



Department  
for Education

# **Work experience and related activities in schools and colleges**

**Research report**

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**Social Science in Government**

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# Executive Summary

## Background to the study

This study, commissioned by the Department for Education, follows the publication of updated guidance for 16-19 study programmes (2015), which built on the work done following recommendations made in the Wolf review. The guidance advocates a period of work experience, or a more extended work placement, as a core part of programmes for all post-16 students, whether following an academic or a technical curriculum, in order to support them in developing their work readiness. Alongside the guidance for post-16 programmes, the government also revised its statutory guidance for schools, expecting schools to offer high quality work experience and encouraging them to engage fully with their local employer and professional community.

The overall aim of the study was to consider current provision and operational practice of work-related activities at schools and colleges in England.

A mixed method approach was used, combining a survey of work experience coordinators/ leads with school and college case studies. Stakeholders interviewed as part of the case studies included work experience leads, senior school/ college staff, employers, brokers/ external agents, parents/ carers and students. Both the survey and the case studies explored views, and experiences of, current provision.

Key terms used throughout the report include:

- ‘Work experience inspiration activities’: used to describe any exposure to work or working practice that does not involve a specific placement within a company. Activities may include employer talks, mini-enterprise activities, skills competitions etc.
- ‘Work experience placements’: used to describe work undertaken in a specific workplace over an extended period of time (this may be a block of time, such as a week or a fortnight, or a day a week over a number of months).
- ‘Work-related activities’: used to describe both work inspiration activities and work experience placements.

## Findings

### Type, coverage and take up of work-related activities

Schools and colleges offered a range of work-related activities, from careers events/ fairs to mock interviews and work experience placements. The majority of schools and colleges (63 per cent) also made provision for students with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND), colleges in particular (82 per cent, compared to 66 per cent of schools without a sixth form and 58 per cent of schools with a sixth form).

The duration, timing and content of work experience placements varied markedly between schools and colleges, and by the student’s programme of study. This was

especially true of colleges where there was a distinction between technical and academic courses. In addition:

- Placements for years 12-13 were longer on average (mean=12 days) than those for years 10-11 (mean=8 days).
- Supported Internships tended to be longer than other forms of placement (mean=30 days) and were more likely to be offered as separate days (32 per cent) than in a single block of time (24 per cent).

Work experience placements were understood to serve multiple purposes, including experience of the world of work, employability skill development and experience to help guide future career decision-making. Here schools emphasised the importance of experiencing the world of work, while colleges stressed a need for students to develop and apply skills learnt during study programmes.

The majority of schools and colleges offered work experience placements to all students (just 11 per cent of placements for years 10-11 and 23 per cent for years 12-13 were not open to all). Reported take-up of work experience placements varied according to the type of placement offered, but was highest for those in years 10-11 (88 per cent).

### **Identification and set-up of work-related activities**

Most schools and colleges used a centralised system for organising/ administering work-related activities (83 per cent). Many of those surveyed also had a work experience coordinator/ coordinating team to help make arrangements. However, this was more common for schools than for colleges (49 per cent of schools without a sixth form, compared to 30 per cent of colleges), where teaching staff played a larger role in making arrangements. This reflects colleges' staff-led approach to identifying and organising work-related activities, and is an indicator of the importance colleges placed on offering work experience placements, particularly to students on technical courses.

By contrast, schools took a largely student-led approach, which placed responsibility on young people and their parents/ carers on finding a placement. Varying degrees of support were offered to students as part of this process, with a greater focus on students with SEND. Having engaged and supportive parents/ carers, as well as parents/ carers with good family connections facilitated the student-led approach.

Identifying suitable employers was an integral part of setting-up successful placements. Work experience coordinators reported a range of approaches, but with many relying on individual staff systems and contacts (33 per cent). Therefore, good relationships between the school or college and employers was an important factor in creating successful placement opportunities.

Schools and colleges worked with employers of various sizes and based in different sectors, although some proved more difficult to secure placements in; among them, engineering, construction, creative and media and health. The reasons for these difficulties varied by sector, for example, whilst student health and safety was a particular

concern for the construction industry, patient confidentiality and safeguarding presented difficulties for the health sector.

### **Organising and operating work experience placements**

Students' career ambitions were the primary consideration when matching students to work experience placements. However, not all schools/ colleges were able to meet this aim, primarily due to difficulties sourcing placements in certain employment sectors.

Preparing students, parents/ carers and employers for work experience placements was viewed as important to delivering effective opportunities because it set appropriate expectations. Preparatory activities for students differed by institution type. Whilst schools focused on sharing key information/ documentation with students and their parents/ carers (e.g. health and safety information), colleges concentrated on developing students' employability skills. This difference in focus reflects variations in the purpose of work experience placements at schools compared to colleges, with the latter placing greater emphasis on opportunities which were tailored to students' future career aspirations.

Schools and colleges prepared employers for work experience placements by ensuring the necessary practical measures had been taken (e.g. health and safety checks). External agents supported these activities when internal resource was lacking.

Once students had been placed with an employer, schools and colleges typically supported students and monitored their progress. Calls and face-to-face visits were the main tools used for monitoring. In case study institutions, this role was fulfilled by a range of different staff including dedicated Work Experience Coordinators, Heads of year, Heads of Department/ Faculty and pastoral staff.

### **Post-placement activities**

Most schools and colleges undertook post-placement activities with students and employers; 86 per cent of work experience coordinators said they assessed students' performance, while 94 per cent reported undertaking follow-up activities with employers.<sup>1</sup>

For schools, the range of post-placement activities included student evaluations, collection of detailed student feedback, student group discussion/ feedback sessions, and collection of employer feedback. Colleges undertook a similar range of post-placement activities with the addition of making database updates and reviewing destinations data to evaluate the impact of work experience placements. For example, analysing monitoring data on the jobs students had taken up six months after completion of their course, and reviewing the proportion who had joined an employer following a placement. This strategic review of work experience placements was more common in

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the survey did not distinguish between formal assessment as part of the student's programme of study and less formal activities.

colleges than schools, reflecting colleges' broader criteria for successful work experience placements, which included the offer of a job/ apprenticeship.

### **Satisfaction with work-related activities**

Satisfaction with work-related activities and work experience placements were high among schools, colleges, employers and students. This included:

- The range of work-related activities offered;
- Approaches to identifying opportunities;
- Placement matching processes;
- Monitoring and evaluation processes during placements; and
- The quality and content of opportunities delivered.

Most work experience coordinators (87 per cent) saw their institution's offer as 'very' or 'quite effective'. Reported effectiveness of work experience placements was highest when a considerable proportion of students went on to secure an offer of employment/ an apprenticeship, and when schools/ colleges used work experience coordinators and centralised systems to support delivery. Staff satisfaction appeared strongest where work experience placements were formally integrated into the curriculum, such as through PSHE lessons, or where they were part of a planned programme of work-related activities.

While overall levels of satisfaction were high, students and employers reported areas of dissatisfaction. For students, this typically stemmed from the nature of the role and what was perceived to be poor planning, such as a limited range of tasks and insufficient work to do. Employer dissatisfaction was typically the result of lack of engagement and/ or negative attitudes from students, both commonly prompted by hastily arranged or poorly matched placements.

Schools and colleges felt there was scope to improve their work experience placement offer by addressing sectoral gaps, given that employer-based issues were often the reason for a lack of placements. Students suggested improvements around monitoring and evaluation practices, such as placement visits undertaken by staff that students know well, to encourage young people to be honest and forthcoming about their experiences.

### **Impact of work-related activities**

Schools and colleges identified multiple benefits of work-related activities, with soft employability skills – 'communication and interpersonal skills' (97 per cent) and 'increased confidence' (95 per cent) – the most frequently mentioned.

However, there were institutional differences in what schools and colleges viewed as the primary benefits of work-related activities. For example, whilst schools identified a better understanding of the world of work as a key benefit, colleges placed more value on an increase in students' wider employability skills. This reflects colleges' views on the



purpose of work experience placements; 29 per cent of colleges compared to nine per cent of schools excluding sixth forms mentioned the impact of work-related activities on students' employability.

Benefits for employers were felt to be primarily philanthropic, such as 'community involvement' (83 per cent) and 'building skills of the future workforce' (80 per cent).

### Lessons for good practice

Schools and colleges identified a range of approaches that were felt to support the delivery of effective work-related activities (summarised in Figure 1.1 below). These related to a number of a different stages in the organisation and implementation of activities and had implications for school and college staff as well as employers, students and their parents/ carers.

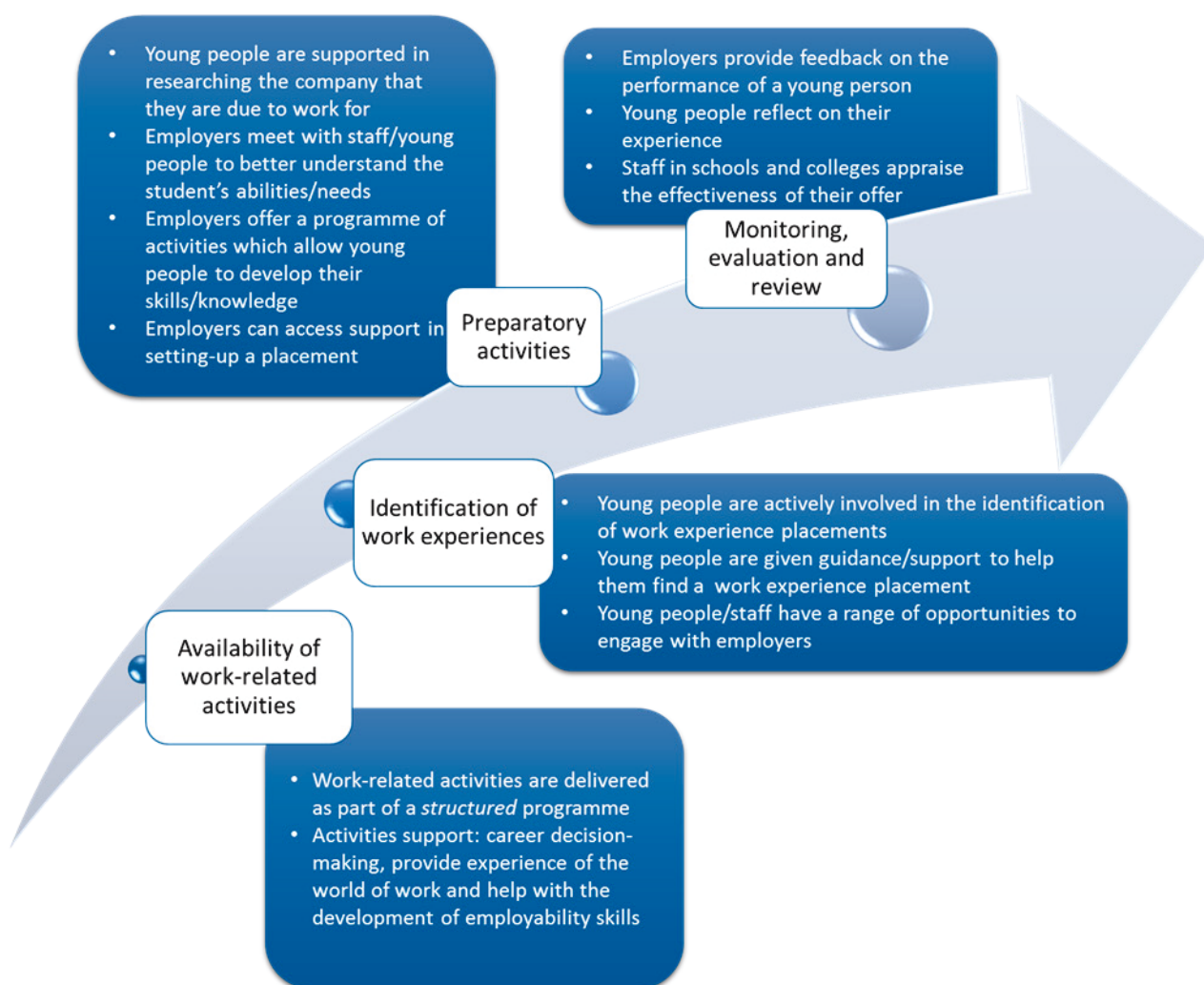


Figure 0-1 Good practice in the delivery of work related activities

Interviewees also highlighted a number of ways in which the impact of work-related activities could be improved. These can be classified into two principal groups;

operational changes that could be taken by schools, colleges and employers and strategic reforms that would require support from Government.

Operational changes included:

- Increasing the duration of work experience placements (particularly those offered by schools).
- (For colleges) offering a broader programme of work-related activities.

Strategic changes included:

- Introducing more precise guidance governing what a school is required to offer by way of work-related activities.
- Additional (central) funding to support an expansion of work-related activities at a time when school and college budgets are tight.
- A central (or local authority level) database of work experience placement opportunities, to help schools and young people identify suitable placements in an increasingly competitive environment.

# 1. Introduction

This research study, commissioned by the Department for Education, was intended to provide up-to-date evidence about the provision and experience of work-related activities at schools and colleges in England. The study took place following the publication of the Department's updated guidance for 16-19 study programmes (DfE, 2015a). Building on much of the work done following the recommendations made in the Wolf report (2011), this guidance advocates a period of work experience,<sup>2</sup> or a more extended work placement,<sup>3</sup> as a core part of programmes for all post-16 students, whether following an academic or a technical curriculum, in order to support them in developing their work readiness.

Alongside the guidance for post-16 programmes, the Government, in 2015, also revised its statutory guidance for schools (DfE, 2015b). Schools are expected to offer '*high quality work experience that properly reflects individuals' studies and strengths, and supports the academic curriculum*'. In doing so, they are encouraged to '*engage fully with their local employer and professional community to ensure real-world connections*', and to offer a range of interventions from bringing in external speakers from the world of work, to offering workplace visits and work placements.

## Background

In promoting work experience, the guidance documents build on a body of evidence on the potential value of work experience for young people in education, both pre-and post-16. This evidence base has been built up over six decades, though work experience did not gain currency as an accepted part of the curriculum for *all* students until the extension of the Employment Department's Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in the late 1980s. By 1990, 91 per cent of schools and 71 per cent of students in their final year of compulsory education were involved in work experience (DES, 1990) and the idea had gained support in the then Departments for Education and Skills (DES) and Trade and Industry (DTI).

Since that time, opportunities for short periods of work experience (generally one or two weeks) or more extended work placements (the models for which have varied markedly) have become more generally integrated into the curriculum for young people both pre-and post-16. By 2004, for example, work experience was seen as a contributory element of the statutory key stage 4 requirement for work-related learning, though the duty on schools to provide every young person with work-related learning was later removed,

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<sup>2</sup> This includes 'inspiration' activities in the workplace (including work shadowing), or in school or college (including skills competitions).

<sup>3</sup> These take place in the workplace and over a longer period than the one or two weeks used for work experience placements.

following an amendment to the Education Act 2002,<sup>4</sup> in September 2012. Opportunities for young people post-16 have also been extended to include traineeships<sup>5</sup> and Supported Internships<sup>6</sup> (both available to a relatively small proportion of the post-16 population).

Despite its previous and almost ubiquitous use in the education sector, both the outcomes and value for money of work experience have often been questioned, partly because its purpose has never been fully articulated and agreed between education institutions and employers. Work experience, for example, has variously been viewed as:

- an alternative to academic education (particularly in the pre-TVEI period, but also in relation to providing opportunities for young people for whom different elements of the curriculum were disappplied) (Golden, O'Donnell and Rudd, 2005)
- a means of developing the range of skills and knowledge required by employers (UKCES, 2009)
- a means of engaging pupils in learning (Steedman and Stoney, 2004)
- a means of empowering learners<sup>7</sup>
- a means of coping with technological and economic change (Huddleston and Oh, 2004)
- a means of supporting career decision-making (QCA, 2008).

However, a one or two-week period of work experience in year 10 may not respond to all of these potential purposes, and the expectations are that these outcomes reflect what might be anticipated as part of a wider work-related programme. Indeed, there is a substantial body of evidence that the process of young people engaging with the workplace leads to perceived benefits for both students and employers. The Gatsby benchmarks (see Holman, 2014), acknowledging this, included encounters with employers and employees and experiences of the workplace as two of the eight benchmarks of a good careers guidance programme. In a recent literature review, Hallam et al. (2016) summarised the potential advantages for young people as: improvements in their motivation to engage in education; improvements in attainment and transition to further learning or work; the greater contextualisation of learning; a greater understanding of industries and of educational pathways; a clarification of career aspirations, and a reduction in the proportion of young people who become NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The public consultation was not, however, in favour of the removal of the duty. See the [DfE response to the national consultation](#):

<sup>5</sup> For further guidance on Traineeships see DfE and BIS, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> For further guidance on Supported Internships see DfE, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> See DfE's [Graduate Talent Pool](#),

<sup>8</sup> For employers, for whom there was less empirical evidence about the benefits, there was nonetheless research which highlighted the business case for engaging in work experience.

This suggests that opportunities for work experience can play a role in both a young person's educational development, and the use they can make of this experience when planning for the future (including when applying for higher education and employment). In contrast, and as highlighted in Jones' 2012 and 2016 reports for the Sutton Trust, those students unable to access a range of work-related activities, particularly placements and opportunities for work shadowing, faced a potential disadvantage when compiling their personal statements as part of UCAS applications.

The study reported here sought to address some of the questions in the field about the current format, organisation, level of curriculum integration, purpose and use of current work experience and work placement practice for both pre- and post-16 students.

## **1.1. Research aims and objectives**

The overarching aim of this study was to provide up-to-date evidence about provision of, and operational practice in, work-related activities at schools and colleges in England. This required a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) approach encompassing the views and experiences of multiple stakeholders, including work experience leads, senior school/ college staff, employers, brokers, parents/ carers and students. It also necessitated investigation of different types of provision to understand the differences in work experience activities and types of work placement, perceptions of value and impact of these work-related activities. In addition, the study considered implementation and delivery issues including an understanding of effective practice.

The specific research aims were to:

1. Investigate the provision and delivery of work-related activities in secondary schools and post-16 institutions to better understand how these differed by key characteristics.
2. Explore perceived impacts and benefits of work-related activities for students, institutions and employers.
3. Explore what constitutes effective practice in delivering work-related activities from the perspective of various stakeholders.

## **1.2. Survey methods**

A key part of the research design was a survey of school or college staff responsible for work-related activities. The survey was intended to gather quantitative data about different types of work-related opportunities for students, as well as a better understanding of how work experience and placements were perceived by educational staff involved in their delivery.

A web-enabled telephone survey (web-CATI) was sent to work experience staff at a sample of 2,825 institutions in England. The main stage fieldwork took place between the 23<sup>rd</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016, and achieved interviews with 712 individuals.

A more detailed account of the survey and the fieldwork process can be found in Appendix A.

## Sampling

A sample of open secondary maintained schools and post-16 institutions in England was drawn from an extract of Edubase (the Department for Education's register of educational establishments in England and Wales) in March 2016. A disproportionate stratified sampling approach was adopted. This meant that the sampling frame was first stratified by institution type,<sup>9</sup> then sorted by:

- region;
- neighbourhood deprivation level (tertiles of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index score);
- urban-rural indicator; and
- institution size/ number of pupils in a school.

This stratified approach ensured representativeness of the sample with regards to key characteristics. All colleges were sampled due to the small number operating in England. Finally, a systematic random sample of schools was selected from those with valid contact information (either a telephone number or an e-mail address).

The total sample of 2,825 institutions included a sample of 70 schools and colleges approached for the pilot survey, and a reserve sample of 252 schools, which was issued during the main stage fieldwork period.<sup>10</sup>

## Response

A total of 712 schools and colleges took part in the survey, giving an overall response rate of 29 per cent. Most respondents completed the survey online (although often having received a call from telephone interviewers, who ensured emails were re-sent to direct email addresses). The final figures by survey mode were 617 online and 95 by telephone (13 and 87 per cent of all completed interviews). Breaking down response by institution type, as in Table 1.1, shows that 34 per cent of sampled colleges took part, compared to 23 per cent of schools without a sixth form and 25 per cent of schools with a sixth form.

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<sup>9</sup> Particularly small strata were oversampled. The small number of post-16 institutions meant that all English colleges were included in either the pilot or mainstage sample.

<sup>10</sup> Another survey targeting secondary schools and post-16 institutions had been launched during the same period as this study, limiting the number of institutions available for the reserve sample.

**Table 1-1 Survey Response Rates by Mode and Institution Type**

	<b>Academies excluding sixth forms</b>	<b>Academies including sixth forms</b>	<b>LA maintained excluding sixth forms</b>	<b>LA maintained including sixth forms</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
Issued sample	406	1125	398	486	340
Total completions	90	275	97	135	115
Online completions	80	240	86	115	96
Telephone completions	10	35	11	20	19

### **1.3. Qualitative case study design**

#### **Overall design**

In order to develop a deeper understanding of the work experience process, a series of in-depth interviews and focus groups was conducted in schools and colleges during the summer term of the 2015/ 2016 academic year. The case study sample was selected to provide (as far as possible) a reflection of the diversity of opportunities and experiences available to young people in different educational institutions.

The qualitative component was undertaken using a nested approach, working outwards from the schools and colleges selected as case studies. Interviewees included a range of personnel and work experience beneficiaries linked to the 14 schools (including two independent schools) and eight colleges (both further education and sixth form colleges) participating in the case studies. These personnel included senior leaders,<sup>11</sup> work experience coordinators, applications coordinators (for college, university or employment), employers who worked with the case study schools and colleges, and external agencies who brokered school/ employer links or provided support services (such as health and safety checks), as well as students and parents/ carers. In addition, a number of employers and external agents were identified through contacts made via the Careers and Enterprise Company. In total, 278 individuals took part across 22 case study sites, as set out in Table 1.2.

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<sup>11</sup> Senior leaders were not interviewed in General FE or 6th form colleges. In our experience, principals and vice-principals tend to have limited engagement with the organisation or delivery of work-related learning activities.

**Table 1-2 Number of interviewees by role and institution type**

Interviewees	Number of interviewees		
	Schools	Colleges	Total
Senior leaders	11	-	11
Work experience coordinator (or equivalent)	17	12	29
Staff responsible for applications (UCAS, college, employment etc.)	5	7	12
Students	94	90	184
Employers working with case study institutions	9	11	20
Other employers	N/A	N/A	4
External agents working with case study institutions (e.g. EBP staff)	7	1	8
Other external agents	N/A	N/A	2
Parents/carers	6	2	8
Total number of interviews	149	123	278

## Sampling and recruitment

The final recruited sample is set out in Table 1.3.<sup>12</sup> Over the course of the study a total of 96 schools<sup>13</sup> were invited to participate in the study; while many were unable to participate because of timing issues, others (around one sixth of the total sample) declined because they did not offer young people work-related activities as part of the curriculum.

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<sup>12</sup> The timing of fieldwork (during the summer term 2015/16), meant it was necessary to adopt a phased recruitment approach. An initial (and geographically diverse) sample of schools and colleges was drawn from the sample frame provided by NatCen, with a further later sample drawn from amongst those who had completed the survey and given their permission to be approached about taking part in a case study. Independent schools were not included in the survey sample, so were approached early in the recruitment phase.

<sup>13</sup> A total of 53 maintained schools and 43 independent schools were contacted about the case studies.



**Table 1-3 Profile of case study schools and colleges**

School Type	Region			
	North	Central	South	London
Independent schools	0	1	0	1
Schools with a sixth form	2	2	3	1
Schools without a sixth form	1	1	1	1
Sixth form colleges	1	-	1	-
General FE colleges	2	2	1	1

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school and college staff and employers, complemented by group discussions and semi-structured interviews with students.

## 1.4. Terminology

Over the years, the terminology around work experience and work placements and the bodies engaged in its promotion has changed. The following offers a short description of the terms used in this report. However, it should be noted that many respondents simply referred to “work experience” during interviews, and that respondents were not provided with specific definitions for all terms used in the survey (see Appendix B). Therefore, although the report uses the terms as described below, those participating in the study may not have used them consistently.

Careers and Enterprise Company	The Careers and Enterprise Company is a national employer-led organisation, funded by the DfE. It provides a range of brokerage and other activities with employers, schools and colleges (primarily through networks of enterprise advisors) that are designed to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship throughout a young person’s education.
Connexions	Connexions was the name given to the national information, advice, guidance and support service established in 2000 (under the Learning and Skills Act) for young people aged 13 to 19 (and up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). The responsibility for providing these various services reverted to local authorities in 2008 and, in 2011, schools became responsible for the careers element. The

	National Careers Service provides a telephone/online service for young people aged 13+.
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. These were previously known as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.
Education Business Partnerships (EBPS)	Education Business Partnerships (EBPS) are organisations that act as specialist brokers, building links between education institutions and employers in order to give young people insight into working practice through, for example, work placements, employability skills and enterprise activities, work shadowing and mentor programmes.
External agencies	Organisations (including Education Business Partnerships) that work with schools and colleges to support links with employers.
Health and Safety Audits (HSA)	These audits are undertaken to make sure the proper systems and processes are in place to uphold health and safety standards. They are assessed against regulated criteria.
JobCentre Plus (JCP)	JobCentre Plus (JCP) provides services to jobseekers and benefits claimants and is managed by the Department for Work and Pensions. Since 2011, it has been managed alongside the Pension, Disability and Carers Service (PDCS) under a single Chief Operating Officer.
Job shadowing	Job shadowing is a form of work placement during which young people learn about a job or an occupational area of interest by shadowing a competent worker over the period of a day or longer.
Mini-enterprise	Mini-enterprise activities are often run in schools to help young people develop their teamwork and communication skills by setting up and running a small business providing services or making and selling goods within a school setting.
Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND)	SEND is a term used to identify young people with a range of needs that affect their ability to learn. SEND can affect a young person's behaviour or ability to socialise, their reading/ writing, comprehension, concentration levels, and physical ability.
Supported Internships/ traineeships	Supported Internships, also known as supported traineeships, are programmes designed to help young people, aged 16-24, with known learning disabilities (with a statement of Special Educational Needs, a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an Education, Health and Care plan) gain the skills they need to enter employment.

