that this same information could be provided to parents/guardians; if they are aware of the range of opportunities available and what students need to do to ensure they are completing some form of education, employment or training when they leave compulsory education, students will be more likely to achieve their aspirations.

In this report we have identified the current provision being offered by schools to support students who have been identified as at risk of becoming NEET. We have determined how useful students find this support, what teachers view to be the most effective form of support, and what more can be done to help students with their next steps after they leave compulsory education.

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APPENDIX

Item 1 – Provider Map of NEET Support

Item 2 – NEET Research Project Survey

Item 3 – LTW Letter to Schools

Item 4 – Mapping of Employer Engagement Template

Item 5 – Teacher Meeting Questions

Item 6 – Student Focus Group Questions

Item 7 – Overview Mapping of Employer Engagement

Item 8 – Hygiene Question Analysis

Item 9 – Provider Map of NEET support for schools