Traineeships	A traineeship is an education and training programme with work experience. It is designed for young people aged 16-24, qualified to below Level 3, and seeks to support them in their skills in English and maths and to provide the work experience needed to secure an apprenticeship or employment.
Work inspiration activities	Work inspiration activities is a term used in this report to describe any exposure to work or working practice that does not involve a specific placement within a company. Activities may include employer talks, mini-enterprise activities, skills competitions etc.
Work experience placements	Work experience placements is the term used in this report to describe work undertaken in a specific workplace over an extended period of time (this may be a block of time, such as a week or a fortnight, or a day a week over a number of months).
Work-related activities	Work-related activities is the term we have used to describe both work experience inspiration activities and work experience placements.

## 1.5. Reporting conventions for survey data

Survey findings presented in this report use data that has been weighted to take account of technical issues such as sample design and non-response. The use of weights ensures that the data matches the overall population as closely as possible (based on institution type, region, area deprivation (IDACI) score, institution size and an urban/ rural indicator).

There are two types of tables and charts included in this report. For those with mutually exclusive responses (the single coded questions) percentages will generally sum to 100 per cent; however, there may be some instances where percentages will not sum exactly as a result of rounding. Where the survey question allowed multiple responses (i.e. the 'select all that apply' questions), the percentages will not sum to 100 per cent.

It is important to note that not all 712 providers who completed the survey answered all questions (it was possible to use 'don't know' and 'refused' options to navigate around questions). The survey findings reported below are based on valid responses only and unweighted base sizes shown in all charts and tables.

The tables use the following notations:

- \* Percentage value is greater than 0, but less than 0.5, which is rounded down.
- Percentage value is 0.

Frequencies based on less than 50 cases are not robust and have not been reported.

The report includes a number of cross-tabulations that present the findings by key characteristics. These cross-tabulations present statistically significant relationships between two variables only. **All the differences cited in the text or presented in the charts are statistically significant at the 0.05 level** (a significance level of 0.05 reflecting a 95 per cent confidence interval). However, the appendix includes a small number of tables where results were not significant. Statistical significance was tested using logistic regression for complex samples.

## 1.6. Limitations

The findings presented in this report reflect the range and diversity of views and experiences of those surveyed and interviewed. It should be remembered that the survey actively targeted work experience coordinators/ leads, and that questions were written to capture the experiences of those operating work experience programmes. Therefore, the survey was not intended, nor able, to measure the prevalence of work experience in England's schools and colleges, nor the reasons that some do not offer any work-related activities.

Likewise, the case studies were designed to explore the experiences of schools and colleges who were operating work experience programmes. It is important to recognise that institutions with more active programmes may have been more inclined to agree to participate, and therefore the case studies cannot be considered fully representative of the sector.

## 2 Work-related activities offered

### Chapter summary

- Schools and colleges offered a range of work-related activities; this very frequently included work experience placements (90/ 91 per cent),
- However, 11 per cent of those offering placements for years 10-11, and 23 per cent of those offering placements for years 12-13, reported that they were not available to everyone in the relevant year group.
- The duration, timing and structure of work experience placements varied considerably by institution type and the student's programme of study. Specifically:
  - Placements for years 12-13 were longer on average (mean=12 days) than those for years 10-11 (mean=8 days).
  - Placements were most commonly offered in a single block of time, particularly for years 10-11 (86 per cent compared to 50 per cent of years 12-13).
  - Supported Internships tended to be longer than other forms of placement (mean=30 days) and were more likely to be offered as separate days (32 per cent) than in a single block of time (24 per cent).
  - Colleges, in particular, showed a distinction between technical and academic programmes, with students on academic programmes less likely to be offered/ to undertake a placement.
- The demands of wider learning programmes was the most commonly mentioned influence on placement timings in both schools and colleges. However, in schools, exam timetables were more likely to be reported, and in colleges, the needs of employers.
- The majority of schools and colleges offered work-related activities to students with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND), although the proportion was higher among colleges (82 per cent) than schools (66 per cent of schools without a sixth form and 58 per cent of schools with a sixth form).
- Work experience placements were seen to serve a range of purposes. This included providing experience of the world of work, developing employability skills, and helping support future career decision-making. Schools emphasised the importance of experiencing the world of work, while colleges stressed a need for students to develop and apply skills learnt during study programmes.
- Reported take-up was highest amongst those offering opportunities to students in years 10-11 (88 per cent). 'Lack of confidence' was the main barrier to take-up.

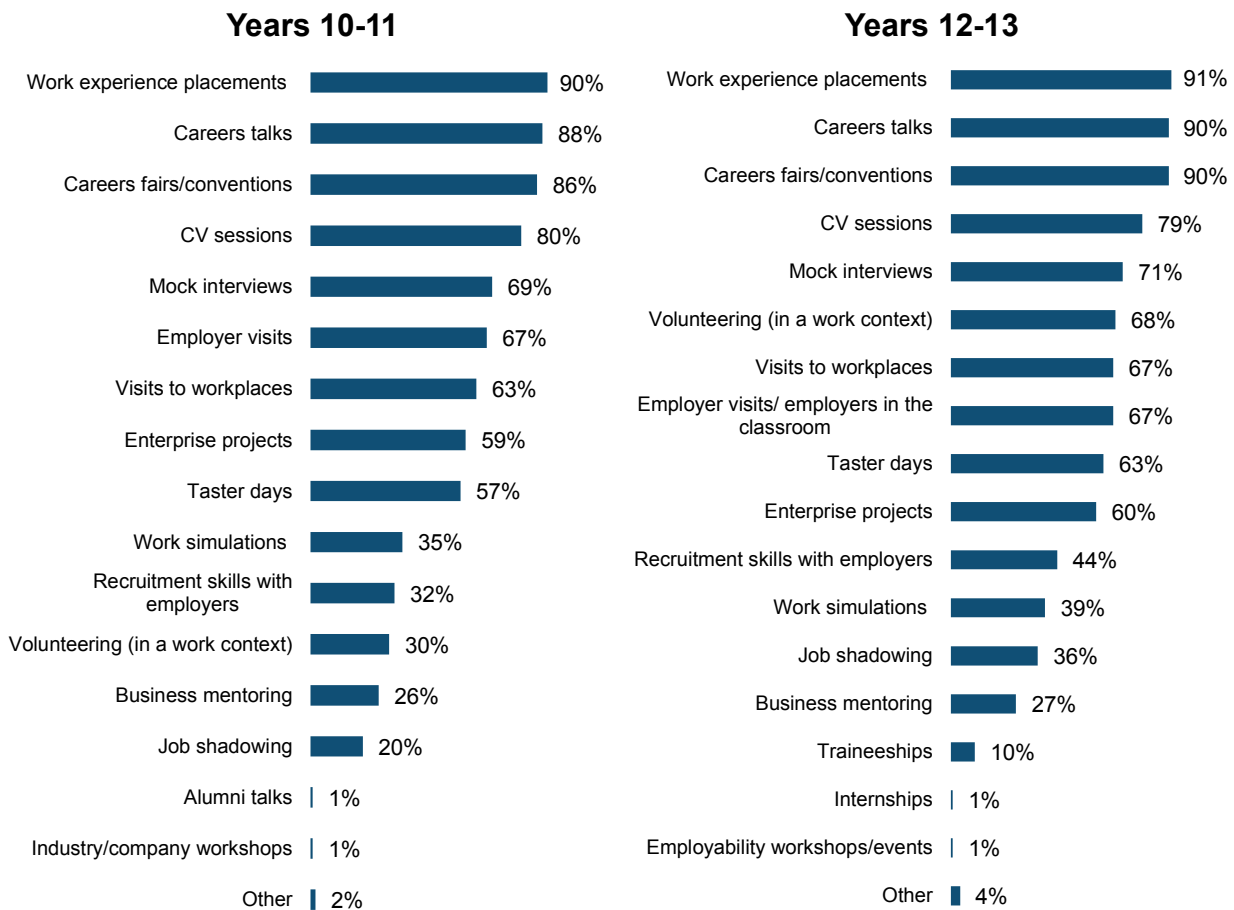
## **2.1. Type, duration and timing of work-related activities available to students**

### **Types of work-related activities offered**

Schools and colleges offered a range of work-related activities, often encompassing work inspiration activities and work placements (see Figure 2.1). Students in years 10-11 and years 12-13 were most frequently offered work experience placements (90 per cent and 91 per cent respectively), careers talks (88 per cent and 90 per cent respectively) and opportunities to go to career fairs and conventions (86 per cent and 90 per cent respectively).

Traineeships are available to young people, aged 16 to 24 (or 25 if they have Learning Difficulty Assessments or Education, Health and Care Plans), who are qualified below Level 3, have little or no experience of work and are not yet ready for an apprenticeship or employment. They were offered as part of a post-16 programme by 59 of the institutions taking part in the survey; these were predominantly colleges (n=33), although some schools also offered this type of placement.

The small proportion of schools and colleges offering traineeships (12 and 29 per cent respectively), was reflected in findings from the qualitative component, where awareness of this type of placement appeared to be extremely low. It should be noted that, in 2015/2016, a total of 19,400 young people started a traineeship, around three-fifths (11,600) of whom were under the age of 19 (DfE, 2015c). This represents just over one per cent of all young people aged 16 to 19, so the relatively low level of offer and awareness amongst the institutions in the survey and case study sample is not, perhaps, surprising.



Base (unweighted): All respondents offering work experience to both pre and post-16s or to pre-16s only (543)

Base (unweighted): All respondents offering work experience to both pre and post-16's or to post-16s only (493)

**Figure 2-1 Types of work-related activity offered to students in years 10-11 and years 12-13**

### Types of work-related activities offered: case study findings

Consistent with survey findings, schools and colleges offered some form of work-related activities to young people, although the scope and scale of these opportunities varied by institution type.

In **schools**, students could expect to be exposed to a range of different work inspiration activities, including:

- Access to careers information, advice and guidance (commonly delivered as part of Physical, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons);
- Careers events/ fairs attended by employers from a range of different sectors; and
- Mock interviews delivered by local employers.

While such experiences were predominantly offered to pupils in year 10 (reflecting survey findings), interviewees commonly felt that activities were most effective if they built on the skills and knowledge developed over the course of students' time at secondary school. It was felt that, when students had access to a programme that started in year 7 (at age

11), they had a better understanding of the purpose of work experience placements by the time they took part in them:

*“It’s absolutely about making... [work experience placements] real for them”*  
(school-based senior leader).

There appeared to be notable differences in the types of experience offered to pupils at each key stage. For instance, between years 7 and 9 (key stage 3), there was an emphasis on developing students’ employability skills such as team-working, communication and problem-solving. Between years 10 and 11 (key stage 4), it was more common for young people to interact directly with employers by taking part in mock interviews or attending careers fairs.

Most schools with a sixth form also offered work experience placements to students in years 12-13. In such settings, work experience placements were more routinely offered to pupils in year 12, since it was thought offering placements to year 13 students may distract them from their exams.

There were examples of year 13 students being offered work experience placements, although it was acknowledged that only a small number of pupils took advantage of this opportunity. Interviewees noted that help, such as liaising with a potential employer, was only offered to students if identifying a suitable work experience placement was vital in helping them achieve a particular outcome (e.g. to make a successful application to study medicine at University where relevant experience was a pre-requisite).

Like schools, **colleges** offered students the opportunity to access a range of work-related experiences. The nature of these activities and the number of students able to access opportunities varied, primarily depending on the student’s study programme. For example, work experience placements were seen as an integral part of more technical courses and in many cases contributed towards a student’s final grade, but were not always offered to students on academic courses. In contrast to schools, colleges tended to place less emphasis on decision-making around future careers in the opportunities offered; this may reflect the higher proportion of college students who had already committed to a technical pathway.

## Duration and timing of work experience placements

The different types of work experience placement varied considerably in their duration. As Table 2.1 shows, Supported Internships (available to those aged 16-24 with a statement of SEN, a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an Education, Health and Care plan) had the longest duration – an average of 30 days.<sup>14</sup> There was no significant

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<sup>14</sup> The average duration of traineeships has not been reported as the base size did not reach the threshold of 50 cases. Please note that this is the approach taken throughout.

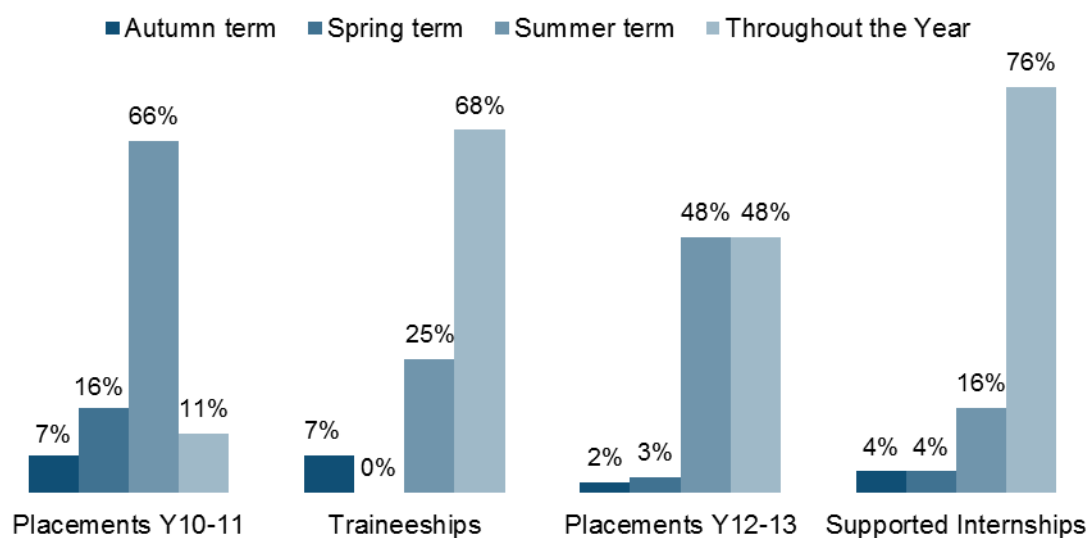


difference in the duration of work experience placements for years 12-13 by type of institution.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 2-1 The mean duration of different types of work experience placements**

	Placements for Y10-11	Placements for Y12-13	Supported Internships
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	480	439	89
Mean number of days	8	12	30
Minimum number of days cited	1	1	1
Maximum number of days cited	140	365	300

As well as variation in the duration of work experience placements, work experience coordinators reported differences in the point in the academic year that different types of placements occurred (see Figure 2.2). For example, traineeships and Supported Internships were most frequently offered throughout the year (68 per cent and 76 per cent respectively), possibly due to the roll-on, roll-off nature of these programmes,<sup>16</sup> while work experience placements for students in years 10-11 were more likely to take place during the summer term (66 per cent). Very few work experience placements were scheduled for the autumn and spring terms.



*Base (unweighted): Placements for Y10-11 (482); Traineeships (51); Placements for Y12-13 (445); Supported Internships (104)*

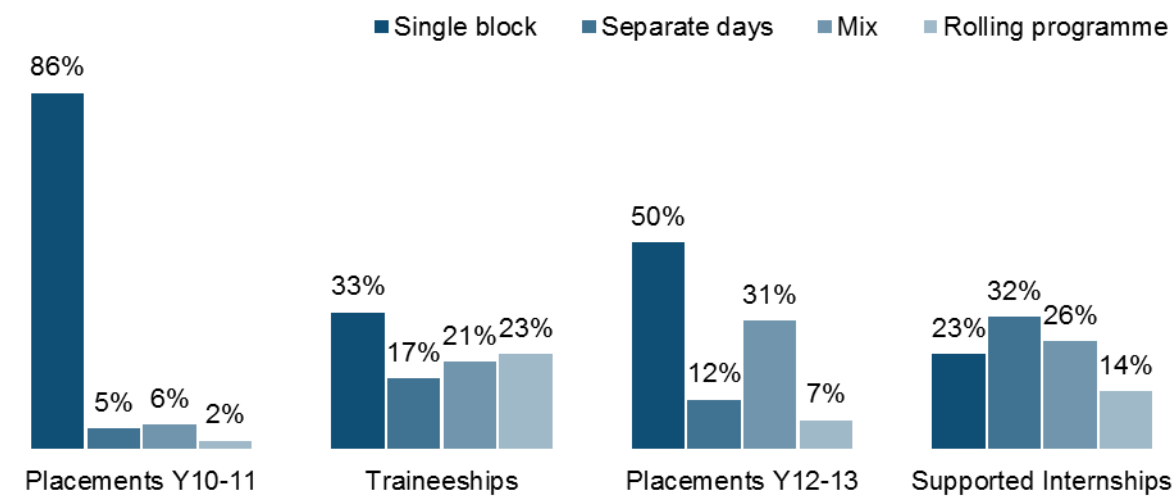
**Figure 2-2 Timing of work related activities in the academic year**

<sup>15</sup> The average (mean) duration of placements for Years 12-13 was 12 days for schools and 10 days for colleges.

<sup>16</sup> For further information about traineeships see BIS, 2015.

As with the timing of work experience placements, there was some variation in how the different types of opportunity were delivered. For example, the large majority of placements for years 10-11 took place in a single block of time (86 per cent); this compared to 50 per cent for years 12-13, 33 per cent for traineeships, and 23 per cent for Supported Internships. Unlike other types of placement, Supported Internships most frequently took place on separate days (32 per cent) (see Figure 2.3).

Further analysis by institution type shows that the timing and delivery of work experience placements for years 12-13 differed between schools and colleges. Schools were significantly more likely than colleges to run programmes in a single block of time (56 per cent compared to 20 per cent) and in the summer term (95 per cent compared to 39 per cent) (see Appendix Tables 2.3 and 2.4).



Base (unweighted): Placements for Y10-11 (483); Traineeships (51); Placements for Y12-13 (445); Supported Internships (105)

**Figure 2-3 Whether work-related activities tended to happen in a single block of time, on separate days or over a period of time**

**Table 2-2 Reasons for the timing and duration of work experience placements**

	Placements for Y10-11	Traineeships	Placements for Y12-13
Base (unweighted)	479	50	444
To fit around programmes of learning	55%	54%	63%
To fit around examination periods	47%	33%	56%
To fit around school/college terms	47%	33%	37%
To fit around coursework	27%	27%	34%
To fit in with employers	13%	49%	27%

To avoid competition with other schools/ colleges	3%	-	*
To fit with pupils	1%	1%	2%
To fit with workload of school/ college staff	*	-	*
Other	2%	11%	3%

Fitting work-related activities around programmes of learning was the most common reason given for their timing and duration (see Table 2.2); this was reported by 63 per cent of those offering work experience placements for years 12-13; 55 per cent of placements for years 10-11 and 54 per cent for traineeships. Other commonly reported reasons for those providing work experience placements for years 10-11 and 12-13 were fitting around examination periods (47 per cent and 56 per cent respectively) and fitting around school and college terms (47 per cent and 37 per cent).

Further analysis showed significant differences in the reasons schools and colleges gave for the timing and duration of work experience placements for years 12-13. In particular, colleges were more likely to report fitting work experience placements around employers (58 per cent compared to 21 per cent) and programmes of learning (72 per cent compared to 60 per cent) while schools were more likely to offer examination times as reasons for their placement timings (59 per cent compared to 41 per cent) (see Appendix Table 2.5).

### **Duration and timing of work experience placements: case study findings**

Findings from the case studies showed greater variability in the timing and duration of work experience placements offered in colleges than schools. In **colleges**, students could expect to be offered a work experience placement of between one and ten weeks. Interviewees noted that, over the longer work experience placements, students might spend one or more days a week with an employer while continuing to attend classes and seminars on their non-placement days. In these instances, it was much more common for work experience placements to be arranged over the course of the academic year rather than in a single block.

The primary factor in determining the duration of placements appeared to be the requirements of a student's study programme. For instance, for some courses (such as Health and Social Care) work experience placements were a mandatory requirement with a specified number of learning hours allocated to this purpose. Other factors included:

- The preferences of employers: some employers indicated that they were happy to accommodate extended work experience placements (of over two weeks) but would find it difficult to ensure students were appropriately supervised if it was undertaken in a single block of time. Others indicated finding it easier to manage a work experience placement if it was delivered in a single block as they could offer a more structured programme of activities.

- The needs/ ability of individual students: Some staff and employers indicated that the duration of a work experience placement could be dictated by the needs/ abilities of a young person. For instance, it was noted that students with SEND might not be able to cope with a week in the workplace but might be able to manage a day per week over an extended period. Other interviewees indicated that the age of a student could be an important factor and that younger students on a 16-19 study programme would often access shorter placements as their skills were often less developed.

Deviating from the survey findings, students in case study **schools** tended to spend no more than one week with an employer. One week placements were largely offered for pragmatic reasons, and designed to make organisation as straightforward as possible for the school and the employer. It was felt that this “*meant employers knew what they were getting into*” (school-based work experience coordinator).

Less common were extended work experience placements, in which school students would spend most of the week out of class on an ongoing basis. Extended placements were used as an option for some students in years 10-11 who were felt could benefit from an alternative curriculum, including those felt to be at risk of disengaging from learning. Extended placements could often see a young person spend a day per week working for an employer over the course of year 11. As noted by one work-experience coordinator:

*“It’s an opportunity that they can run with. They’re not dogged by their past experiences at school and what everyone thinks about them. It’s a new, fresh opportunity and they can rise to that”* (school-based work experience coordinator).

In general, and in keeping with findings from the survey, work experience placements were offered to school students during the summer term. Indeed, most schools only offered placements at this point in the academic year. Where possible work experience placements were arranged after the end of the examination period.

## 2.2. Coverage and take-up of work-related activities

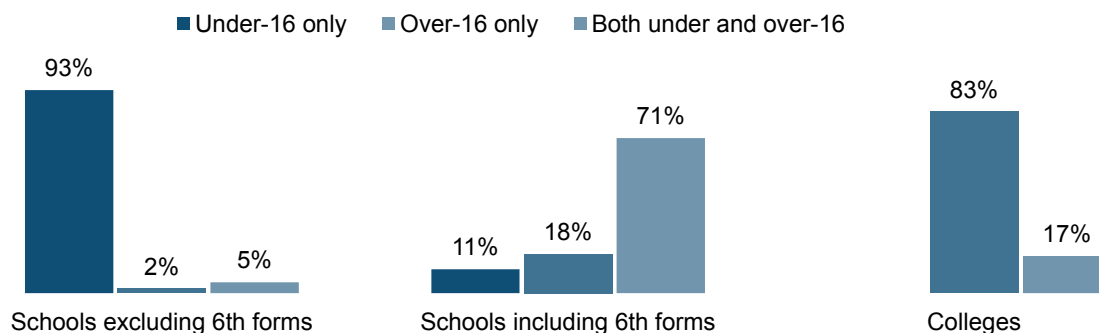
### Coverage

A large majority of schools without a sixth form offered work-related activities to under-16s only (93 per cent),<sup>17</sup> whereas nearly three-quarters of schools with a sixth form offered work-related activities to both over and under 16s (71 per cent). Colleges

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<sup>17</sup> It is not possible to determine why a small number of schools without a sixth form reported offering work-related activities to post-16 students from the survey findings. However, this may be due to respondent error.

predominantly (though not exclusively) offered opportunities just to over-16s (83 per cent) (see Figure 2.4).



Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (187); Schools including 6th forms (410); Colleges (115)

**Figure 2-4 Age range of students offered work-related activities**

Opportunities were less likely to be offered to students in years 11 and 13 than years 10 and 12:

- Nearly three-quarters of schools and colleges offering work-related activities to under-16s, said they were available to year 10 only (73 per cent), 17 per cent to year 10 and 11, and ten per cent to year 11 students only (see Appendix Table 2.1).
- For those offering work-related activities to post-16 students, around half said opportunities were available to both years 12 and 13 (54 per cent); 45 per cent to year 12 only, and just one per cent to year 13 only (see Appendix Table 2.2).

The majority of schools and colleges offered work experience placements to all students in the relevant academic year. Of those offering placements for years 10-11, 11 per cent reported that they were not available to everyone. Of those offering placements for years 12-13 this figure was 23 per cent.

The reasons given for the limited availability of work experience placements are listed in Table 2.3. The table shows that of those offering placements to students in years 10-11, a 'lack of available opportunities' was the most commonly reported reason (24 per cent). This also applied to a similar proportion of those offering placements to students in years 12-13 (26 per cent).

However, the most common reason for not offering all year 12-13 students work experience placements was that they were on an academic study programme (46 per cent). This correlates closely with findings from the case studies, where students taking part in an academic course were less likely to be offered a placement.

**Table 2-3 Reasons not all students were offered work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	50	98
Students are on an academic study programme	13%	46%
Not enough opportunities available	24%	26%
Students don't want to go on placements	12%	18%
Too expensive/lack of funding	12%	6%
Only offered in certain subject areas	7%	10%
Students have work experience already	3%	13%
Not offered to students with high attainment	12%	2%
Only offered to certain year groups	11%	1%
Not all students are ready to be offsite	8%	2%
School/college attendance requirements	5%	-
Not offered to students with low attainment	-	2%
Parents/carers don't give permission to go on placements	2%	-
Not the school/college's responsibility	-	1%
Other	23%	7%

## Take-up of work experience placements

In addition to restrictions on the availability of work experience placements, some work experience coordinators reported issues with student take-up. Rates were highest among those offering placements to students in years 10-11, at nearly 90 per cent, followed by placements for years 12-13 at 72 per cent. Just 58 per cent of students offered Supported Internships took these opportunities up (see Table 2.4).

**Table 2-4 Proportion of students who took-up available work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	480	432	91
Proportion taking-up placement opportunities	88%	72%	58%

There were a number of different reasons why students did not take-up placements open to them (see Table 2.5). ‘Lack of confidence’ was the most frequently cited challenge to take-up across all types of opportunity – 89 per cent for work experience placements for years 10-11, 71 per cent for Supported Internships, and 53 per cent for work experience placements for years 12-13. Other barriers faced by younger students (years 10-11) and those undertaking Supported Internships, were connected to a lack of confidence and life experience (e.g. ‘fear of the unknown’ and ‘not being work ready’).

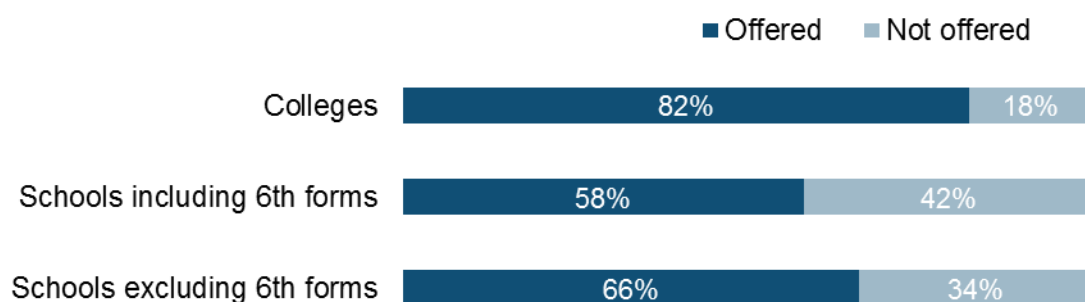
**Table 2-5 Main challenges for students in taking-up work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	481	433	94
Lack of confidence	89%	53%	71%
Fear of the unknown	81%	45%	63%
Not being ‘work ready’	61%	41%	67%
Distance of placement from home	54%	42%	42%
Time management	24%	31%	31%
Fitting in work placements along with study	10%	46%	28%
Cost of travel	28%	30%	24%
Fitting in work placements along with part time work	5%	34%	13%
Lack of placements appropriate to student interests	1%	3%	-
Lack of student engagement/ motivation	*	2%	-
Issues with finding a place	1%	1%	-
Unrealistic student expectations	*	-	-
Age restrictions	1%	-	-
Other	2%	3%	6%

In response to these challenges case study schools and colleges adopted a range of approaches to help young people to prepare for their work experience placements (see section 4.1).

## 2.3. Work-related activities for students with SEND

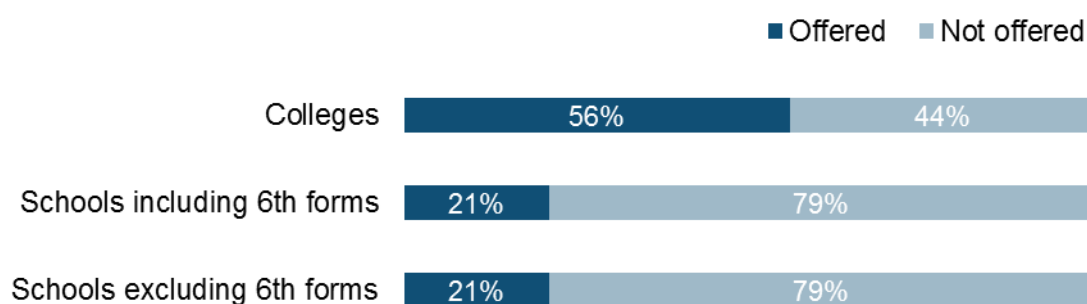
Sixty-three per cent of work experience coordinators reported that their school or college offered work-related activities to students with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND).<sup>18</sup> This was more common among colleges (82 per cent) than schools (66 per cent of schools without a sixth form and 58 per cent of schools with a sixth form) (see Figure 2.5).



Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (187); Schools including 6th forms (409); Colleges (115)

**Figure 2-5 Whether work-related activities were offered to students with SEND by institution type**

Of these schools and colleges, just a quarter (26 per cent), offered their students Supported Internships (SIs). As with the wider offer to SEND students, colleges were significantly more likely than schools to offer SIs (56 per cent of colleges, compared to 21 per cent of schools with and without a sixth form) (see Figure 2.6).



Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (117); Schools including 6th forms (231); Colleges (57)

**Figure 2-6 Whether Supported Internships were offered to students with SEND by institution type**

<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that the sample did not include specialist schools for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.



## Work-related activities for students with SEND: case study findings

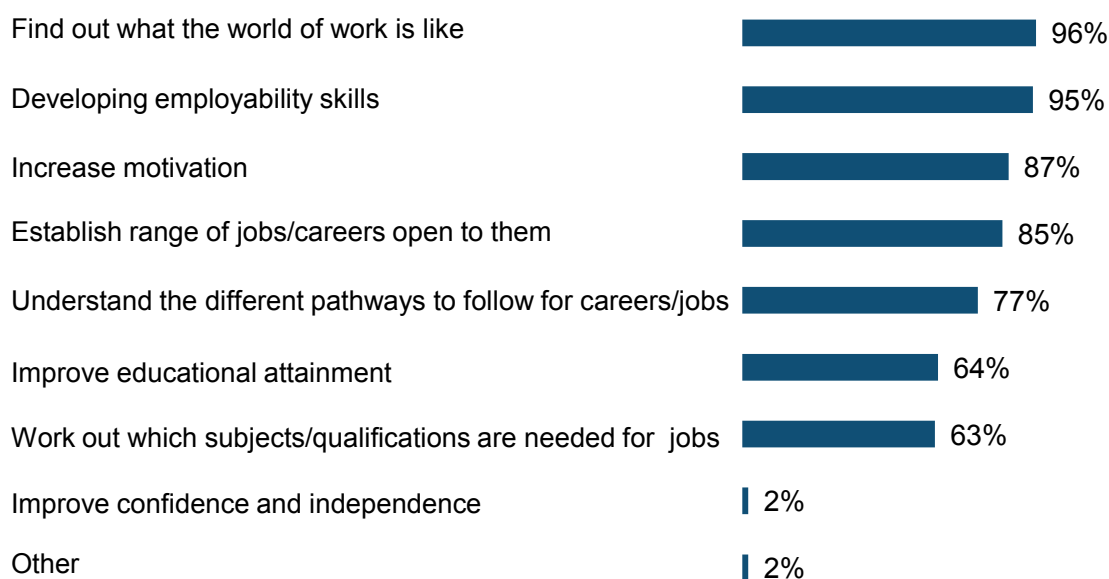
Broadly in keeping with the survey findings, interviewees indicated that work-related activities were available to all students irrespective of whether they had SEND. However, few gave specific examples of the adjustments they had made to ensure students could access opportunities.

In contrast to more general work-related activities, work experience placements were far less likely to be offered to young people with SEND. Where they were offered, the duration, timing and structure of placements was generally the same for school and college students. A key issue for staff facilitating work experience placements for young people with SEND was identifying an appropriate/ accessible sector and occupation.

Across schools and colleges, the availability of Supported Internships was low, which again broadly correlates with findings from the survey.

### 2.4. Purpose of different types of work experience placements

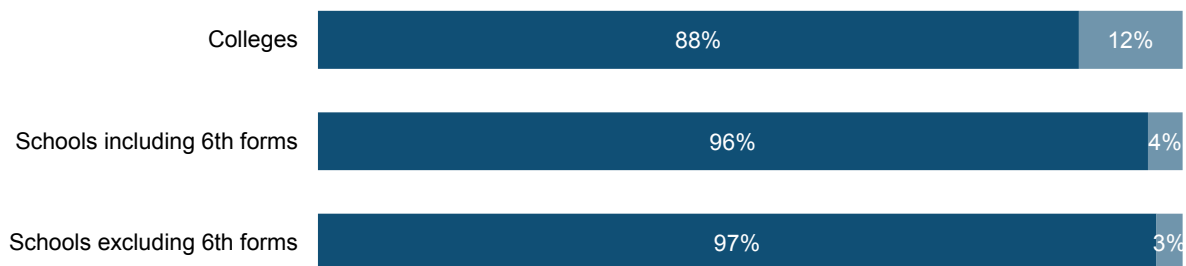
The perceived purpose of work-related activities is a key element behind providing the right opportunities for students. For the majority of work experience coordinators placements were perceived as serving multiple purposes, with most selecting more than one of the options offered (see Figure 2.7). Among these options 'finding out what the world of work is like' was most commonly reported (96 per cent). Other frequently cited purposes were developing 'employability skills' (95 per cent), 'increasing motivation' (87 per cent) and 'establishing the range of jobs' open to students (85 per cent).



Base (unweighted): All respondents (681)

Figure 2-7 Intended purpose of work experience placements

Further analysis showed that schools were significantly more likely to report that the purpose of work experience placements was to ‘find out what the world of work was like’ (97 and 96 per cent, compared to 88 per cent of colleges) (see Figure 2.8). There were no significant differences between schools and colleges on any other purpose.



Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (176); Schools including 6th forms (395); Colleges (110)

**Figure 2-8 Purpose of work-related activity: Finding out what the world of work is like**

### **Purpose: case study findings**

Consistent with the findings of the survey, interviewees in school and colleges indicated that work-related activities (including work experience placements) were offered for a range of purposes, including:

- Providing experience of what the world of work is like;
- Developing employability skills; and
- Helping young people to make choices about a future career.

When **schools** were asked to differentiate between the purpose of specific work-related activities (including experience placements), there were notable differences in the emphasis interviewees placed on particular activities and the relative prominence of work experience placements within a setting’s overall offer. The most commonly identified purpose was to provide students with experience of the world of work, followed by developing employability skills.

While a range of work-related activities were considered helpful in achieving these objectives, schools noted that this did not mean all were equally effective or met the same purpose. They acknowledged that a work experience placement could help a young person decide whether they wanted to work in a particular sector, but it would not give them a sense of the range of opportunities open to them. Work inspiration activities such as careers fairs were felt to be more effective in providing this overview, as long as staff and employers shared a common view of the purpose and content of such experiences. For example, one school was frustrated that an employer used a talk to

students to 'sell' the company's apprenticeship offer rather than talk more widely about the career and sector.

Colleges viewed work experience inspiration activities primarily as a means of preparing young people to get the most out of a placement. For example, students might be encouraged to undertake research into the employment sector they would be placed in. The primary purpose of the work experience placements themselves was to allow students to develop and apply the skills they had learnt as part of their study programme. As noted by one student:

*'(Undertaking some research) makes you realise... if you actually want to do it... it is often the theory side that puts us off but we love the practical side of it' (school pupil).*

### 3 Identification and set-up of work-related activities

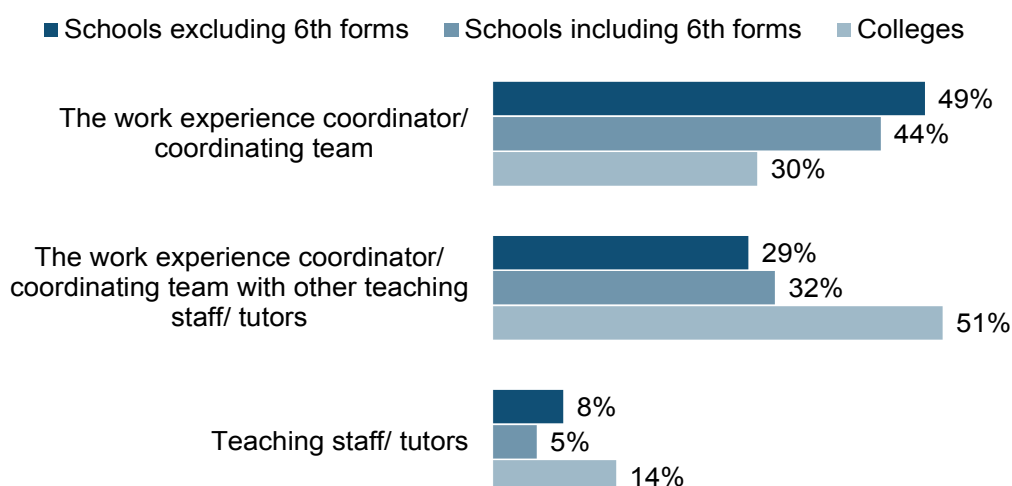
#### Chapter summary

- Most schools and colleges used a centrally coordinated system for organising/ administering work-related activities (83 per cent).
- A higher proportion of schools (49 and 44 per cent) than colleges (30 per cent) used a work experience coordinator/ team to organise activities. At colleges, teaching staff were more involved in making arrangements than in schools.
- Schools tended to take a student-led approach to identifying and organising work-related activities, and colleges a staff-led approach.
- Suitable employers were most frequently identified using staff systems and contacts (33 per cent). Approaches included:
  - Door-knocking and cold-calling by the staff responsible for identifying work experience placements
  - Employer engagement and celebration events arranged by staff
  - Ad hoc or opportunistic approaches
  - Specialist identification – i.e. tailored to the needs of specific students.
- Employers varied in size and sector.
- Facilitators to arranging opportunities included having engaged and supportive parents/ carers with good connections (particularly for younger students), and positive relationships between schools/ colleges and employers.
- Challenges included the limited availability of opportunities by sector, employer size and location. Establishing contact was the main difficulty with large employers, but small employers were more likely to find the process of providing a placement challenging. The creative and media, engineering, construction, and health sectors were seen as more difficult to engage.
- Challenges placing students (rather than sourcing placements) included pupils' age and ability.
- Most schools and colleges promoted awareness of work-related learning opportunities. Active (e.g. through contact with invited employers) rather than passive (e.g. sending a flyer) strategies were felt to be more effective.

### 3.1 Responsibility for organising work-related activities

Most institutions (83 per cent) had a centrally coordinated system for organising/ administering work-related activities.

At schools the work experience coordinator/ coordinating team organised work-related activities in around half of cases (49 per cent of schools without a sixth form, and 44 per cent of schools with a sixth form) compared to just 30 per cent of colleges (Appendix Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of all responses to this question by institution type).



Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (187); Schools including 6th forms (410); Colleges (115)

**Figure 3-1 Who was responsible for organising work-related activities**

At colleges, teaching staff were more involved in organising work-related activities than at schools:

- The majority of colleges (51 per cent) reported that work-related activities were arranged by the work experience coordinator/ coordinating team along with other teaching staff, compared to 32 per cent of schools with a sixth form and 29 per cent of schools without a sixth form.
- In a similar vein, 14 per cent of colleges mentioned that teaching staff/ tutors were responsible for organising work-related activities, compared to eight per cent of schools without a sixth form and just five per cent of schools with a sixth form.

Amongst those offering work experience placements for years 10-11 and years 12-13, work experience coordinators tended to share responsibility for arranging opportunities with students and/ or parents. Arrangements for traineeships and Supported Internships were usually made by other staff members, 67 per cent and 66 per cent respectively (see Table 3.1).

**Table 3-1 Who made arrangements for different types of work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Traineeships</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	483	53	443	113
The work experience coordinator	81%	25%	64%	43%
Other staff members	16%	67%	35%	66%
Students and/ or parents	42%	7%	50%	16%
External organisation/s (e.g. Connexions)	20%	13%	13%	8%
Work experience/ placement team	-	-	1%	1%
Other	-	-	*	*

\* denotes a response of less than 1%

Where students and their parents/ carers were involved in making arrangements for work experience placements, they tended to share this responsibility with the school/ college. An average of 65 per cent<sup>19</sup> of students in years 10-11 (and their parents) played a role in making arrangements; this was 63 per cent for students in years 12-13.<sup>20 21</sup>

### **Identifying and organising work experience placements: case study findings**

Schools and colleges had two approaches to identifying placements:

- The **staff-led approach** involved staff members taking primary responsibility for identifying work experience placements, with a dedicated in-house work experience coordinator or team to facilitate this; external agency support was generally not needed. This was the approach most often taken by **colleges**, which is indicative of the importance they placed on ensuring students were offered a placement, particularly those on technical courses. The work experience coordinator or team were responsible for establishing relationships with local employers and maintaining employer/ alumni databases. Where internal staff capacity was limited or unavailable colleges turned to external agencies for assistance, mainly to support aspects of the set-up (e.g. health and safety checks). Other settings sought full brokerage services to help identify placement opportunities.
- The **student-led approach**, placed responsibility for identifying work experience placements on young people and their parents/ carers; this was the approach generally taken by **schools**. Within this approach there was variation in the level of support provided to students looking for placements; which tended to be higher for

<sup>19</sup> The mean value.

<sup>20</sup> Work experience coordinators were asked, on a scale of 0-100 per cent, what proportion of students/ parents wholly or partly organised opportunities for themselves.

<sup>21</sup> The base sizes for traineeships and Supported Internships did not reach the threshold of 50 cases, and therefore proportions have not been reported.

students seeking a placement in less accessible sectors, or to those with SEND. Schools and colleges maintained employer and alumni databases and links in order to provide this support, but their databases tended to be less comprehensive than those in institutions with a staff-led approach. Students who had found a work experience placement were given a lower level of practical support. These students received practical materials and forms – work experience feedback booklets, health and safety paperwork and parent/ carer permission slips. Health and safety procedures and visits were typically part of each institution’s offer, but these were often undertaken by an external party.

Where schools and colleges operated a staff-led approach, common techniques in engaging employers included:

- Door-knocking and cold-calling by the staff responsible for identifying work experience placements. This approach was used to source specific opportunities or to establish links with potential future placement providers.
- Employer engagement and celebration events arranged by staff. These events were perceived as especially valuable in engaging local employers. They included “*business breakfasts*” whereby schools/ colleges invited local employers to visit and discuss their work-related activities programme.
- An ad hoc or opportunistic approach, where schools and colleges contacted or were contacted by employers, pupils or parents/ carers on an ad hoc basis.
- Specialist identification, where the approach taken was tailored to the needs of individual students. This approach relied on having a dedicated team that could source industry contacts.

#### **Case illustration: The ‘business breakfast’**

In one school located in a market town in the south of England, staff had sought to build stronger relationships with local employers by hosting a termly ‘business breakfast’.

At these events, employers were invited to find out what the school was doing to prepare young people for their future career and how they could get involved. This often included a short presentation on what they did and what type of work experience placement they might be able to offer.

Staff felt these events were invaluable in demonstrating to employers the importance of work-related learning, and in providing young people with opportunities to select a sector for their placement.

Regardless of whether responsibility for identifying work experience placements primarily resided with staff or students (and their parents/ carers), any opportunity to make use of the personal contacts of young people and their families was utilised if it had the potential

to match their career aspirations. Even at colleges where staff were primarily responsible for identifying placements, interviewees supported young people to be involved and engaged in the process. Students were asked to suggest potential employers and there was a collaborative approach between the young person and the coordinators in defining the parameters for the placement search and the final decision:

*“It gives them the opportunity to go and approach someone that they think they’d be really interested in working with, as opposed to us saying ‘well these are the places you can go to, which one do you want?’ It actually gives a little bit more scope for some of them to do that.”* (work experience coordinator)

Interviewees described family connections as providing “*high end*” or “*professional*” work experience placements in sectors which were typically challenging to engage. However, it was acknowledged that it placed young people who did not have these family contacts at a disadvantage:

*“Being successful at work experience has more to do with your contacts than your abilities. It’s who you know”* (school-based senior leader).

Interviewees felt that the most important element of any identification approach was a strong support network for students who could not identify their own opportunity, whether that was due to a lack of personal contacts, special educational needs, or a lack of motivation and engagement. Common types of support included:

- Help identifying a suitable work experience placement using personal/ professional contacts.
- Advice and guidance on how to go about contacting an employer and organising a work experience placement.
- Provision of tools to help organise a work experience placement, such as those relating to the completion of a health and safety audit.

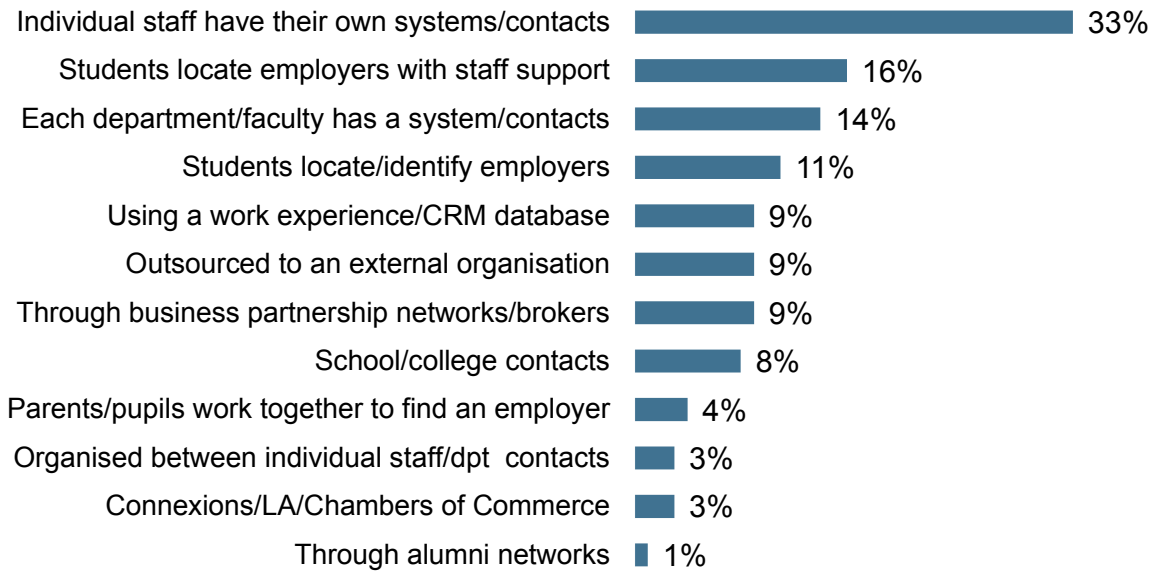
In practice, however, the capacity of staff to deliver this support varied.

## **3.2 Making arrangements for work-related activities**

As Figure 3.2 shows, the most common way of finding suitable employers was through individual staff with their own systems and contacts (33 per cent). Schools and colleges with a centrally coordinated system for organising work-related activities were:

- Less likely to have individual staff with their own systems/ contacts, and to use faculty connections.
- More likely to rely on students to identify employers with support from staff, to use a work experience/ CRM database, and to use business partnership networks or brokers.

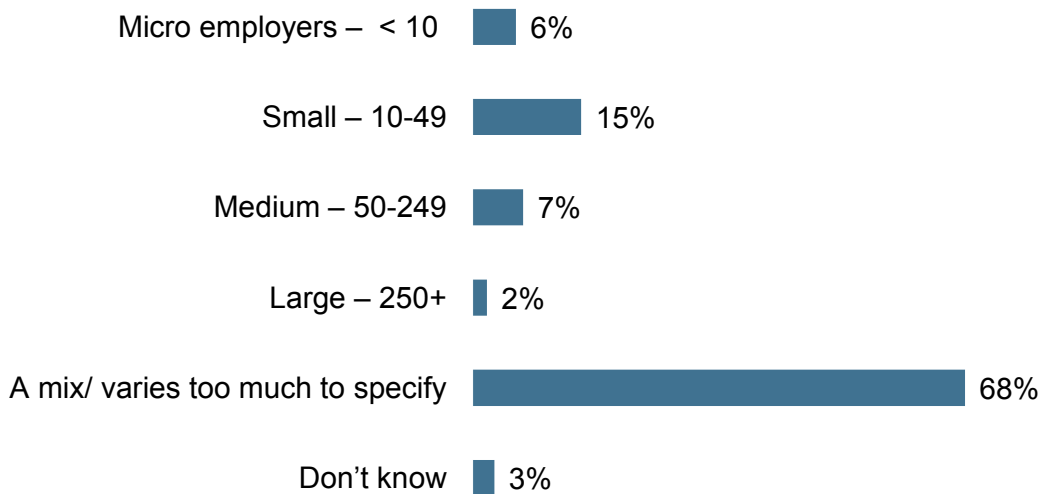




Base (unweighted): All respondents reporting that the school/college organised work-related activities (659)

**Figure 3-2 How schools and colleges found suitable employers to work with**

In most cases work experience coordinators reported that employers offering work-related activities varied in size (68 per cent), as illustrated in Figure 3.3.



Base (unweighted): All respondents reporting that the school/college organised work-related activities (690)

**Figure 3-3 Size of employers who offered work-related activities**

Work-related activities were offered across a range of sectors. The most frequently mentioned sector across all four types of opportunity was business, administration and finance – 93 per cent for those offering work experience placements in years 10-11; 84 per cent for work experience placements in years 12-13; 62 per cent for traineeships; and 49 per cent for Supported Internships (see Table 3.2).

Those offering work experience placements for years 10-11 had particularly strong coverage of different sectors, with at least 80 per cent of work experience coordinators reporting that students were offered placements in the following nine sectors – business, administration and finance (93 per cent); retail (90 per cent); sport and leisure, hair and beauty, and hospitality and catering (all 89 per cent); information technology (88 per cent); engineering, and creative and media (both 83 per cent); and construction and the built environment (82 per cent).

**Table 3-2 Employment sectors where students were offered work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	467	428	94
Business, Administration and Finance	93%	84%	49%
Construction and the Built Environment	82%	63%	20%
Creative and Media	83%	72%	23%
Engineering	83%	69%	12%
Hair and Beauty	89%	55%	32%
Hospitality and Catering	89%	62%	35%
Information Technology	88%	75%	23%
Land-based and Environmental	68%	47%	26%
Manufacturing	67%	45%	10%
Public Services	76%	66%	18%
Retail	90%	68%	38%
Society, Health and Development	78%	75%	30%
Sport and Leisure	89%	74%	24%
Travel and Tourism	70%	55%	14%
Animal care/ science	2%	2%	-
Education	4%	4%	-
Science	*	2%	1%
Law	2%	4%	1%
Other	1%	1%	-

However, the creative and media sector was identified as particularly difficult to find work experience placements in (46 per cent for placements in years 10-11 and 42 per cent of placements in years 12-13), as shown in Table 3.3.

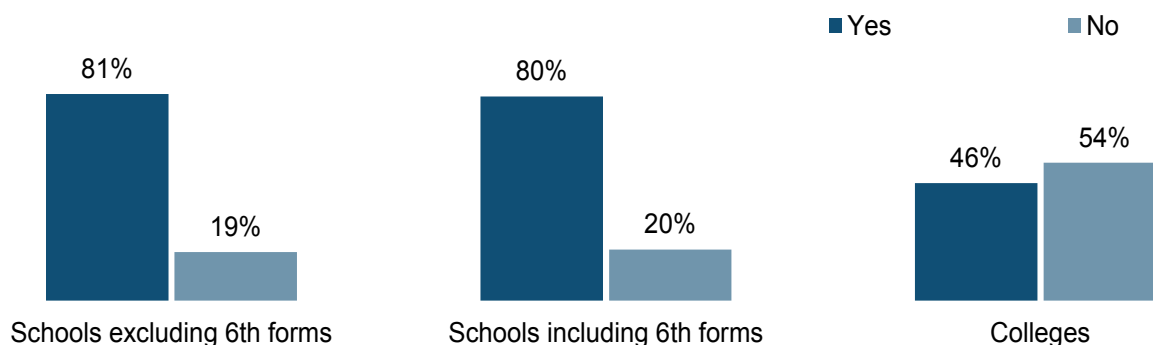
Across all four types of work experience placement, the engineering sector, and construction and the built environment sector, were frequently cited as challenging sectors to source opportunities.

- Engineering was reported by 38 per cent of those offering placements in years 12-13, 36 per cent of those offering placements in years 10-11 and 31 per cent of those offering Supported Internships. Furthermore, amongst those with a pre-16 offer it was significantly harder to find engineering opportunities in urban locations (39 per cent) than rural ones (19 per cent).
- Construction and the built environment was selected by 38 per cent of those offering work experience placements in years 10-11, 28 per cent of those offering work experience placements in years 12-13, and 27 per cent of those offering Supported Internships.

**Table 3-3 Employment sectors where it was difficult to find work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Traineeships</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	465	51	425	100
Business, Administration and Finance	7%	9%	14%	21%
Construction and the Built Environment	38%	30%	28%	27%
Creative and Media	46%	24%	42%	29%
Engineering	36%	29%	38%	31%
Hair and Beauty	2%	8%	5%	17%
Hospitality and Catering	4%	9%	6%	15%
Information Technology	33%	17%	32%	32%
Land-based and Environmental	20%	17%	18%	21%
Manufacturing	23%	14%	19%	23%
Public Services	35%	22%	32%	26%
Retail	6%	6%	7%	18%
Society, Health and Development	32%	16%	31%	22%
Sport and Leisure	21%	14%	16%	20%
Travel and Tourism	19%	17%	13%	19%
Animal care/ science	3%	-	2%	-
Law	4%	-	5%	1%
Science	1%	-	2%	-
Medicine/NHS	7%	-	6%	4%
Other	1%	-	*	-
None	8%	26%	15%	31%

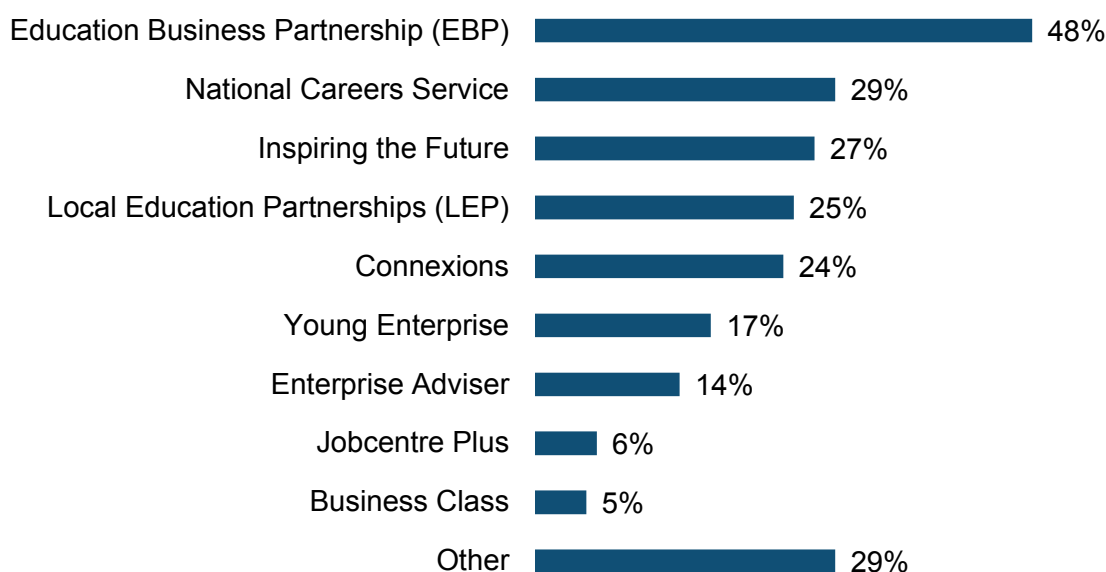
More schools than colleges reported working with external organisations to source work-related activities (81 per cent of schools without a sixth form and 80 per cent of schools with a sixth form, compared to 46 per cent of colleges), as shown in Figure 3.4.



Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (187), Schools including 6th forms(410), Colleges (115)

**Figure 3-4 Whether external organisations were used to source work-related activities**

As Figure 3.5 shows, schools and colleges worked with a wide range of external organisations. Around half of those (48 per cent) using external organisations to source work-related activities worked with Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) (see Appendix Table 3.2 for a full breakdown of responses).

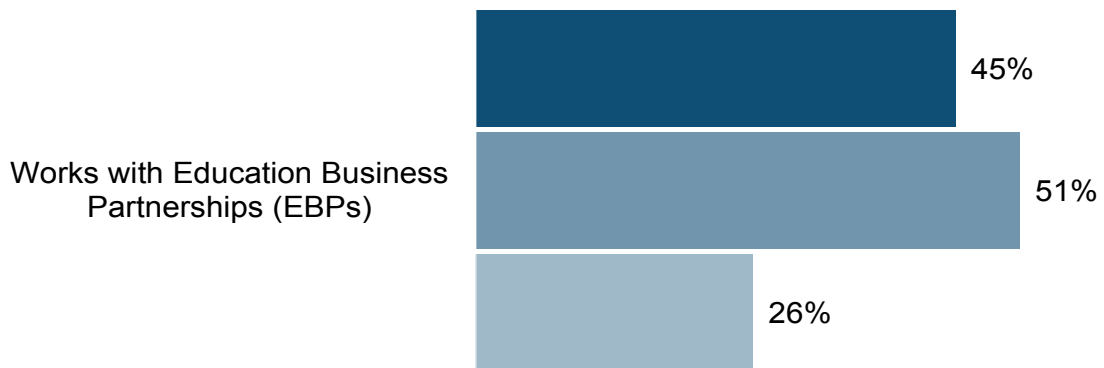


Base (unweighted): All respondents that used external organisations to source work-related activities (522)

**Figure 3-5 External organisations schools and colleges worked with**

Further analysis showed that significantly more schools (45 per cent of schools without a sixth form and 51 per cent of schools with a sixth form) worked with EBPs than colleges (26 per cent) (see Figure 3.6).

■ Schools excluding 6th forms   ■ Schools including 6th forms   ■ Colleges



Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (149); Schools including 6th forms (323); Colleges (52)

**Figure 3-6 Schools and colleges working with EBPs**

### **Challenges and facilitators to arranging work-related activities: case study findings**

Students' career aspirations were identified as important when arranging a work experience placement. However, interviewees noted a range of difficulties to realising these aspirations. These included:

- Availability of work experience placements by sector;
- Availability of work experience placements by employer size;
- Availability of work experience placements by location;
- Pupils' age; and
- Pupils' ability.

The following sectors were highlighted by interviewees as being difficult to engage:

- Health sector: Difficulties arranging work experience placements in the health sector commonly arose due to concerns around pupil safeguarding and the need to maintain patient confidentiality. Work experience coordinators and external agents commented that they often sourced opportunities in care homes and nurseries as an alternative to healthcare settings, if the latter was not possible.
- Manufacturing/ construction sector: Interviewees found the manufacturing and construction sector harder to engage due to safety concerns.
- Creative and media sector: Interviewees perceived the creative and media sector as harder to engage due to the limited capacity of these businesses to offer work experience placements; most being micro, small and medium size enterprises. As a result, students interested in gaining experience in this sector were often offered

alternative, yet related experiences, such as an opportunity to get involved in a competition or to showcase their work at an event attended by relevant employers.

The second challenge highlighted was employer size. Staff noted that while it was often much more difficult to “*get a foot in [the door]*” with larger employers, smaller businesses often found it difficult to navigate the “*red tape*” associated with offering placements in their organisation, for example, the need to complete the paperwork for a health and safety audit.

Location was the third challenge identified. Interviewees in schools and colleges indicated that their rural location made it difficult to find a suitable work experience placement due to:

- The limited number of employers in certain sectors;
- The cost for students of travelling to placements; and
- The availability of public transport.

As noted by one applications coordinator:

*“There are good placements that are available but students can’t get to them”*  
(applications coordinator).

Students’ age was reported as a further challenge to arranging work experience placements in settings catering for younger cohorts. Interviewees highlighted a number of reasons for this including:

- Employers’ liability insurance not covering students aged under 16;
- Concerns about safeguarding procedures; and
- Concerns about pupils’ level of maturity.

Students’ academic ability was the final challenge mentioned. It was felt that students should be able to meet the expected academic thresholds of their prospective career (including medicine, veterinary medicine and highly technical professions). In cases where staff/ students could not persuade an employer to offer a work experience placement, students were commonly encouraged to accept a placement in a related field with lower entry requirements.

Interviewees also identified several facilitators to arranging work experience placements:

- Engaged and supportive parents/ carers;
- Parents/ carers with relevant family connections; and
- Good relationships between the school or college and employers.

It was recognised that supportive parents/ carers were more likely to be on the ‘lookout’ for opportunities for their child and to attend any parental briefing sessions run by the school or college. Moreover, these parents/ carers were more likely to ensure that practical plans were in place at the identification stage, were any problems to arise (e.g. the desired placement being far from home). This particular facilitator was felt to be

especially powerful in schools catering for pre-16 students, which tended to engage more with parents/ carers during the work-related learning process.

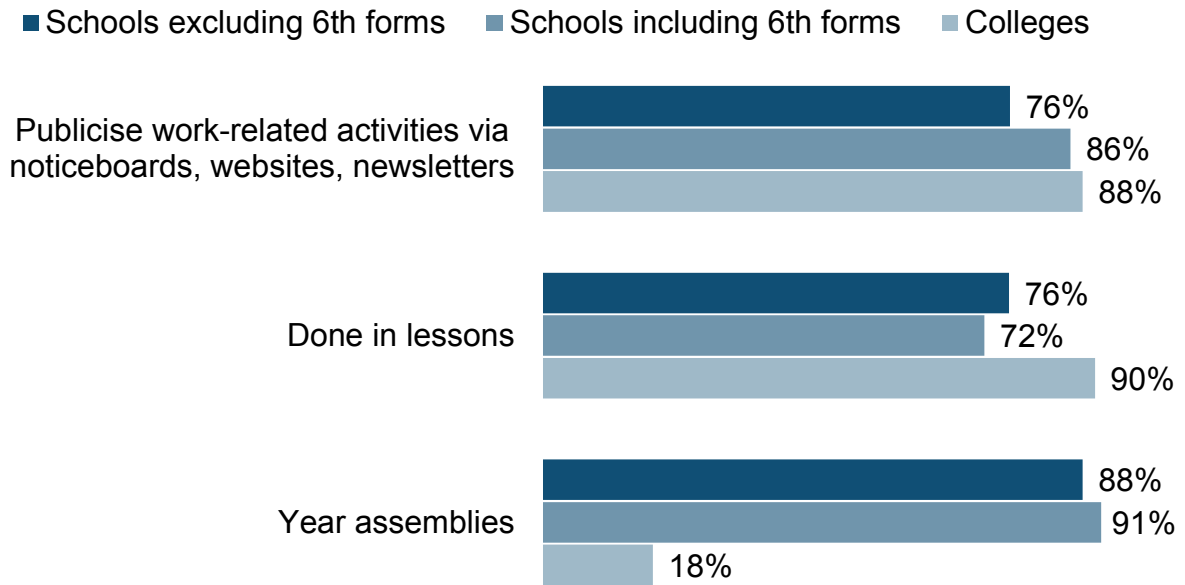
Parents/ carers with relevant family connections and good relationships between the school or college and employers, were both felt to lead to more reliable employer contacts. Both reduced the likelihood that a work experience placement would fall through. Where schools were confident that an employer would reliably deliver an effective placement, there was also greater certainty that the student would benefit from it. In situations where a student might require extra support while on their placement (e.g. due to special educational needs), schools felt better able to rely on known employers. This was particularly important for schools catering for younger students (pre-16), perhaps reflecting their greater reliance on a student-led approach to identifying placements.

### **3.3 Raising awareness and promoting take-up of work-related activities**

Almost all work experience coordinators (96 per cent) reported that their school or college took action to raise awareness and promote work-related activities amongst students and parents/ carers.

Figure 3.7 shows the range of awareness-raising activities reported, by institution type (the chart includes only those factors showing a significant difference). Most schools used year assemblies to raise awareness and promote work-related activities (91 per cent of schools with a sixth form, and 88 per cent of schools without a sixth form) compared to just 18 per cent of colleges. Conversely, colleges were more likely to report raising awareness and promoting work-related activities in lessons (90 per cent) compared to schools (76 per cent of schools without a sixth form, and 72 per cent of schools with a sixth form). Most colleges also publicised work-related activities via notice boards, websites and newsletters, as did schools with a sixth form (88 per cent and 86 per cent respectively), compared to around three-quarters of schools without a sixth form (76 per cent). Appendix Table 3.3 includes a breakdown of all responses by institution type.



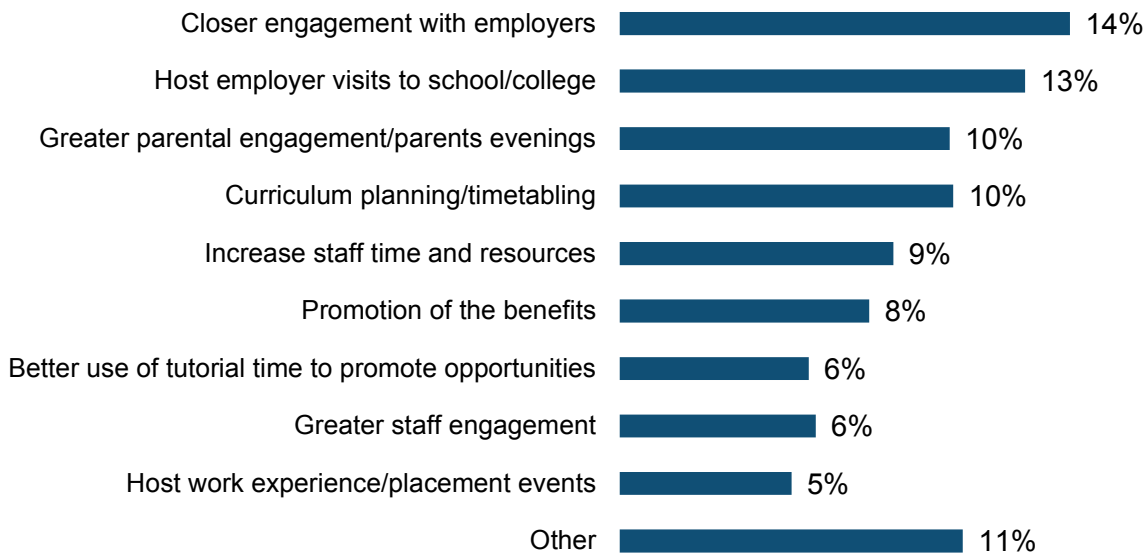


Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (180); Schools including 6th forms (396); Colleges (108)

**Figure 3-7 Activities to raise awareness and promote work-related activities by institution type**

However, colleges in particular (70 per cent) felt that more could be done to promote take-up of work-related activities; this compared to around half of schools (50 per cent of schools without a sixth form, and 56 per cent of schools with a sixth form).

Figure 3.8 shows the ten most frequently cited suggestions of how take-up of work-related activities could be further promoted at the respondent's school or college. Building stronger relationships with employers was most frequently mentioned, whether through closer engagement with employers (14 per cent) or hosting employer visits (13 per cent).



*Base (unweighted): All respondents answering that more could be done to promote take-up of work-related activities (371)*

**Figure 3-8 Ways in which schools or colleges could promote take-up of work-related activities**

### **Strategies used to promote work experience placements: case study findings**

Most schools had strategies to promote work experience placements, which included organising assemblies and discussion during PSHE classes. This was also true of colleges, who tended to use careers events and promotional materials. External agencies rarely became involved with the promotion of work experience placements, but where they did it tended to be undertaken within the setting; this included taking part in school assemblies and information evenings, and producing materials to distribute in school.

Although feedback on the success of these strategies was limited, it was evident that young people favoured ‘active’ approaches, such as the opportunity to meet with employers and hear what they might do on a work experience placement, rather than ‘passive’ ones such as receiving a flyer. These ‘passive’ approaches were considered much less helpful in preparing young people to make the most of an opportunity.

## 4. Organising and operating work-related activities

### Chapter summary

- Schools and colleges most commonly matched students to placements on the basis of their career ambitions (53 per cent for years 12-13 and 47 per cent for years 10-11). However, a significant proportion (47 percent for years 10-11 and 42 per cent for years 12-13) reported that students (and/ or their parents/ carers) arranged their own placement.
- Most schools and colleges helped students to prepare for placements. In schools, preparation focused on information sharing (e.g. health and safety information), while in colleges the focus was on developing students' skills (e.g. support with applications and CV writing).
- Schools and colleges also prepared employers for placements (for example, conducting health and safety checks). External agents supported these activities when internal resource was lacking.
- All of this preparatory work was seen as important for setting expectations and establishing roles, and therefore to delivering effective work experience placements.
- Schools and colleges typically supported and monitored students on work experience placements through calls and face-to-face visits, in order to check progress and identify any problems.
- Survey findings highlighted employer-based issues (e.g. lack of employers/ roles in certain industries/ areas), staff time and funding as key challenges to setting up work-related activities. Qualitative findings indicated issues such as poor quality and planning of work experience placements, poor communication between providers and employers and poor behaviour/ disinterest from students.

### 4.1 Matching students to work experience placements

The main consideration when matching students to work experience placements was finding a sector based on their career ambitions; this was reported by 58 per cent of those offering Supported Internships, 52 per cent of those offering work experience placements for years 12-13 and 47 per cent of those offering work experience placements for years 10-11<sup>22</sup> (see Table 4.1).

The importance of matching students' career ambitions was echoed in the case studies, where staff indicated that this was their primary concern when working with young people

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<sup>22</sup> The base size for traineeships did not reach the threshold of 50 cases, and therefore proportions have not been reported.

to identify opportunities. This did not, however, mean that staff were always successful (see section 3.2).

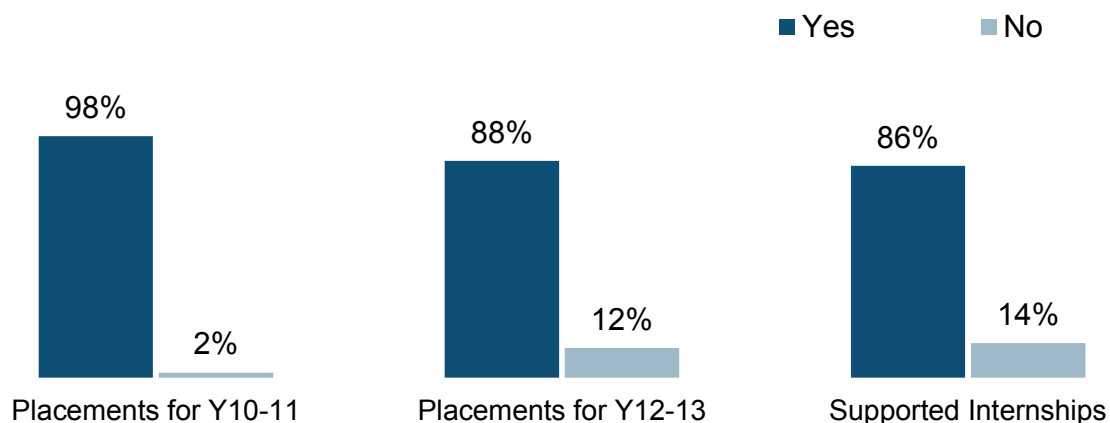
Further analysis revealed that where the work experience coordinator/ coordinating team organised work experience placements for years 12-13, significantly more students were matched to placements on the basis of their career ambitions (58 per cent), and subjects studied (39 per cent).

**Table 4-1 How schools/ colleges matched students to work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	466	431	98
Matching students' career ambitions with a placement in that sector	47%	52%	58%
Identifying students' strengths and matching them with an employer who wants those skills	30%	26%	34%
Matching students on the basis of subjects studied	17%	33%	26%
Identifying placements that will stretch students/ challenge their view of work	23%	19%	22%
By ease of access or location (near to home)	30%	24%	24%
Random allocation	5%	1%	2%
Not applicable: placements primarily arranged by students or parents/ carers	47%	42%	13%
Other	1%	2%	8%

## 4.2 Preparing students and employers for work experience placements

Most work experience coordinators reported helping students to prepare for placements in some way (see Figure 4.1). This was the case for those offering placements for years 10-11 (98 per cent), for years 12-13 (88 per cent) and Supported Internships (86 per cent). A range of methods were used; the most frequently reported being helping students to understand protocols. This applied to 95 per cent of those offering work experience placements for years 10-11, 86 per cent for years 12-13 and 74 per cent for Supported Internships (see Table 4.2).



Base (unweighted): Placements for Y10-11(482), Placements for Y12-13 (444), Supported Internships(101)

**Figure 4-1 Whether anything is done to help students to prepare for work experience placements**

Further analysis revealed that where a work experience coordinator/ coordinating team organised year 12-13 work experience placements, significantly more reported holding an initial meeting between the employer and student (44 per cent, compared to 31 per cent when the work experience coordinator/ coordinating team did not organise the placement).

Preparation activities also varied by institution type (see Appendix Table 4.1), with more colleges than schools:

- Undertaking employability skills in class time before the work experience placement (83 per cent compared to 59 per cent);
- Supporting students drafting their CVs (87 per cent compared to 77 per cent);
- Developing students' interview skills (76 per cent compared to 70 per cent); and
- Holding an initial meeting between the employer and the student (50 per cent compared to 32 per cent).

**Table 4-2 Measures taken to prepare students for work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	470	393	88
Students undertake employability skills in class time before the placement	72%	64%	72%
Supporting students with drafting their CVs	71%	79%	63%
Developing students' interview skills	63%	71%	64%
Help students understand protocols e.g. turning up on time, communicating appropriately, dress code	95%	86%	74%
Holds an initial meeting between employer and student	43%	36%	66%
Provides one-to-one advice	63%	70%	73%
Health and safety talks/ assembly	5%	2%	-
Dedicated work placement/ experience assembly	4%	2%	-
Pre-placement training/ preparation day	1%	1%	-
Pre-placement visits/ phone calls	2%	*	-
Parents evening	1%	-	2%
Work experience booklets/ folders	3%	2%	-
Other	5%	5%	4%

### **Preparing students for work experience placements: case study findings**

Most school and colleges used a range of preparatory activities in advance of identifying work experience placements.

In **schools**, activities focused on information sharing:

- Assemblies were used to explain procedures to students, the timeline for the placement process, and to introduce any external agencies they might be working with.

- Health and safety preparation was a major element of preparation in schools. Students needed to have the opportunity to ask questions and needed to receive the necessary employer paperwork.
- Enlisting parental/ carer support was viewed as important, so that they understood the process and purpose. Parents/ carers would also often be asked to complete permission slips.

In **colleges**, preparation focused on developing students' skills:

- Students were supported with writing applications, drafting CVs, preparing cover letters and completing employer application forms.
- Feedback sessions were held with previous cohorts of students and employers to help students understand what a work experience placement would be like.
- Group discussions were used to help students understand the purpose of placements and the employability skills they should be aiming to develop.

Once a work experience placement had been identified, schools and colleges:

- Encouraged students to make contact with employers to introduce themselves and confirm requirements, such as their working hours and dress code.
- Supported students to research the company they would be placed with, and the role they would be performing.
- Used pre-work experience placement sessions to develop students' employability skills. These took place during tutorials in colleges and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) classes in schools.

Interviewees noted that specific approaches were required to help students with SEND access placements, these included:

- Fostering good communication between the student, their parents/ carers, the SEND coordinator, the broker and the employer, from the outset.
- Discussion between staff, students and their parents/ carers to establish the appropriate level of disclosure. This was viewed as valuable in ensuring students had appropriate employer support.
- Undertaking extra health, safety and accessibility checks.
- Arranging pre-meets and site tours, which were viewed as especially helpful for students with autism. Interviewees felt they helped to prepare students for the routine of the work experience placement so they would feel more confident about what would be involved.
- Discussion of internal work experience placements as an option for students with higher levels of need. Schools and colleges were seen as better able to support these needs than an external employer. Typical internal work experience

placements included working in a school or college kitchen, or at an on-site hair and beauty salon.

- Reviewing the support measures available for students while on placements. This was viewed as especially important for young people with anxiety issues or more severe learning difficulties. Support measures might include a carer or teaching assistant accompanying the student, or arranging transport to and from the placement.

### **Preparing employers for work experience placements**

Interviewees highlighted the importance of checking employers had health and safety arrangements in place.

Colleges took primary responsibility for health and safety audits. This was not always the case for schools, many of whom out-sourced this to an external agency as a result of constraints on staff capacity. Health and safety audits largely comprised of a desk-based risk assessment. However, where placements were perceived to present a higher risk, such as those based in kitchens or on construction sites, desk-based assessments would be followed by a visit to the employer.

External agents stressed that their role was to support settings and employers by providing a “*duty of care service*”, which could extend to suggesting preparation activities for the employer to complete prior to the student’s arrival. However, both external agencies and school/ college staff noted that employers rarely approached them to ask for support regarding the structure and content of work experience placements.

## **4.3 Supporting and monitoring students on work experience placements**

Keeping in touch visits, monitoring calls and post-placement reviews were the most frequently cited types of support offered to students across all three types of opportunity – work experience placements for years 10-11, placements for years 12-13, and Supported Internships (see Table 4.3). Keeping in touch visits and calls were commonly reported, particularly by those offering work experience placements for years 10-11 (84 per cent and 80 per cent respectively), suggesting that younger students were monitored more closely than their older counterparts.



**Table 4-3 Type of support offered to students whilst on work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	483	422	93
Travel expenses paid	17%	14%	26%
Meal expenses paid	8%	5%	10%
Provision of work clothes	20%	13%	23%
Mentoring	22%	28%	47%
Keep in touch visits	84%	56%	77%
Keep in touch calls	80%	73%	78%
Supervision during placement	17%	16%	57%
Post-placement review	76%	69%	68%
SEN students accompanied by teaching assistant	*	-	-
Log book/diary (includes advice/ emergency contact details)	2%	1%	-
Other	3%	1%	1%

Closely related to support while on placements, schools and colleges also used a range of monitoring methods. These included:

- Collecting feedback from employers (reported by 92 per cent of those offering work experience placements for years 10-11 and 79 per cent for years 12-13); and
- Collecting feedback from students (89 per cent for work experience placements for years 10-11 and 80 per cent for years 12-13).

Amongst those offering Supported Internships, visits by staff was the most common monitoring method (82 per cent).

**Table 4-4 Monitoring methods for students on work experience placements**

	<b>Placements for Y10-11</b>	<b>Placements for Y12-13</b>	<b>Supported Internships</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	483	429	93
Collect feedback from students	89%	80%	79%
Collect feedback from employers	92%	79%	80%
Placement visits by staff	88%	56%	82%
Evaluate and review outcomes	59%	50%	59%
Record work activities undertaken	68%	55%	62%
Keep in touch calls	77%	65%	74%
Record range of skills gained	46%	43%	58%
Carry out assessments to gather evidence for student portfolios	26%	29%	48%
Use students' Individual Learning Plans (ILP)	11%	17%	49%
No monitoring undertaken	1%	5%	4%
Log book/ diary is kept	4%	2%	4%
Other	1%	2%	1%

### **Supporting and monitoring students on work experience placements: case study findings**

Reflecting findings from the survey, support and monitoring typically involved meeting with pupils face-to-face (placement visits) or telephoning the employer, in order to check on their progress and identify any potential issues.

Monitoring visits were conducted by school staff, but in some settings were undertaken by external agents. During these visits, staff completed a “*visit form*” to capture details about the work experience placement, which included:

- Recording that a monitoring visit had taken place for accountability purposes;
- Collecting up-to-date employer contact details where necessary;
- Recording the tasks the student was undertaking;
- Creating a qualitative assessment of the working environment; and
- Assessing whether the setting should work with that employer in future.

Schools noted that this information was typically stored on a central database, as illustrated by the case example below.

### **Case illustration: a central database at a school**

To ensure students gained access to a balanced programme of work-related activities, one school maintained a central database which listed the activities students had participated in. The database was accessible to all members of staff and was perceived as helpful in identifying and addressing gaps in the activities taken up by individual students. For example, if they had yet to prepare a CV, go on a work experience placement or attend a mock interview, this could be noted and then addressed. By recording feedback from individual students after work-related activities, staff felt that it was easier to tailor their discussions and identify suitable career pathways. Overall, staff saw the database as a rich source of information that had contributed to an improvement in the quality of their work-related learning programme.

Contact could also take place with employers, pupils or parents/ carers on an ad hoc basis. Interviewees noted that the school took immediate remedial action when problems arose if there was a safeguarding concern or when a student's attitude or performance was unsatisfactory. As noted by one employer:

*“Where a young person clearly doesn't want to be there, we let the school know and they are asked not to come back. Schools are fine with this as they recognise that a [work] placement is an opportunity that young people need to take” (employer).*

Formal monitoring processes in colleges were more variable, ranging from mid-placement checks to “satellite tutors” – permanent staff members who were paid to spend extra time to identify and support work experience placements.

The extent of in-placement visits varied across courses. Where work experience placements were an assessed part of a course – for example, on Childcare or Health and Social Care courses – students were commonly observed during their placements, with variation in the number of observations conducted and the members of staff undertaking them. Where work experience placements were not an assessed part of a student's course, such visits were rare.

## **4.4 Facilitators to setting up work-related activities**

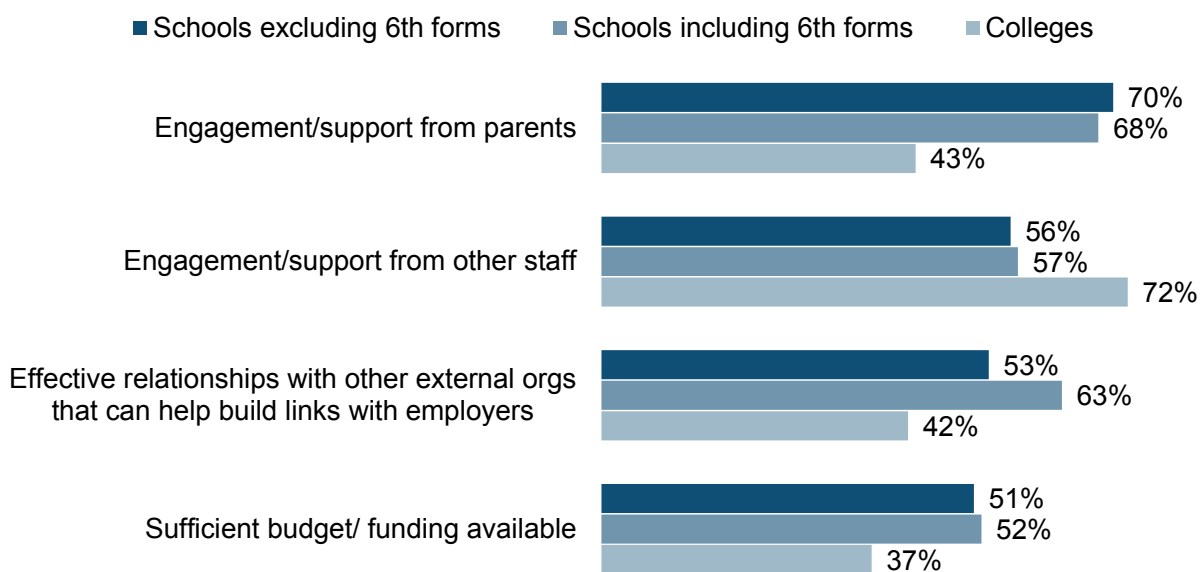
Facilitators to setting up work-related activities varied significantly by institution type (see Appendix Table 4.2 for a full breakdown of responses), with the following more commonly reported by schools (see Figure 4.3):

- Engagement with or support from parents/ carers (70 per cent of schools without a sixth form, and 68 per cent of schools with a sixth form, compared to 43 per cent of colleges).

- Having sufficient budget or funding available (52 per cent of schools with a sixth form, and 51 per cent of schools without a sixth form, compared to 37 per cent of colleges).
- Having effective relationships with other external organisations to help build links with employers (63 per cent of schools with a sixth form, compared to 53 per cent of schools without a sixth form, and 42 per cent of colleges).

Conversely, engagement or support from other members of staff was more frequently cited by colleges (72 per cent) than by schools (57 per cent of schools with a sixth form, and 56 per cent of schools without).

**Figure 4.3 Factors that help in the set-up of work-related activities**

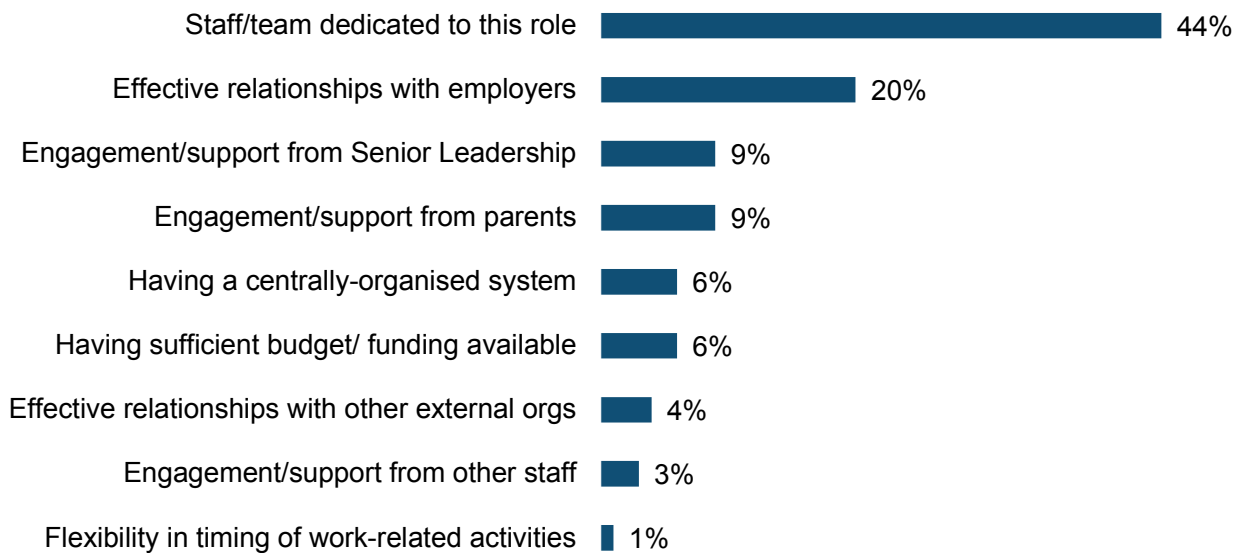


Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (186); Schools including 6th forms (409); Colleges (114)

**Figure 4-2 Factors that help in the set-up of work-related activities**

Having a dedicated member of staff or team was identified as **the most important** facilitator in setting up work-related activities (44 per cent),<sup>23</sup> as shown in Figure 4.4. However, this finding should be read cautiously as the survey was answered by the staff member dedicated to this role, so it is unsurprising that they saw their role as central to facilitating the set-up of work-related activities.

<sup>23</sup> Work experience coordinators who reported more than one facilitator were asked which was the most important.



Base (unweighted): All respondents that mentioned more than one facilitator (669)

**Figure 4-3 Most important factor/ facilitator in setting up work-related activities**

### **Facilitators to setting up and delivering work-related activities: case study findings**

Overall, interviewees felt that an effective work experience placement relied on clear communication about its purpose, so all parties had shared expectations during the identification and set-up phases.

Staff in schools and colleges identified preparatory work as important to supporting placement set-up, such as the employer meeting the student – formally or informally – prior to the work experience placement:

*“It’s more a confirming exercise than a selection exercise” (employer).*

However, while this preparatory work was viewed by interviewees as important, the extent to which young people completed it varied. Common reasons for not undertaking preparatory activities included a lack of confidence in contacting employers, uncertainty about what they should discuss, or limited interest/ engagement in the work experience placement.

In terms of facilitators of effective delivery, there was variation in the way employers perceived work experience placements and their potential role in either awareness-raising or future recruitment. Employers who hired apprentices directly from schools and colleges placed more emphasis on giving young people the opportunity to demonstrate and develop skills during their work experience placement, with a *“hands-on”* element viewed as very important:

*“They are not here to make tea; they are not here to sweep the floor... they are here to work... If they want to work in IT, then they need experience in IT, they need to know what it’s like” (employer).*

For students this was what distinguished their work experience placement from other work-related activities:

*“[At a] careers fair [you] get to look at a variety of things, but on placement you get to actually do things”* (student).

Employers who primarily recruited at graduate level had different expectations. Students were aware of this difference, viewing their role while on such placements as largely one of shadowing and observation. One student noted that while their work experience placement in a hospital had been spent largely at the nurses’ station:

*“It’s all about getting the experience of hospital-life... Unless I can demonstrate this I’ll struggle to study medicine [at university]”* (student).

## **4.5 Challenges commonly associated with the delivery of work-related activities**

Challenges to setting up work-related activities also varied by institution type.

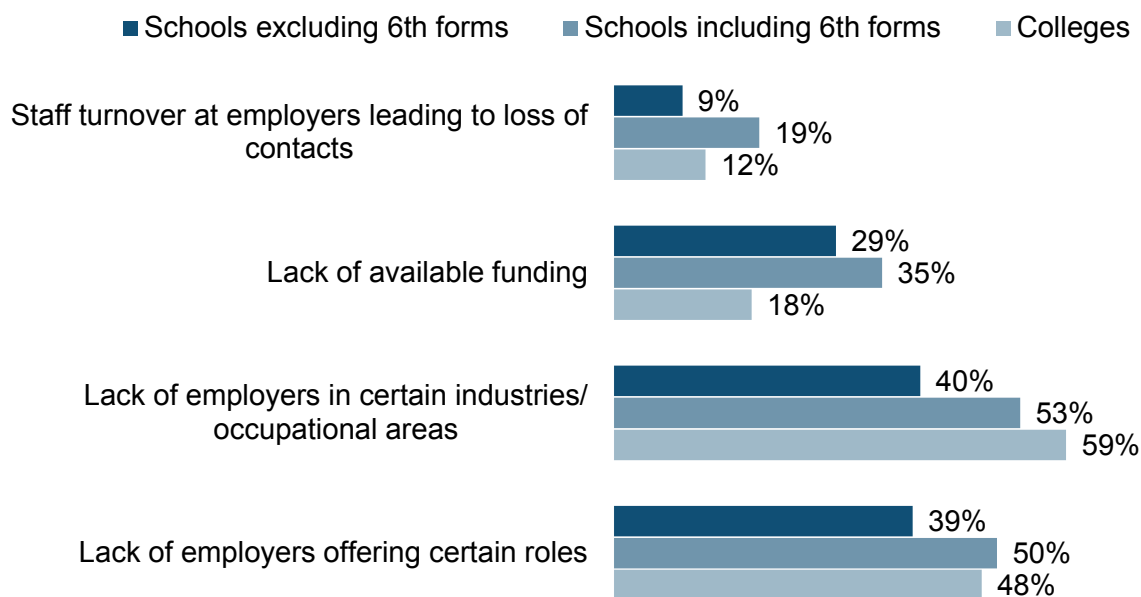
As Figure 4.5 shows, a lack of available funding was more commonly reported as a challenge by schools (35 per cent of schools with a sixth form, and 29 per cent of schools without a sixth form) than colleges (18 per cent).<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, employer-related issues were more of a challenge for colleges and schools catering for older cohorts (i.e. those with a sixth form):

- A ‘lack of employers in certain industries or occupational areas’ was reported by 59 per cent of colleges and 53 per cent of schools with a sixth form, compared to 40 per cent of pre-16 schools.
- ‘Not enough employers offering certain roles’ was cited as a challenge by 50 per cent of schools with a sixth form and 48 per cent of colleges, compared to 39 per cent of schools without a sixth form.
- ‘Staff turnover at employers leading to a loss of contacts’ was reported by 19 per cent of schools with a sixth form, 12 per cent of colleges and just nine per cent of schools without a sixth form.

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<sup>24</sup> See Appendix Table 4.3 for a break-down of all responses



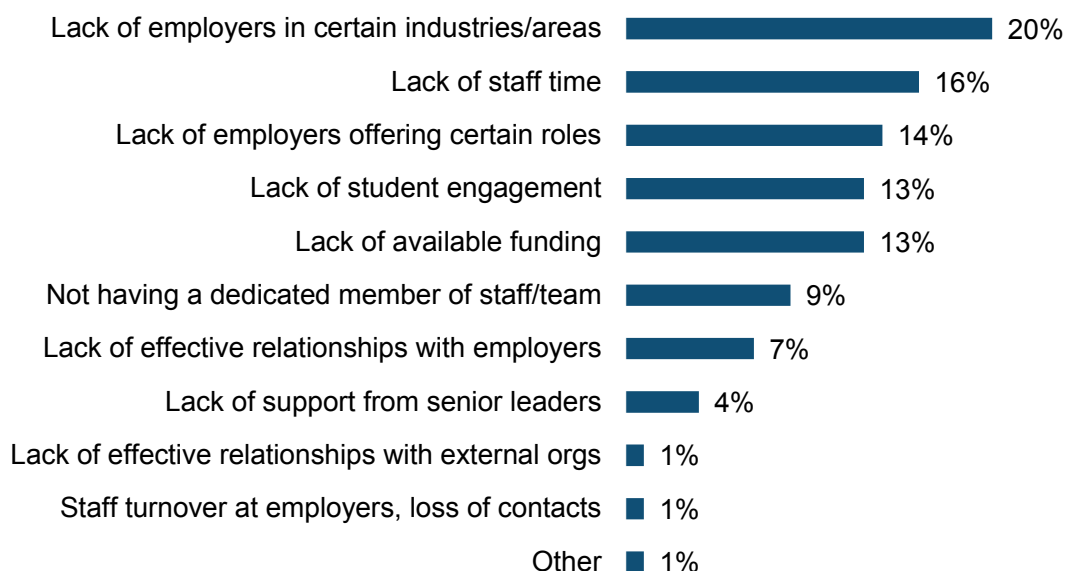
Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (187); Schools including 6th forms (409); Colleges (114)

**Figure 4-4 Challenges to setting up work-related activities**

The **most important challenges** to setting up work-related activities were identified as lack of employers in certain industries or areas (20 per cent); lack of staff time (16 per cent); and lack of employers offering certain roles (14 per cent), shown in Figure 4.6.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Work experience coordinators who reported more than one challenge to setting up work-related activities were asked which was the most important.



Base (unweighted): All respondents that mentioned more than one challenge (548)

**Figure 4-5 Most important challenge in setting up work-related activities**

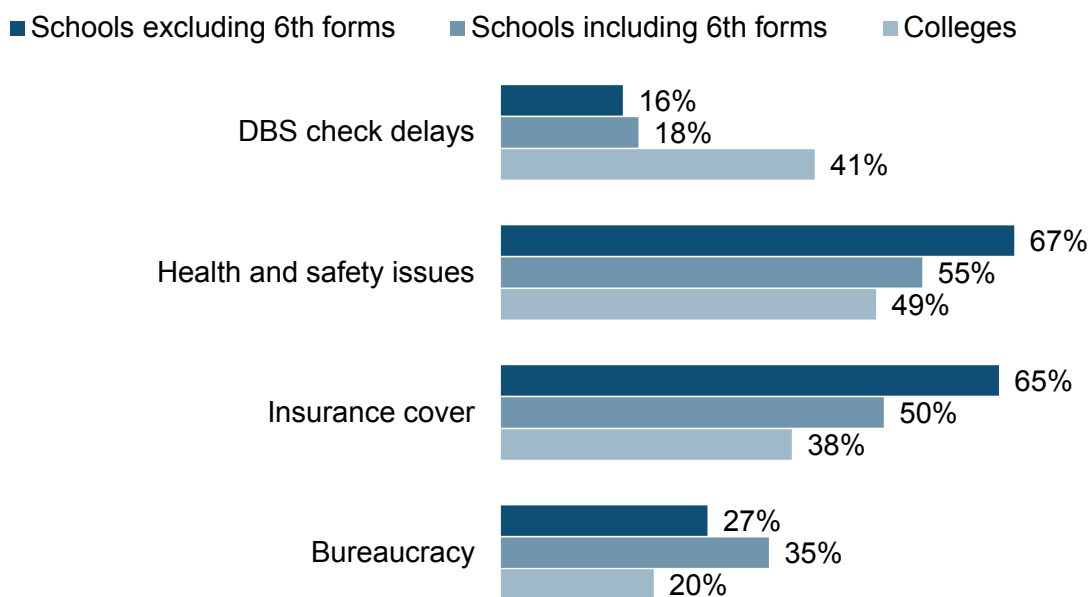
Challenges faced when engaging employers also varied significantly by institution type, as shown in Figure 4.7.<sup>26</sup>

- Delays with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks was cited as a key challenge by significantly more colleges (41 per cent) than schools (18 per cent of schools with a sixth form, and 16 per cent of schools without a sixth form).
- Conversely, schools without a sixth form were more likely to report health and safety issues and insurance cover as a challenge (67 per cent and 65 per cent respectively), compared to schools with a sixth form (55 per cent and 50 per cent respectively) and colleges (49 per cent and 38 per cent respectively).
- Bureaucracy was generally more of a challenge for schools (both those with and without a sixth form); it was reported by 35 per cent of schools with a sixth form

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix Table 4.4 for all responses by institution type.



and 27 per cent of schools without a sixth form, compared to 20 per cent of colleges.



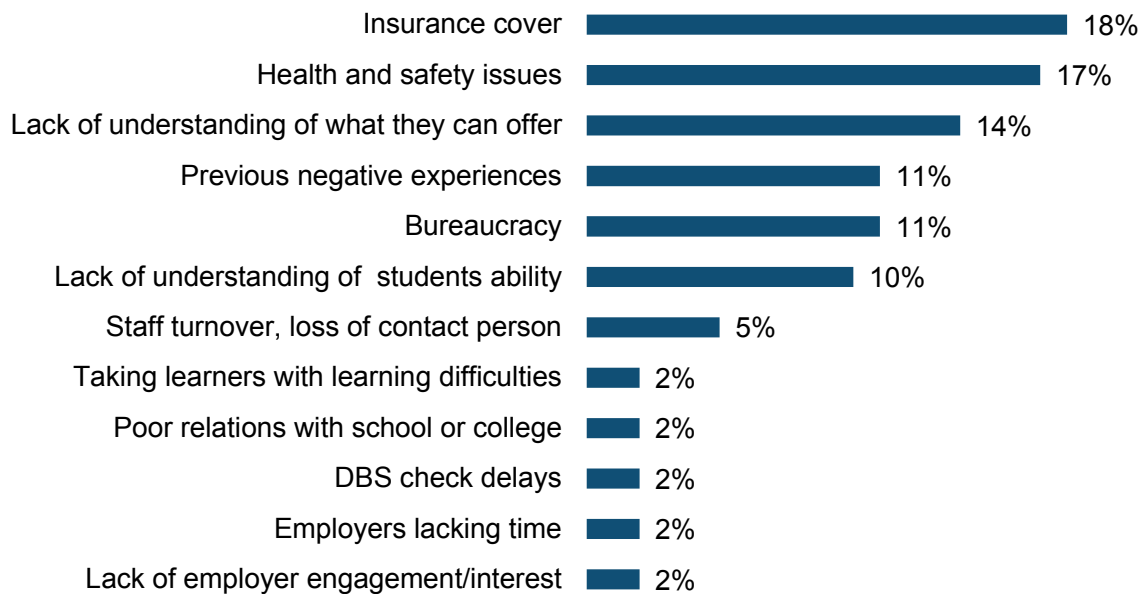
Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (103); Schools including 6th forms (283); Colleges (80)

**Figure 4-6 Challenges when trying to engage employers**

Practical issues were identified as some of the most important challenges to engaging employers; 18 per cent of work experience coordinators reported insurance cover as a challenge while 17 per cent cited health and safety issues (see Figure 4.8).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Work experience coordinators who reported more than one challenge when trying to engage employers were asked which was the most important.



Base (unweighted): All respondents that mentioned more than one challenge (420)

**Figure 4-7 Most important challenge to engaging employers**

### **Challenges to setting up and delivering work-related activities: case study findings**

The main set-up and delivery challenges identified by school and college staff included:

- Opportunities falling through;
- Poor quality and planning of work experience placements leading to inappropriate or insufficient work for young people; and
- Behavioural issues and/ or disinterest from students.

Employers highlighted poor communication from school staff and pupils as the main set-up challenge, which contributed to the withdrawal of some work experience placements.

Interviewees and external agencies expressed concern that some opportunities fell through at very short notice when employers pulled out of agreements. Reasons for such late withdrawal included:

- Staff changes at the company;
- Bankruptcy;
- An unexpected reduction in employer capacity to deliver a work experience placement; and
- Employer dissatisfaction with a young person's input or behaviour during the set-up process.

Schools, colleges and students expressed frustration with what they saw as poor quality and planning of work experience placements. Young people were particularly dissatisfied when placements consisted solely of repetitive administrative tasks, or when placements did not reflect the roles and activities normally undertaken in the company. This suggests

that a lack of shared expectations and effective communication hindered delivery, highlighting the importance of early communication and of setting expectations at an appropriate level.

Insufficient work for students to do whilst on their work experience placement was also noted as a challenge by settings, external agencies and young people. One young person commented:

*“Sometimes I did kind of feel a bit like a burden, because I knew they had their own jobs to get on with”* (school student).

There was recognition that efforts undertaken to deliver work experience placements were sometimes undermined by the disinterest and occasionally poor behaviour from students. Staff in schools and colleges identified a range of strategies/ approaches that helped to prepare young people to take greater responsibility for setting-up a placement. Further information can be found in section 4.1.

## 5 Post-placement activities

### Chapter summary

- Most schools and colleges informally assessed students' performance post-placement (86 per cent), and undertook follow-up activities with employers (94 per cent).
- Schools and colleges undertook a range of post-placement activities – student evaluations, detailed student feedback, and collection of employer feedback. Schools also held student group discussion/ feedback sessions, which were not reported by colleges.
- Colleges also made database updates and used destinations data to examine post-school/ college pathways and evaluate the impact of work experience placements. However, evaluating the effectiveness of placements was complicated by difficulties with attributing subsequent pathways to the placement experience – particularly where students' career intentions were less certain – and by potential benefits may not manifest until much later.

### 5.1 Post-placement activities and evaluation

The majority of schools and colleges undertook some form of follow-up activity with employers (see Table 5.1). The most commonly reported was providing feedback on progress students had made following their time with the employer (selected by 69 per cent of those offering Supported Internships, 38 per cent of those offering work experience placements for years 10-11, and 37 per cent of those offering work experience placements for years 12-13).<sup>28</sup>

However, a notable minority did not undertake any follow-up activities with employers, for years 12-13 (37 per cent) and placements for years 10-11 (34 per cent).

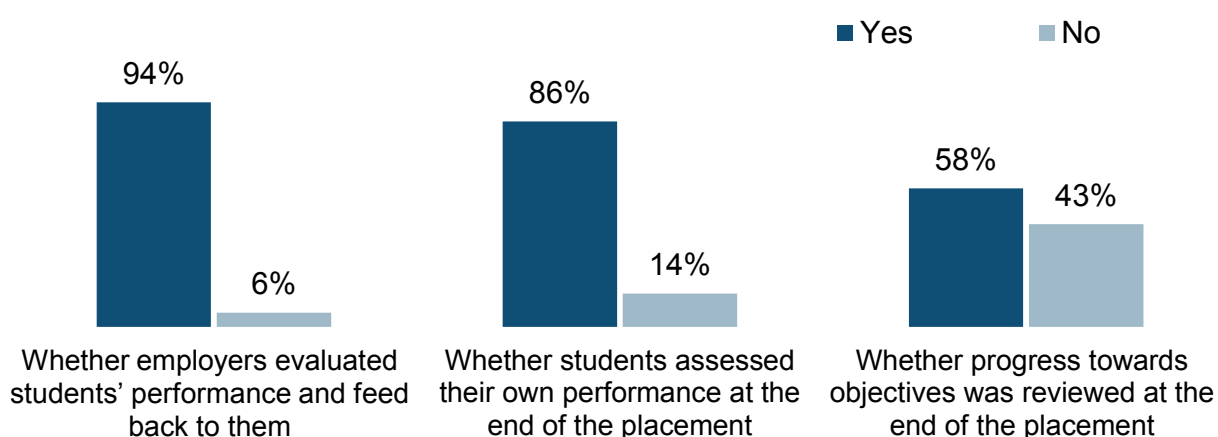
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<sup>28</sup> The base size for traineeships did not reach the threshold of 50 cases, and therefore proportions have not been reported.

**Table 5-1 Follow-up activities undertaken with employers**

	Placements for Y10-11	Placements for Y12-13	Supported Internships
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	475	426	94
Provide feedback on progress students have made following their time with the employer	38%	37%	69%
Feedback students' perceptions of their experiences while with the employer	34%	36%	55%
Hold a review meeting with employers to discuss what went well and areas for improvement	13%	16%	42%
No follow up activity	34%	37%	11%
Students/ school writes thank you letters	13%	6%	3%
Other	3%	1%	3%

Figure 5.1 shows that most employers evaluated students' performance and provided them with feedback (94 per cent). This was matched by students' assessments of their own performance after completing their placements (86 per cent). The majority of work experience coordinators (58 per cent) reported that students' progress towards their objectives was reviewed at the end of the work experience placement.



*Base (unweighted): all respondents (682)*

**Figure 5-1 Evaluating performance and reviewing progress towards objectives**

## Post-placement and evaluation activities: case study findings

### Feedback from students

Across schools and colleges post-placement and evaluation activities focused predominantly on student feedback. However, there were important differences between institution types in prioritisation of these activities.

The range of feedback activities **schools** undertook with young people included:

- Student post-placement evaluations;
- Collection of detailed student feedback; and
- Student group discussion/ feedback sessions.

Firstly, in line with findings from the survey, schools generally conducted post-placement evaluations with young people, which included collecting feedback from individual students via surveys (e.g. paper questionnaires, Google or Survey Monkey) or other feedback forms. These short surveys covered topics such as how much they enjoyed the placement and the likelihood of recommending it to others. They were primarily used as tools to encourage students to reflect on placements, and to collect information on any issues or problems the students experienced.

Secondly, schools discussed collecting detailed feedback from students for further analysis. Staff used the data to learn how the work experience placements had performed against students' expectations, and to understand how students' self-reported skills had developed. Detailed feedback was collected through:

- Reflective written reports;
- Surveys (before and after the work experience placement); and
- Diaries/ journals.

While school staff reported providing students with diaries/ journals to record tasks completed and lessons learnt as a result of the placement (often with a section for employer feedback) these were primarily used to identify issues faced by individual students, rather than as an evaluation tool.

Thirdly, schools offered students some form of group discussion or feedback session post-placement, albeit less frequently. The format of these feedback sessions varied. Schools used tutorial time, dedicated PSHE lessons, assemblies or general review sessions.

Like schools, **colleges** undertook different post-work experience placement activities with young people:

- Student post-placement evaluations; and
- Collection of detailed student feedback.

Firstly, colleges generally conducted some form of post-work experience placement feedback, as highlighted by the survey findings. Similar to schools, individual student

feedback was discussed as a core element of monitoring activities, with colleges asking students to complete a survey or evaluation form.

Secondly, some colleges did collect more detailed feedback using reports and diaries:

- Students might be asked to write a report once they had returned from a work experience placement, or to self-evaluate their skills before and after their placement, highlighting any areas of improvement.
- Students were provided with a diary or booklet to record their experience and employers/ supervisors completed a report. The more detailed booklets included personal objectives, a “*work [experience] placement contract*”, information about the work experience placement and company, and an induction checklist. In colleges where work experience placements were not formally assessed, these diaries were generally not formally reviewed because it was not a priority, or because it was seen as a “*tool for reflection*”.

Employers working with colleges said they found this typical of general FE colleges, and reported that college students were less likely to complete work experience booklets for non-mandatory placements than school pupils (as schools were thought to place more emphasis on their completion). In addition, these employers reported that feedback requested of them by schools and sixth form colleges was more structured than that requested by general FE colleges.

### **Post-work experience placement feedback from employers**

In line with the survey, **schools** typically collected feedback from employers, most commonly on student attendance, performance and their perceived strengths and weaknesses, alongside documentation of the tasks the student performed. Although employers did not always want to discuss feedback with students following the placement. Where such information was collected it was considered as part of a meeting between staff at the school or college.

Whilst the survey found that **schools** and **colleges** offered feedback to employers post-placement, colleges did not do this unless there were specific issues highlighted by students, such as multiple students providing negative feedback about a particular work experience placement or employer. In these instances, they followed up with students and employers to understand what did not work.

It was common for **colleges** to have a central database recording which students had completed a work experience placement, and where this had taken place. These databases, which ranged from simple spreadsheets to online “*e-trackers*”, were typically used to monitor work experience placements/ employers as well as for post-placement assessment:

*“I want to know and to be able to see everything that has been done with this client... You’ve got to be able to track, be able to evidence what you’ve done”* (work experience coordinator).

For some, databases were regularly updated and used as a performance monitoring system, recording the progress of each student against pre-defined targets.

### **Strategic evaluation of a school's/ college's work-related learning offer**

Strategic evaluations of the whole work experience placements programme were unusual in **schools** visited, but were undertaken. They ranged from staff surveys on perceptions of the previous year's programme, to annual feedback sessions with the external agencies they worked with. These annual feedback sessions included formal reports to highlight lessons from work experience placements, as well as meetings with the external bodies to discuss experiences, highlight employers deemed unsuitable, and to identify any gaps in employer/ sector coverage.

More detailed evaluation of individual work experience placements was uncommon, driven in part by challenges in formally assessing effectiveness:

*"It is hard to quantify how effective it is - even if it is the worst placement in the world, they'll have got something out of it"* (school based senior leader).

In **colleges**, such evaluative activity was more common. For instance, destination or progression data was used to evaluate the impact of work experience placements reflecting college students' proximity to the labour market. Interviewees reported actively using this data (e.g. leavers/ destinations surveys) to map students' pathways following work experience placements, as well as to calculate how many placements turned into an offer of employment or an apprenticeship. As such, interviewees noted that a successful placement could result in the offer of an apprenticeship or a job, with some viewed by Work (Experience) Placement Officers as "*apprenticeship trials*". However, whilst colleges collected destinations data, it was widely acknowledged that it was difficult to consider student progression as being directly driven by a work experience placement.

Indeed, it was noted that quantifying effectiveness of work experience placements was challenging. A career-relevant placement could lead to immediate benefits for students with a clear idea about their employment aspirations, but for students with less direction such benefits were likely to come later (for example, when asked to list any work experience on a job application form). College interviewees therefore emphasised that post-placement feedback from students needed to be treated with caution, as it evaluated students' initial impression of an employer rather than what they gained from the experience.

Colleges also noted that what constituted a successful work experience placement varied, and that intended outcomes were not the same for each student, as the following case illustration demonstrates.



**Case illustration: student target outcomes for work-related activities**

Staff in one college in the north of England indicated that the most effective work-related activities were those tailored to a student's ability/ level of experience. As a result, they took steps to identify individual prior academic performance, course choices and career preferences within their tracking system. This information was used to inform the selection of appropriate work-related activities. For example, Level 1 students did not have mandatory work experience placements. Staff at the college emphasised the need to deliver activities that supported the development of softer skills amongst this cohort. For instance, in the previous year students had been given the opportunity to undertake an enterprise challenge. Set by an employer, this had given students an opportunity to develop their communication, team-working and problem-solving skills.

## 6 Satisfaction with work-related activities

### Chapter summary

- Satisfaction with work-related activities was high among all respondents. This included levels of satisfaction with the range of activities offered; approaches to identifying opportunities; matching processes; monitoring processes; and the quality/content of placements delivered.
- 87 per cent of work experience coordinators saw their institution's overall offer of work-related activities as 'very' or 'quite' effective. Reported effectiveness was even higher when work experience coordinators and centralised systems supported delivery. Qualitative data suggested satisfaction was higher where work-related activities were formally integrated into the curriculum.
- Despite high levels of satisfaction there was scope for improvement; with schools and colleges acknowledging sectoral gaps in their provision of work experience placements. Where schools/ colleges identified a lack of placements of the right type, this was felt to be due to factors such as a limited range of employers in the area, and limited employer contacts.
- Young people at schools and colleges also suggested modest improvements to monitoring and evaluation of placements, such as staff visits happening early on in the work experience placement so any remedial measures could be put in place quickly. Timing placements for the end of term, was felt to have negative consequences for the quality of feedback and reflection.
- Any dissatisfaction amongst young people (and their parents/ carers) stemmed from the nature of their role, such as a limited range of tasks and insufficient work to do, while any employer dissatisfaction was prompted by the young person's poor attitude or lack of engagement.
- Employers tended to express greater satisfaction where they had on-going involvement with the school or college, such as through a wider programme of work-related learning, rather than just a placement provider.

### 6.1 Satisfaction with the number and range of work-related activities offered

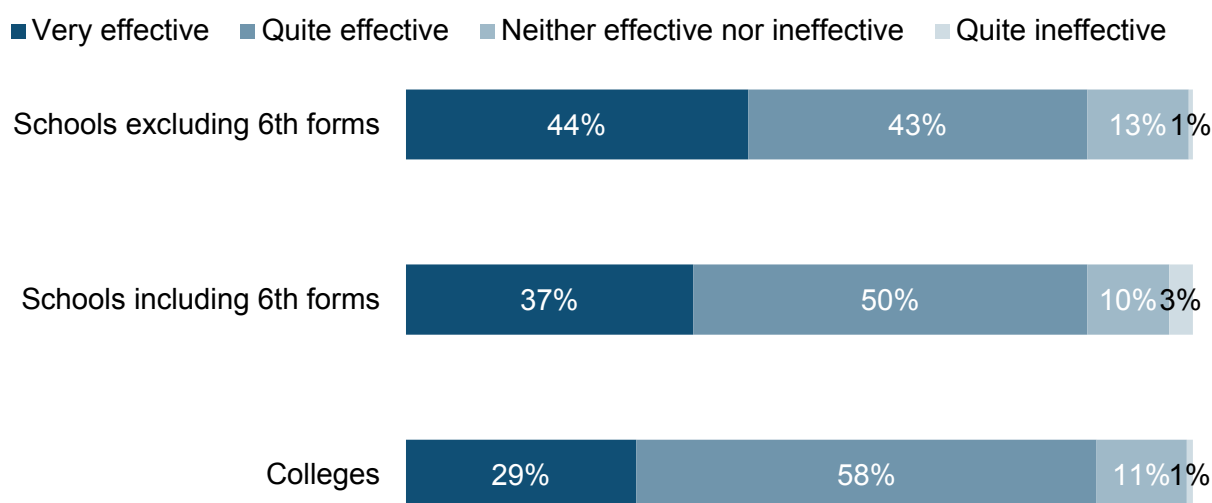
Overall, work experience coordinators were very positive about the range of work-related activities offered to students by their school or college, with 87 per cent reporting that it was 'very' or 'quite effective' (38 and 49 per cent respectively). This high level of satisfaction is perhaps unsurprising given work experience coordinators' key role in providing work-related activities.

Reported effectiveness was significantly higher when:

- Placements were organised by a work experience coordinator (see Appendix Table 6.1); and
- There was a centrally organised system for administering work experience placements (see Appendix Table 6.2).

Effectiveness was also positively associated with the proportion of students going on to secure employment or apprenticeships. In instances where more than 50 per cent of students had secured employment, 53 per cent of work experience coordinators reported the range of work-related activities offered as ‘very effective’, compared to 29 per cent viewing it as ‘very effective’ where fewer students (26 to 50 per cent) had secured employment. However, this association is diluted when taking account of the proportions citing their school/ college’s offer as ‘quite effective’ (see Appendix Table 6.3).

Further analysis also revealed significant differences by institution type (see in Figure 6.1). Staff from schools without a sixth form were the most likely to feel that their institution was ‘very effective’ in the range of work-related activities on offer (44 per cent). This compares to 29 per cent of staff in colleges.

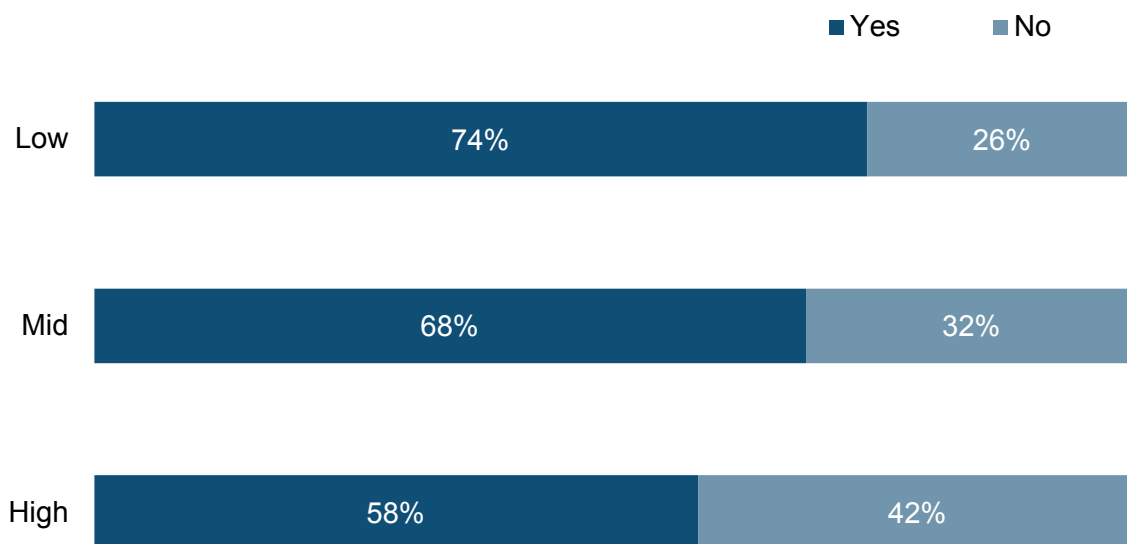


*Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (187); Schools including 6th forms (409); Colleges (115)*

**Figure 6-1 How effective work experience coordinators feel their school or college is at offering a good range of work-related activities to students**

Findings also suggest reasonably high levels of satisfaction with the number of work experience placements of different types on offer to students, with approximately two-thirds of staff satisfied that their institution offered sufficient placements of the right type. The highest satisfaction levels were found in relation to Supported Internships, 74 per cent, and the lowest for traineeships, 60 per cent (see Appendix Table 6.1).

Subgroup analysis suggests few significant differences by school characteristics. However, satisfaction with work experience placements for years 10-11 did vary by area deprivation level. As Figure 6.2 shows, staff working in schools in high deprivation areas were significantly less likely to feel that their school or college offered students enough placements of the right type. Similar differences were not evident for placements targeted at students in years 12-13.



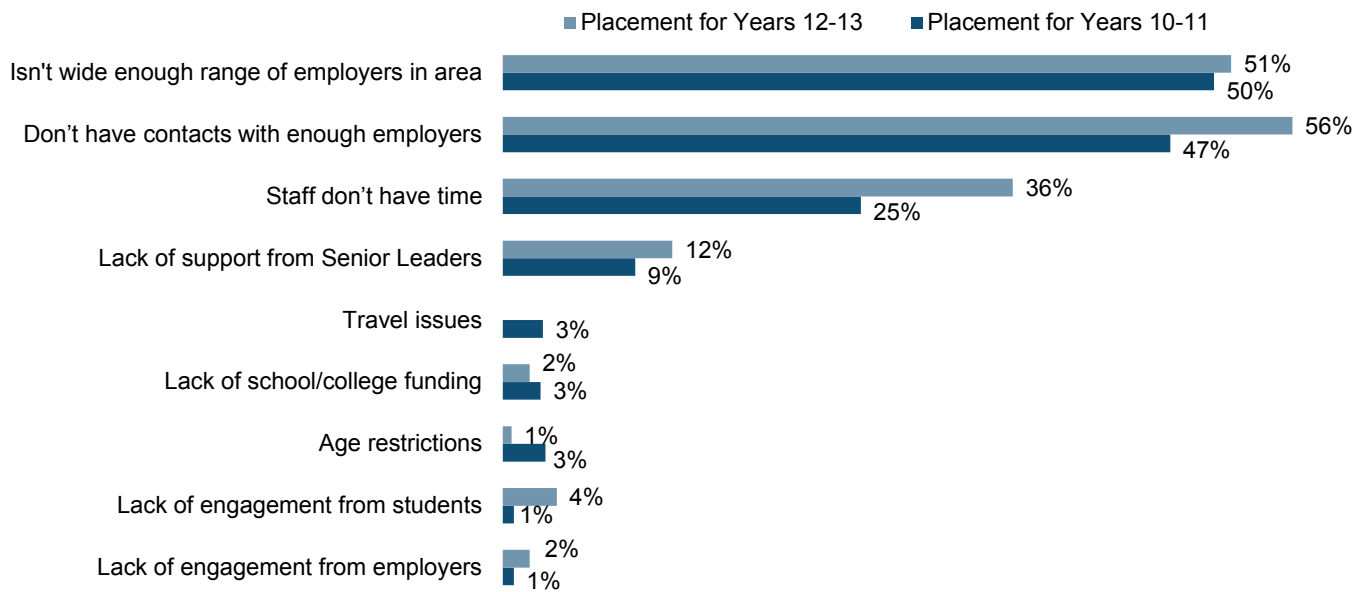
*Base (unweighted): Deprivation low (159); deprivation mid (178); deprivation high (141)*

**Figure 6-2 Whether the school or college offers enough work experience placements for years 10-11 by deprivation level**

The minority of work experience coordinators who reported that their school or college had not sourced enough work experience placements for its students were asked to provide the reasons for this gap. Looking at placements for years 10-11 and 12-13,<sup>29</sup> the key reasons cited were a limited range of employers in the area (50 and 51 per cent) and limited contacts with employers (47 and 56 per cent) (see Figure 6.3). While the most commonly reported reasons were connected to external factors (e.g. the local labour market), the third and fourth most frequently cited were at the school level, with a lack of staff time (25 and 36 per cent) and lack of support from senior leaders (9 and 12 per cent) both attracting reasonably large numbers of responses.

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<sup>29</sup> The base sizes for traineeships and Supported Internships did not reach the threshold of 50 cases, and therefore proportions have not been reported.



Base (unweighted): Placements Years 10-11 (154), Placements Years 12-13 (161)

**Figure 6-3 Reasons for a lack of work experience placements of the right type for students**

### Satisfaction with identifying sufficient work experience placements: case study findings

In line with the survey results, schools and colleges were generally satisfied with their approach to identifying sufficient work experience placements, regardless of the approach taken (i.e. student self-identification or broker/ setting identification).

The large number of young people able to source an opportunity was cited as evidence of the success of the self-identification approach. Where this approach failed, it was felt to be a problem with the profession or sector (for example, health and safety concerns connected with the construction sector). Given the heavy reliance on personal or family contacts, interviewees did acknowledge issues for students where these connections were not in place. In these instances, schools and colleges generally directed students to setting-managed resources (e.g. employer databases). However, not all settings were able to offer further support.

Students tasked with identifying their own work experience placements suggested this approach was preferable to choosing from a list supplied by their school, college or external agency because it provided more variety, increased their chances of finding a relevant work experience placement, and was good experience for future job applications. However, students who experienced rejection when trying to source their own opportunities felt more guidance (e.g. how to find employers, how to approach them) would have been beneficial.

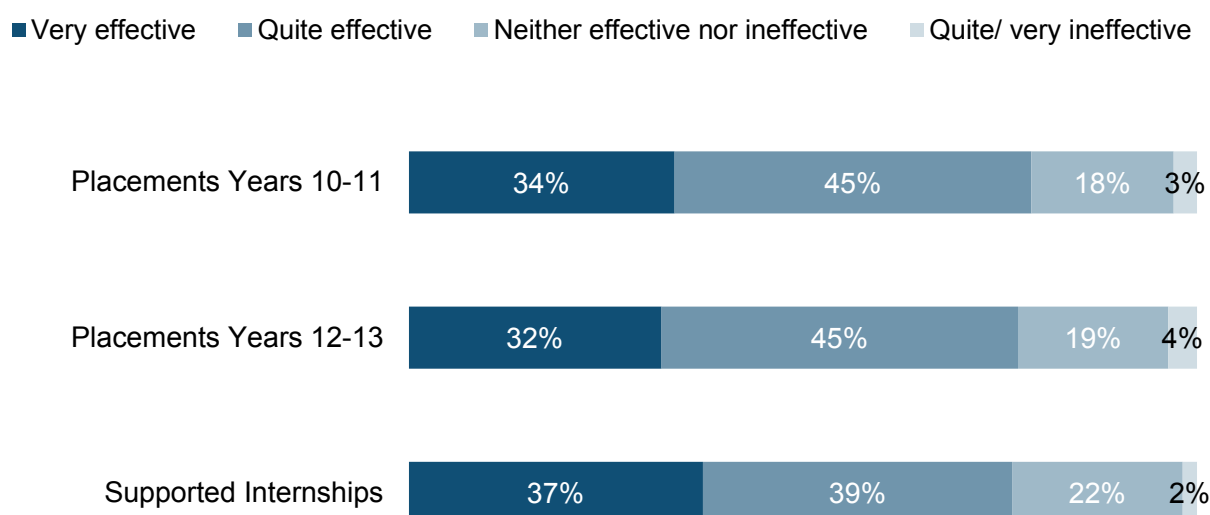
Where work experience placements were identified by an external agency or by school college staff, students were satisfied with the process and with the range and type of work experience placements offered. Where students were dissatisfied, they discussed

difficulties securing the most desirable or “*first-choice*” work experience placements due to competition, limited variety in the placements on offer, and a lack of placements relevant to their interests or career aspirations.

While schools and colleges were generally positive about the range of work experience placements available, it was felt that there was scope for improvement, for example, many identified sectoral gaps in their provision. Interviewees were keen to address these gaps and were happy that alternative options were strong, such as work experience placements sourced in a related field or on-site projects.

## 6.2 Satisfaction with matching students to work experience placements

Satisfaction with matching students to placements was very high, with approximately 80 per cent stating that matching was ‘very’ or ‘quite effective’. This is perhaps unsurprising given that most respondents were work experience coordinators.



*Base (unweighted): Placements Years 10-11 (480); Placements Years 12-13 (437); Supported Internships (103)*

**Figure 6-4** How satisfied work experience coordinators are that students are effectively matched to placements by type of opportunity

### Satisfaction with matching students to work experience placements: case study findings

Schools and colleges were also satisfied with their ability to effectively match young people to work experience placements, including students with SEND. Finding suitable work experience placements for young people with additional educational needs often

meant working with a smaller pool of employers who regularly offered work experience placements tailored for these students.

Schools and colleges felt the interests of students were taken into consideration when selecting placements. Yet it was notable that staff in a number of schools thought any pre-16 work experience placement was 'a good placement' regardless of the sector, as it provided young people with an experience of the world of work. Students also consistently viewed the main benefit of their pre-16 work experience placement as an opportunity to build their general employability skills. The experience also appeared to influence their subsequent behaviour, such as their productivity in school. It was more common for post-16 institutions to state that successful work experience placements needed to be tailored more towards students' career aspirations.

In the few instances where schools and colleges used a broker or other external body to identify work experience placements, they were happy with the service received. Those not satisfied commented that external partners were less able to successfully pair a student with an employer because they did not know the student well enough to ensure a successful match.

### **6.3 Satisfaction with setting up and managing work experience placements**

Work experience coordinators were very positive about how different types of placement were prepared for and managed at their school or college, with large proportions of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing that:

- Work experience placements have clear aims and objectives that are relevant to students' study programme;
- Roles and responsibilities are agreed up front;
- Employers are made aware of the capabilities of students/ expectations are managed;
- There is regular contact between the employer and the school before the placement;
- There is regular contact between the employer and school during the placement;
- Students are provided with support whilst on placements.

When looking just at proportions who 'strongly agreed' with each of the statements (displayed in Table 6.1) there are, however, some notable differences. For example, the larger percentage of work experience coordinators who 'strongly agreed' with statements in relation to Supported Internships suggest that additional efforts could be made to ensure that thorough preparations take place ahead of work experience placements, setting employer expectations and agreeing roles and responsibilities, and in supporting students while on placements.

The largest proportion is, however, for support offered to students attending work experience placements for years 10-11 (60 per cent). This is likely connected to the age and experience of the students involved. Evidence from the case studies suggests, however, that support and contact during work experience placements may consist only of a short visit or phone call (e.g. for the purposes of trouble-shooting) rather than anything more involved.

**Table 6-1 Extent to which work experience coordinators ‘strongly agree’ that the following take place before and during work experience placements**

	Placements for Y10-11	Traineeship	Placements for Y12-13	Supported Internships
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	483	54	443	111
Staff ensure placements have clear aims and objectives, relevant to study programmes	25%	27%	28%	40%
Roles and responsibilities between employers, the school and students are agreed up front	44%	34%	32%	43%
Employers are made aware of the capability of the student, so that expectations are managed	31%	43%	25%	46%
There is regular contact between the employer and the school/ college before placements	34%	29%	24%	43%
There is regular contact between the employer and the school/ college during placements	42%	33%	25%	43%
The student is provided with support and is contacted by the school whilst taking part in placements	60%	34%	30%	44%

### **Satisfaction with the set-up process: case study findings**

Reflecting the results of the survey, school and college staff were generally satisfied with their own process for setting up work experience placements. Even so, there appeared to be notable differences in the challenges faced by settings and employers, depending on who was responsible for arranging work experience placements.

Where work experience placements were arranged on the student’s behalf, it was common practice for them to make contact with the employer prior to their start date. This was predominantly done via a telephone call, but occasionally via email or in person. One external body felt that the biggest cause of work experience placements falling through was that students had failed to make early contact with their placement provider, though such occurrences were uncommon.

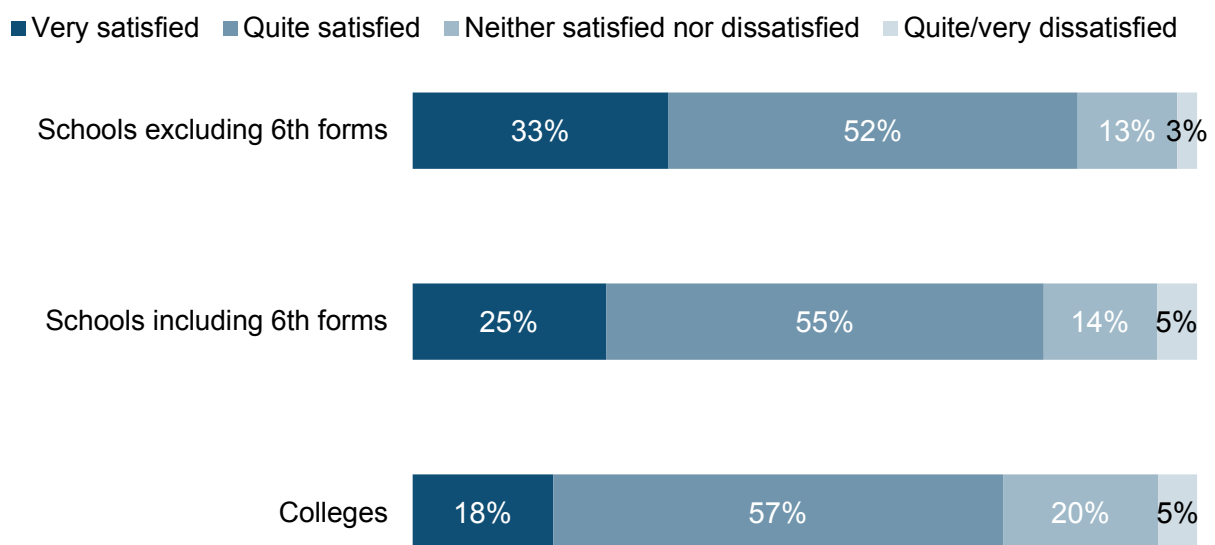


Where students had taken responsibility for arranging their own work experience placements, they appeared generally happy with what they had been able to achieve. However, there were cases where students had arrived for their first day of their placement to find that staff were unaware that they were coming. Whilst this was a rare occurrence, it tended to result from a break-down in communication with the employer.

## 6.4 Satisfaction with monitoring activities

Levels of satisfaction with monitoring activities were high overall with more than three-quarters of work experience coordinators 'very' or 'quite satisfied' with the system operating in their school or college. Further analysis shows small but significant differences by institution type, with the highest levels of satisfaction among schools without a sixth form and lowest among the colleges (85 and 75 per cent respectively) (see Figure 6.5).

**Figure 6.5 How satisfied work experience coordinators are that monitoring is effective by institution type**



*Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (174); Schools including 6th forms (389); Colleges (107)*

**Figure 6-5 How satisfied work experience coordinators are that monitoring is effective by institution type**

### Satisfaction with monitoring and evaluation: case study findings

School and college staff also tended to be satisfied that their monitoring processes during work experience placements – visits, diary/ journals – were fit for purpose, and that their internal systems were comprehensive.

Firstly, while most students did not consider visits necessary because they did not have any specific issues, they acknowledged that it would be beneficial for those experiencing problems. However, the nature of these checks – short visits and phone calls, a focus on dealing with problems – meant they offered limited scope to fully engage students and gather their feedback. As a result, it was felt this process could be developed further, specifically:

- Students suggested that they should be visited by teachers who they know well, so they would feel comfortable in discussing their experiences frankly.
- Students felt that such visits and calls should take place early on in the placement so measures could be put in place quickly to alleviate concerns or issues.

Secondly, while very few young people expressed concerns with filling out journals, some young people felt completing it each day was unnecessary and repetitive. Students acknowledged the importance of providing feedback but felt they could have completed a record of the week as a whole, rather than of each individual day. Taking this forward, one student suggested changing the format of the journals to include a series of focused questions to be completed at the end of the work experience placement.

Thirdly, considering the internal systems in place, school/ college staff and external agencies suggested developing existing systems so outcome data and information on skills and personal development could be recorded. This would allow for formal monitoring of these measures.

The timing of work experience placements was thought to create particular issues for monitoring and evaluating placements:

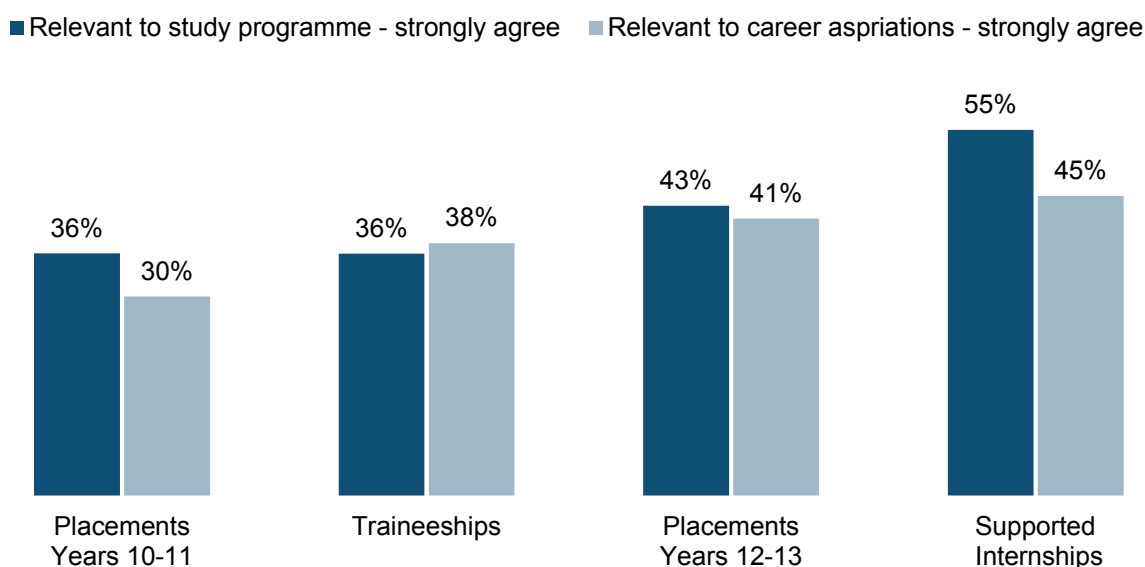
- Students' minds were sometimes "*less focussed*" at the end of term when work experience placements took place, resulting in less considered feedback.
- Scheduling placements at the end of the summer term also meant review sessions took place after the summer break, so experiences were not fresh in young people's minds. This limited the potential to build on learning gains.

For employers, the biggest issue regarding monitoring and evaluation was the level of staff time it required. There were also concerns about a lack of feedback from schools/ colleges, and limited or informal feedback. Employers who were most satisfied with their relationships with schools or colleges tended to be those that had the highest levels of on-going contact with staff or third-party organisations responsible for organising work experience placements. This included employers being invited to participate in a school or college's wider work-related learning programme throughout the academic year, rather than simply being relied upon as a source of work experience placements at a certain point in the academic year.

## 6.5 Satisfaction with the relevance, quality and content of work-related activities

In terms of relevance for students' study programmes and their wider career aspirations, work experience coordinators reported high levels of agreement overall. However, as previously mentioned, proportions were higher for Supported Internships than for other opportunities (55 per cent strongly agreed in terms of relevance for study programmes and 45 per cent strongly agreed in terms of career aspirations, as shown in Figure 6.6). It is perhaps surprising that traineeships were not more closely linked to student's study programmes or career aspirations, but less so for work experience placements for younger students, which were seen as having a broader purpose (see chapter 2).

**Figure 6.6 How relevant are work experience placements to students' study programmes and career aspirations, by type of opportunity**



Base (unweighted): Placements for Y10-11 (483/481), Traineeships (53/50), Placements for Y12-13 (441/441), Supported Internships (99/99)

**Figure 6-6 How relevant are work experience placements to students' study programmes and career aspirations, by type of opportunity**

### Satisfaction with the quality and content of work-related activities delivered: case study findings

The level of satisfaction with the work-related activities delivered was high amongst case study interviewees and employers. Staff satisfaction levels appeared strongest where work experience placements were formally integrated into the curriculum, such as through PSHE lessons, or as part of a planned programme of work-related activities, including mock interviews for example. Employers reported satisfaction with being able to 'give something back'. They were also generally positive about the young people with whom they had worked:

*“[Young people are] sometimes of benefit, sometimes of hindrance, but more often than not a benefit” (employer).*

In line with the majority of work experience coordinators, case study staff and brokers/ other external organisations were more specifically satisfied with the quality and content of the work experience placements. They reported that work experience placements generally reflected young people’s study programmes and career aspirations. Some settings referenced the fact that young people had attained jobs or apprenticeships as a result of successful work experience placements (see also chapter 7).

Young people taking part in the group discussions said they had wanted to undertake a work experience placement as they saw the benefits of doing so, which is in keeping with the generally high levels of student take-up reported in chapter 2. Students particularly enjoyed their placement when they felt it was tailored to their interests or career aspirations. Other factors contributing to satisfaction included:

- Having a “*hands-on*” placement, where young people experienced what the job was really like. Shadowing was also considered a positive experience when students accepted that it would be unrealistic to be given more responsibility (e.g. in some health professions).
- Having a structured and varied work experience placement (see examples outlined in chapter 8).

Despite generally positive experiences, there was some dissatisfaction amongst case study interviewees and employers. The most common areas of dissatisfaction amongst young people included:

- Not being able to experience what the role was really like;
- Having to undertake menial or repetitive tasks; or
- Being given too little work to do.

Less frequently cited reasons for dissatisfaction amongst young people included:

- Limited support or poor supervision/ management from their employer; and
- No reimbursement for the work they had done.

Where employers were less satisfied, this was often caused by:

- The young person’s poor attitudes to work;
- A lack of engagement with the tasks they had been assigned.

Whilst most employers did not express a preference for young people with particular characteristics, several wanted young people who were interested in the profession, something which was often considered more important than current skill level. Employers also raised concerns about the sustainability of work experience placements in terms of having the capacity to continue to provide work experience placements, given the staffing levels and resources needed to support them.

Work experience placements were only cut short on rare occasions. The reasons for this included:

- Employer health and safety concerns;
- Students being asked to perform only menial tasks/ students being viewed as an “*extra pair of hands*”;
- Young people not wanting to continue with the placement; or
- Employer dissatisfaction with the attitude or performance of the young person.

The latter two situations tended to arise from the young person’s lack of interest in the work experience placement from the outset, often stemming from its last-minute arrangement or a lack of fit between the opportunity and their areas of interest.

## 7 Impacts and Benefits

### Chapter summary

- Schools and colleges identified multiple benefits of work-related activities, highlighting the importance of opportunities for building soft employability skills such as ‘communication and interpersonal skills’ (97 per cent) and ‘increased confidence’ (95 per cent).
- There were differences in the impacts identified by schools and colleges, which related to underlying differences in the purpose of work-related activities:
  - Schools saw the primary benefit as a better understanding of the world of work, a benefit also recognised by young people themselves.
  - Colleges were more likely to identify an increase in students’ wider employability skills as a key benefit.
- Schools and colleges viewed the benefits for employers as mainly philanthropic; for example, as an opportunity for ‘community involvement’ (83 per cent) and also to ‘build the skills of the future workforce’ (80 per cent).

### 7.1 Impacts and benefits for students

The first column in Table 7.1<sup>30</sup> clearly shows that staff perceived work-related activities to offer multiple benefits for students. Indeed, five of the listed impacts were chosen by more than 90 per cent of work experience coordinators; the most commonly selected being softer employability skills – ‘communication and interpersonal skills’ (97 per cent) and ‘increased confidence’ (95 per cent).

Analysis also showed significant differences by institution type, with colleges more likely than schools to identify employment-based impacts – improved employability and a better understanding of the world of work/ industries. In contrast, schools were more likely to recognise soft impacts, such as ‘increased confidence’ and ‘increased maturity’ (see Appendix Table 7.1).

When asked to select just the **most important** impact (displayed in the second column), ‘communication and interpersonal skills’ did not rank at the top of the list. In this instance having a ‘better understanding of the world of work and/ or industries’ was selected by the largest proportion of work experience coordinators (23 per cent). ‘Increased

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<sup>30</sup> The survey offered work experience staff a list of perceived benefits of work-related activities for students and asked them to select all those they felt were applicable, then to select the impact they felt was the most important. Findings from both questions are displayed in Table 7.1.

confidence' was the second most commonly selected (20 per cent), followed by 'improved employability' (15 per cent). Less than one per cent of work experience coordinators selected 'time management skills' and 'improved educational attainment'.

**Table 7-1 Impacts of work-related activities for students**

	All impacts	The most important impact
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	711	705
Communication and interpersonal skills	97%	9%
Increased confidence	95%	20%
Better understanding of world of work/ industries	93%	23%
Improved employability	93%	15%
Increased maturity	91%	9%
Team working skills	90%	1%
Increased independence	90%	4%
Enhanced CV	88%	3%
Time management skills	87%	*
Clearer sense of career aspirations	86%	6%
Greater motivation to engage in education	74%	5%
Understanding of educational/ career pathways	72%	4%
Easier transition from education to work	69%	2%
Improved educational attainment	54%	*
Other answer	*	*

Note: the base for 'main impact' only includes work experience coordinators who selected more than one impact in the first multi-choice question.

Further analysis of the main impact of work-related activities showed statistically significant differences by institution type (see Table 7.2). Key areas of difference were 'improved employability' (29 per cent of colleges, 16 per cent of schools with a sixth form, and nine per cent of schools without a sixth form), and 'increased confidence' (eight per cent of colleges, 20 per cent of schools with a sixth form and 25 per cent of schools without a sixth form). The greater focus of schools on personal development impacts, and colleges on employability, reflects the differential purpose of work-related activities highlighted in the case studies.

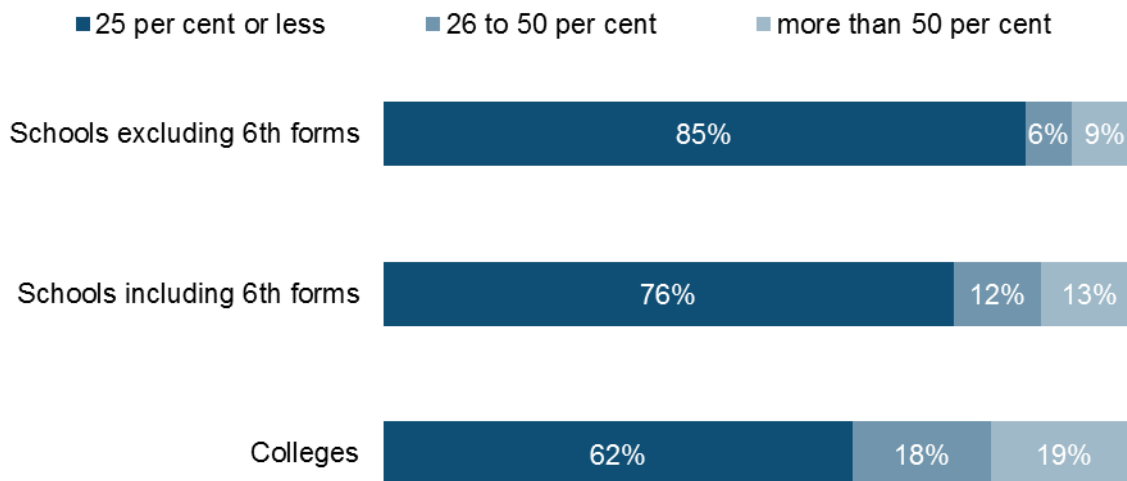
**Table 7-2 Impacts of work-related activities for students by institution type**

	<b>Schools excluding 6th form</b>	<b>Schools including 6th form</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	186	405	114
Communication and interpersonal skills	10	9	10
Increased confidence	25	20	8
Better understanding of world of work/ industries	22	22	30
Improved employability	9	16	29
Increased maturity	13	7	6
Team working skills	1	1	-
Increased independence	5	4	3
Enhanced CV	1	4	1
Time management skills	-	*	-
Clearer sense of career aspirations	4	6	7
Greater motivation to engage in education	5	6	-
Understanding of educational/ career pathways	4	4	3
Easier transition from education to work	1	1	3
Improved educational attainment	-	*	-

Average proportions going on to secure employment or an apprenticeship following their work placement were relatively low overall (mean=22 per cent and median=10 per cent). These figures suggest that work experience placements rarely operate as a direct route into employment; rather that they fulfil broader purposes (as seen in the discussion of impacts, above).

Despite relatively small proportions overall, analysis shows significant differences by institution type, with colleges reporting the largest proportion of students progressing to work or an apprenticeship following their placement (see Figure 7.1).





Base (unweighted): Schools excluding 6th forms (155); Schools including 6th forms (337); Colleges (82)

**Figure 7-1 Proportion of students going on to secure employment or apprenticeships following their work experience placements by institution type**

### Benefits for students: case study findings

Survey findings show that some of the most commonly reported benefits for students are softer skills. It is important to note, however, that the survey encouraged work experience coordinators to differentiate as far as possible between improved employability, team working, communication skills and time management. This level of differentiation was rare in the case studies, with staff commonly grouping these attributes within an overall concept of “employability”.

There were, however, notable differences between the primary benefits identified by schools and colleges. In particular, **school** staff tended to feel that the greatest benefit of work-related activities was a better understanding of the world of work. In contrast, **college** staff tended to see the primary benefit as an increase in students’ wider employability skills.

Whilst there appeared to be few differences in school and college students’ perceptions of the benefits of work experience placements, students in schools tended to comment more on the role work experience placements played in their decisions around future careers:

*“If you think all through secondary school ‘I’m definitely gonna do this’ and you don’t have any work experience [haven’t done a work experience placement], you go to uni and pay for it and do the whole course and actually do it and don’t enjoy it, it’s like a waste of time” (school student).*

More generally, young people (whether at schools or colleges) discussed the benefits of experiencing the “world of work”, or the “real world”. As one student noted, it was important to go on a work experience placement:

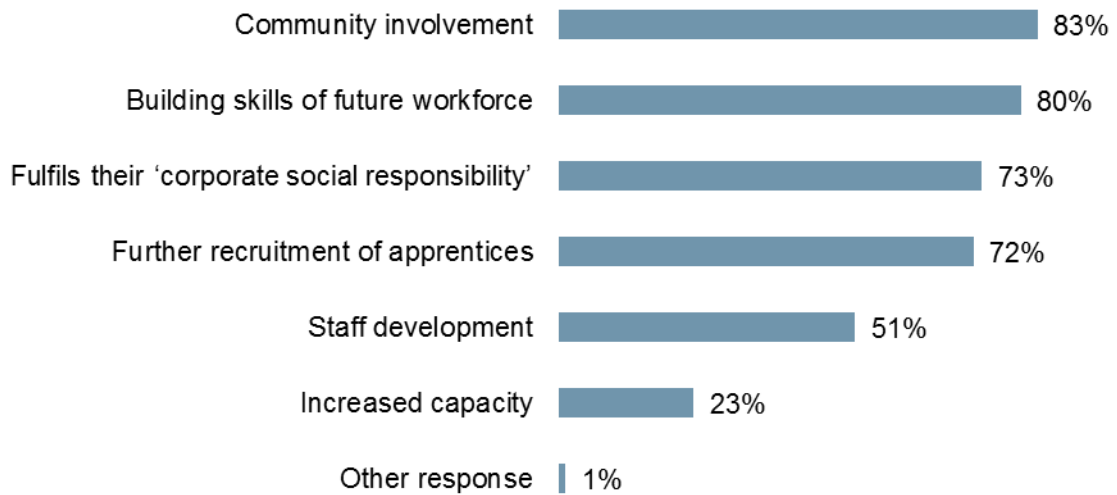
*“So you know what to expect when you’re older, ‘cause I don’t think you realise how hard ‘working’ is until you do it”* (school student).

Students also recognised the importance of developing their employability skills, although this phrase was not used directly. Simply being in a work environment was seen to help them to build their confidence. Alongside this, students spoke about the opportunities provided via placements to improve their communication and interpersonal skills from working with other employees. Understanding how to deal with different and sometimes difficult situations was also noted, especially by young people placed in settings such as care homes, nurseries, hospitals and schools. For example, one student noted that working in a school has taught them the importance of conducting themselves in a professional manner:

*“Being a teaching assistant it kind of made me understand more exactly how you should treat others and what they expect from you at the same time”* (college student).

## **7.2 Benefits for employers**

As well as offering benefits for students, work experience placements and other work-related activities hold the potential to offer advantages to participating employers. Schools and colleges most commonly reported ‘community involvement’ (83 per cent) and ‘building skills of the future workforce’ (80 per cent) (see Figure 7.2). Just 23 per cent of work experience coordinators felt employers benefitted from ‘increased capacity’, suggesting that benefits were seen as being primarily about both social/ community involvement and long-term skills development/ capacity-building rather than meeting current business needs.



Base (unweighted): All respondents (710)

**Figure 7-2 School and college views on the benefits of providing work-related activities for employers**

Table 7.3 shows differences in reported benefits for employers by institution type. Core areas of difference are in workforce-based benefits, such as 'further recruitment of apprentices' (82 per cent of colleges compared to 69 per cent of schools excluding sixth forms) and 'building skills of future workforce' (84 per cent of colleges compared to 78 per cent of schools excluding sixth forms).

**Table 7-3 Benefits of providing work-related activities for employers by institution type**

	Schools excluding 6th form	Schools including 6th form	Colleges
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	187	408	115
Increased capacity	19%	24%	35%
Staff development	44%	54%	60%
Further recruitment of apprentices	69%	71%	82%
Community involvement	83%	83%	76%
Fulfils their 'corporate social responsibility'	71%	73%	81%
Building skills of future workforce	78%	80%	84%

Further analysis by geographic region shows a significant difference in 'building skills of the future workforce', with the highest proportion in the central region (86 per cent), followed by the South (80 per cent) and the North (73 per cent) (see Appendix Table 7.1).

## **Benefits for employers: case study findings**

Reflecting the views of work experience coordinators, the primary reason given by employers for becoming involved in the provision of work experience placements was philanthropic. Giving young people an opportunity to gain exposure to the work place and make themselves more employable was mentioned in particular. As one employer in an engineering firm explained:

*“My partner and I started working here as apprentices before rising to become management and eventually buying the business. It’s important that we give young people the opportunities we had” (employer).*

Despite this general trend there were some notable differences in motivation according to whether the sector commonly recruited young people as school/ college leavers or as graduates (e.g. the medical and legal profession). Employers based in sectors relying on graduate recruitment noted that work experience placements were intended to offer young people a sense of what it was like to work in a particular sector, prior to further study. As one employer in a legal services firm reported:

*“We can’t expect young people [at school or college] to come to us with legal knowledge... We can’t give them case work to do but what we can give them is a flavour of what it would be like... Although some won’t like it, others will... We consider both to be a positive outcome” (employer).*

Conversely, an employer in a construction firm (who might expect to recruit young people directly from college) noted that:

*“With many of the colleges we work with, the experiences are marketed to the young people as apprenticeship trials. We find it really difficult to find people with the right skills to do what we do, so recruiting an apprentice is really important to the long-term health of the business” (employer).*

Another employer, based in the hospitality industry, argued that for them the value of work experience placements was in raising the profile of the sector, which was often perceived as the source of more precarious employment opportunities:

*“Offering work experience [placements] provides [us] with an opportunity to show young people that we offer a career-path not just temporary jobs. Few will take this option but it is still worth it to us... Where a young person shows themselves to be a good worker we sometimes offer them summer jobs” (employer).*

## 8 Conclusions and lessons for good practice

This section brings together findings from the case studies to inform the identification of approaches which support effective practice in the delivery of work-related activities. It also considers methods for improving the impact of work-related activities at the strategic (by the Department for Education and other national actors) and operational level (by schools, colleges and other local/ regional actors).

### 8.1 Good practice in the delivery of work-related activities

Schools and colleges identified a range of approaches that were felt to support the delivery of effective work-related activities (summarised in Figure 8.1, below). These related to a number of different stages in the organisation and implementation of activities, and had implications for school/ college staff as well as employers, students and their parents/ carers.

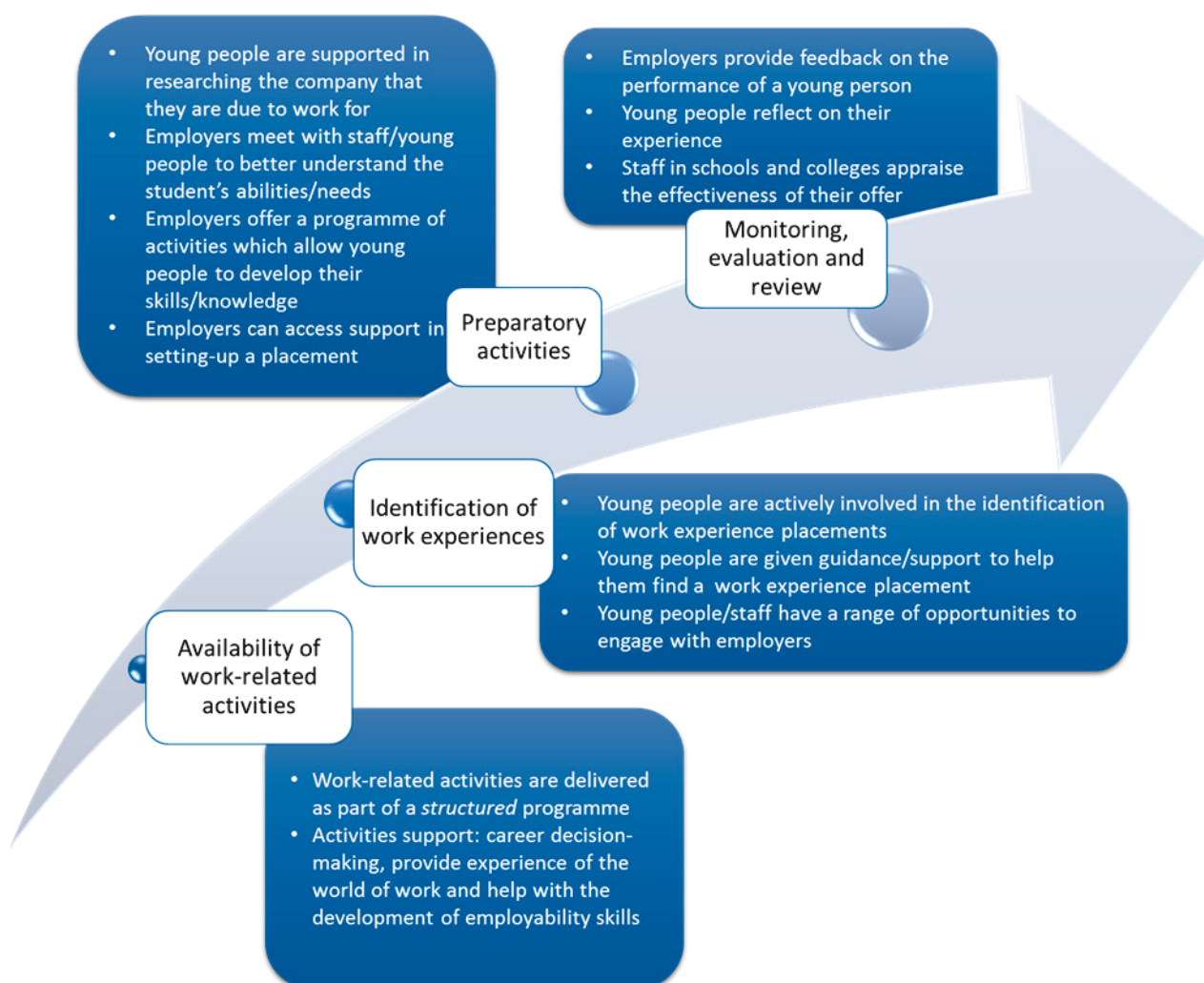


Figure 8-1 Good practice in the delivery of work-related activities

## Availability of work-related activities

In those schools and colleges in which work-related activities were perceived to have the greatest impact on students, work experience placements were offered as part of a structured programme of opportunities that were delivered over the course of a young person's programme of study. Such activities, both timetabled and extra-curricular, were seen as key to building students' confidence so that they were in a position to maximise learning from their work placements.

### **Case illustration: a structured programme of work-related activities**

One 11-16 school located in a town in the north of England sought to deliver a structured programme of work-related activities through the development of what it called the '*Optimum Curriculum*'. Developed in-house, this was designed to support the embedding of employability skills in the teaching of all subjects at key stage 3 and key stage 4, as well as through bespoke non-curriculum activities. Over the course of their time at the school, students were expected to develop a number of characteristics or '*qualities*' that senior leaders at the schools thought would make them more employable when they left school, including being:

- an effective participator
- an independent enquirer
- a creative thinker
- a reflective learner
- a team-worker
- a self-manager.

In addition to the range of focused activities delivered in the classroom, students were also expected to take part in three '*Challenge Days*' each year. For example, year 9 students had been challenged to produce a meal for their peers working with a chef from the RAF. Participation in the activity was credited with showing students the importance of working together as a team and helped them to develop this skill.

By providing students with an opportunity to gain a range of such experiences outside the classroom, staff felt that young people were better prepared when it came to accessing a work experience placement (which they were expected to do in year 10), both because they had developed their employability skills and gained confidence in operating in a 'professional' environment.

Within many of these comprehensive work-related programmes, explicit recognition was made of the benefits of different activities in supporting a range of outcomes - principally increased awareness of career pathways, experience of the world of work and improved employability skills.

### **Case illustration: a varied programme of work-related activities**

In order to ensure that students left the school equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve a successful progression outcome (whether into work, further or higher education or training), one 11-18 school located in a spa town in the north of England delivered a programme of work-related activities in which different activities were explicitly designed to develop knowledge, skills and competencies.

Students in years 7 to 9 were encouraged to participate in a '*Challenge and Celebration*' week. Delivered through a programme of school trips/ visits, students could expect to participate in a range of activities explicitly designed to support the development of a range of different employability skills. For example, some students completed an outdoor adventure intended to improve their leadership and communication skills. Other students visited a local college and completed a variety of practical tasks designed to improve their problem-solving skills.

In year 10 this programme was supplemented by the delivery of a 'World of Work' module delivered within PSHE lessons over the course of the academic year. As part of the module, students were invited to consider potential career pathways culminating in the production of a CV and the completion of a mock interview with an employer. Both strands of activity (the module and the challenge week) were felt to help prepare young people for a work experience placement (which was commonly undertaken in year 10). The programme of activities was seen as a way of providing students with an understanding of what it would be like to enter the world of work and what skills/ attributes they might require.

### **Identification of work experience placements**

In schools and colleges where staff took responsibility for identifying work experience opportunities for students, staff considered it important that young people played an active role in the process; for example, in meeting with a prospective employer and discussing what experience they might access. Involving students in this way was perceived by interviewees as a valuable way of establishing a young person's level of interest and managing the expectations of all parties involved in the discussion.

### **Case illustration: active involvement of students in identifying work experience placements**

To improve pupil '*ownership*' of work experience placements, one sixth form college in the south of England had sought to incorporate the theory of '*guided discovery*' into their approach when working with students to organise their own work experience placements.

Staff noted that students were less likely to see the value of work experience placements if attendance was mandatory and the placements were arranged for them. Conversely, they argued that leaving students to arrange their own work experience placements without support could mean that they were not able to identify a placement that was relevant to their career aspirations.

Instead, staff saw themselves as providing the infrastructure or framework around which students were given just enough support to identify and organise a placement, whilst seeing themselves as fully responsible for the outcome. The process varied depending on the needs/ abilities of the students but common tools included access to a structured conversation with a member of staff to discuss options and support in identifying potential employers in an appropriate sector. This approach was credited with a steady increase in satisfaction with completed placements amongst both students and employers.

In those schools and colleges in which students were responsible for identifying their own work experience opportunities, it was felt to be vital that staff had sufficient capacity to support students to ensure all were able to identify a placement that matched their career aspirations. This was particularly the case where parents did not have access to a network of employment contacts.

Regardless of sector or size, staff in schools and colleges often appeared more satisfied with the quality of work experience placements where local employers had a number of different opportunities to engage with students (and were not seen just as placement providers). For example, employers might speak at a school assembly or conduct/ assist with mock interviews. By building a relationship with employers at these events, it was argued that they were much more likely to offer placements to students.



### **Case illustration: employer engagement activities**

In one sixth form college in London, staff acknowledged the challenge they faced in identifying suitable placements for students. To help overcome this challenge, they had sought to strengthen their relationships with employers by providing them with a range of opportunities to engage with the school in the delivery of work inspiration activities.

For example, employers had been asked to deliver talks, facilitate mock interviews and judge the results of an enterprise activity. Involving employers in these types of activities was considered a valuable way of supporting the development of students and to cultivate a stronger relationship with employers, so making them more likely to consider offering a placement.

## **Preparatory activities for work experience placements**

Interviewees felt it was important that students were provided with support in undertaking background research on the company that they would be working with. That would help ensure that students had realistic expectations of what type of work they might do while on a placement.

### **Case illustration: preparing for work experience placements**

Staff in one general FE college in the north of England acknowledged the importance of ensuring that students had realistic expectations of what they might be asked to do while on a work experience placement. As a result, the decision had been taken to set aside time in each student's study programme (regardless of whether they were studying for academic or technical courses) for them to undertake an independent research project on their chosen career pathway and, ultimately, the employer that they were scheduled to visit on placement.

By developing a better understanding of the sector they were interested in, and of the company which they had secured a placement with, staff felt that students developed much more realistic expectations about what they might be asked to do while on a placement. They noted that students were also more likely to be enthusiastic about their placements as they could see how what they were being asked to do supported the ongoing success of the business.

Interviewees felt that it was important that employers met both with staff at the school or college and with the students themselves in order to better understand the skills and abilities of young people and ensure that proposed activities were appropriate. This was particularly important for students with SEND.

Students commonly regarded the most effective work-related activities to be those in which they had an opportunity to engage with a structured programme of activities that allowed them to get a feel for what it might be like to work for that employer in the future.

**Case illustration: a structured programme of placement activities**

To ensure that young people (predominantly, but not exclusively, students in year 10 or year 11) had the best possible experience while on placement, one employer in the legal services industry had developed a structured programme of activities.

Over the course of a one-week work experience placement young people were given the opportunity to spend one or two days with each team in their firm. During their time with each team, the young person could expect to spend a couple of hours meeting with key staff and learning about their job roles. Over the rest of the day they were then expected to undertake a project linked to that team's specialism. Over time, the company noted that they had developed a resource bank of relevant activities that young people could undertake, depending on their age and skill level. For instance, within the conveyancing team young people were regularly asked to consider the implications arising from the covenants on an exemplar property.

Such activities were seen as a means of giving young people a taste of the day-to-day life of a solicitor and of highlighting the importance of developing research skills during the remainder of their education.

Employers welcomed support from schools and colleges (and, where used, external bodies) in setting up placements, principally in undertaking a health and safety audit. Interviewees noted that the bureaucracy associated with setting up a placement was one reason that employers were unwilling to offer them.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review of work experience placements**

Interviewees in schools and colleges felt that it was important that employers provided personalised feedback for the students on placements in order to support their ongoing development and to ensure that they had an opportunity to learn from the experience.

Work experience placements were felt to have the most impact if students were provided with a structured framework within which to reflect on what they had learnt, for example, through completion of a journal or workbook, which would then be discussed in a timely way with staff at their school and college. Such discussions were seen as a valuable way of ensuring work experience was used to inform ongoing career planning.

### **Case illustration: the post-placement feedback process**

In one rural 11-18 school, located in the West Midlands, a comprehensive feedback process was organised for students to maximise learning from their work experience placements. This was designed to complement the briefing session which preceded the placement and thereby allow students to reflect on their journey and experiences.

In order to support the feedback process, young people were given work experience placement diaries to be completed during the course of their week in the workplace. Alongside introductory written material, which echoed the content of the briefing session (such as a health and safety checklist and overview guidance sheet), the diaries had a section for filling in the company's details, as well as a page for each day of the placement. Students were asked to complete these diaries during the course of the placement.

The booklet prompted them to consider the jobs they had done each day and what they had learnt. It also encouraged students to engage in particular tasks, such as ensuring that they spoke to several members of staff during their placement. The diary was designed to help students reflect on what they did and did not enjoy about the placement. The final page of the diary had a space for employer feedback, which students were encouraged to view as a reference which could be cited in the future.

Once back from the placement, students took part in a session with their tutor group, intended to allow them to consider their feedback alongside that given by their employer. During this session, young people were actively encouraged to speak to one another about what they had done and what they had enjoyed in order to get a sense of the breadth of experiences. Students were also encouraged to highlight the key things that they had learnt as a result of their placement, such as time-management and using their initiative.

After the feedback session, booklets were handed in to members of staff and kept in the student's record of achievement. The diaries and feedback sessions allowed students to understand the distance that they had travelled over the course of the week and pinpoint exactly how they had developed. Meanwhile, asking for written employer feedback encouraged young people to consider the placement as something concrete which they could use to support future applications.

The most effective work experience placements were often perceived to be delivered by those schools and colleges who were committed to regularly (self-) evaluating their offer, e.g. by examining feedback from employers and/ or students.

### Case illustration: supporting self-evaluation of work-related learning

One independent school in London sought to evaluate its own successes and areas for improvement in the staff's management of work experience placements. The school coupled its self-evaluation with a feedback session designed to give students an opportunity to reflect on their placements.

Once the year group had returned from their week-long placements, they were brought together in a half-day reflection session in the assembly hall. Staff introduced the session and then grouped the young people into clusters. The students were then given a set of questions to discuss within their groups. These questions were designed so that young people could learn about the kinds of experiences their peers had, and so that each smaller group might put forward their ideas about the factors that made for a successful placement.

After the discussions had taken place, students were encouraged to distil their thoughts and present them to the wider group. By encouraging students to focus on the process of identifying and setting-up placements, staff were able to identify both successes and areas for improvement in their part of the process. Moreover, students were able to reflect on their learning and, by discussing experiences with others, investigate other potential careers.

Staff also read out snippets of feedback from employers. This allowed the group to celebrate successes and for staff to congratulate those who had done especially well.

Employer feedback regarding the placement process was combined with student

## 8.2 Improving the impact of the work-related activities offered to young people

Case study interviewees identified a number of ways in which the impact of work-related activities could be improved. These can be classified into two principal groups; operational changes that could be taken by schools, colleges and employers and strategic reforms that would require support from Government.

### Operational changes

Despite the emphasis placed on the importance of situating work experience placements within the context of a broader programme of work inspiration activities, the most commonly identified operational improvement was to increase the duration of work experience placements (particularly those offered by schools). The most vocal proponents of this change were employers, who felt that longer placements (of two weeks or more) would be beneficial for them and for students.

It was felt that longer placements (as opposed to those lasting a single week) would allow young people sufficient time to become familiar with a particular working environment and/ or role. As noted by one employer:

*“By the end of the first week, we hope that they will be comfortable in their surroundings... Given the amount of training that we need to give them before we can let them loose, it will be the second week before we would even think about it”* (employer).

Amongst college-based staff, interviewees indicated that students would benefit from a broader programme of work-related activities (not just those aimed at preparing them for their placements), for example, having the opportunity to learn about different employment sectors. In case study schools, although interviewees often reflected that they could do more to support and develop students (such as make more support available to help young people arrange a suitable placement), there appeared to a greater degree of satisfaction with the range of experiences on offer.<sup>31</sup>

## Strategic changes

Case study participants identified a number of ways in which work-related activities could be supported at a strategic level:

- Interviewees (particularly those working in, or with, schools) expressed concern about the lack of precise guidance governing what a school was required to offer by way of work-related activities. This was felt to have had a direct impact on the decision of some schools not to offer placements to their students:

*“It is so much more difficult to arrange placements than four or five years ago... some of the schools we used to work with simply don't offer them anymore”* (employer).

- Some school-based interviewees noted that while clearer guidance would be helpful in helping senior leaders to make the case for investing in work-related activities, the principal driver behind the reduction in the number of work experience placements was the level of institutional investment required in order to develop (and maintain) relationships with employers. It was felt that, in order to support an expansion of work-related activities at a time when school and college budgets were tight, additional (central) funding was required. As noted by one work experience coordinator:

*“We are based in a deprived area... identifying appropriate placements for students is hard work... Why do we have to pay for it?”* (school-based work experience coordinator).

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<sup>31</sup> It is important to note that there were differences in the primary purpose for which work experience placements were offered in schools and colleges (as discussed in chapter 2).

- The provision of work placements was felt to be more effective where schools and colleges used work experience coordinators and centralised systems to support delivery. While this should inform generic future guidance and support, staff and students expressed a specific desire for a central (or local authority level) database of work experience placement opportunities. It was thought that this would help schools and young people identify suitable placements in an increasingly competitive environment:

*“Our local authority used to maintain a database of opportunities... this was brilliant as it opened pupil’s minds to the opportunities out there” (senior leader).*

## Concluding remarks

In many schools and colleges work-related activities are still considered an important part of the curriculum. However, it is evident that there is considerable variation in the practice of individual institutions both in terms of the types of activities they make available to students and the age at which students are offered them. This variability includes both work inspiration activities (with some schools building these into the curriculum and others not) and work placements. The latter varied in terms of:

- their **purpose** - whether in relation to employability or technical skills;
- the ways in which they were **arranged and organised** - ranging from centralised coordination and management of placements to more ad hoc approaches where responsibility for organising the placements lay primarily with the student/ their family;
- the extent to which feedback from placements was used both to **support individual development** and the ongoing **strategic development** of work experience programmes.

Despite widespread acceptance of the importance of work-related activities in preparing young people for the world of work, and some common agreement about what constituted good practice, it was noted that the absence of clear guidance from the Department for Education in relation to work-related learning pre-16, meant that it was not always prioritised (whether in the curriculum or in staffing). The absence of guidance was felt to be particularly impactful when governors/ senior leaders needed to be persuaded of the benefits of delivering a structured programme of work-related activities. Detailed guidance related to pre-16 provision, therefore, is to be welcomed.

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## Appendix Tables

**Appendix Table 2.1: Whether work-related activities are available to years 10 and/ or 11**

	<b>Schools</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	483
Just year 10	73%
Just year 11	10%
Both years 10-11	17%

**Appendix Table 2.2: Whether work-related activities are available to years 12 and/ or 13**

	<b>School/colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	418
Just year 12	45%
Just year 13	1%
Both years 12-13	54%

**Appendix Table 2.3: Timing of work experience placements for years 12-13 in the academic year**

	<b>Schools including 6th form</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	332	108
Throughout the year	39%	95%
Autumn Term	3%	-
Spring Term	2%	1%
Summer term	56%	4%

**Appendix Table 2.4: Whether work experience placements for years 12-13 tended to happen in a single block of time on separate days or over a period of time**

	Schools including 6th form	Colleges
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	332	108
Single block	56%	20%
Separate days	12%	9%
Mix	25%	63%
Rolling programme	7%	6%
Other	1%	1%

**Appendix Table 2.5: Reasons for the timing and duration of work experience placements for years 12-13**

	Schools including 6th form	Colleges
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	332	107
To fit around programmes of learning	60%	72%
To fit around examination periods	59%	41%
To fit around school/college terms	37%	43%
To fit around coursework	33%	44%
To fit in with employers	21%	58%
To fit with pupils	2	1
To fit with workload of school/college staff	*	1
To avoid competition with other schools/colleges	*	*

\* denotes a response of less than 1%

**Appendix Table 2.6: Whether all students in years 10-11 were offered work placements**

	Schools
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	482
Yes - all year 10	75%
Yes - all year 11	8%
Yes - all years 10-11	7%
No	11%

**Appendix Table 2.7: Whether all students in years 12-13 were offered work placements**

	<b>Schools/colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	445
Yes - all year 12	45%
Yes - all years 13	*
Yes - all years 12-13	32%
No	23%

\* denotes a response of less than 1%

**Appendix Table 3.1: Who was responsible for organising work-related activities by institution type**

	<b>School excluding 6th forms</b>	<b>Schools including 6th forms</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	187	410	115
The work experience coordinator/ coordinating team	49%	44%	30%
The work experience coordinator/ coordinating team with other teaching staff/ tutors	29%	32%	51%
Teaching staff/tutors	8%	5%	14%
Other staff	4%	4%	1%
Students	2%	3%	4%
Students with staff	4%	7%	5%

**Appendix Table 3.2: Type of external organisations schools and colleges reported working with**

	School/ colleges
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	522
Education Business Partnership (EBP)	48%
National Careers Service	29%
Inspiring the Future	27%
Local Education Partnerships (LEP)	25%
Connexions	24%
Young Enterprise <sup>32</sup>	17%
Enterprise Adviser	14%
Job Centre Plus	6%
Business Class	5%
A local business/ employer	4%
Local Chambers of Commerce	3%
Local Authority	3%
Prospects	2%
NYBEP / BEP	2%
Future First	1%
Leicestershire Education Business Company (LEBC)	1%
Our Futures	1%
Barclays LifeSkills	1%
Positive Steps	1%
B&E Together	1%
Careers South West	1%
Believe in Young People	*
C&K Careers	*
Form the Future	*
Futureworks	*
Other	29%

\* denotes a response of less than 1%

<sup>32</sup> Young Enterprise (YE) is a UK charity that helps young people to develop and build their personal and business skills, including teamwork, communication, resilience, problem solving and financial capability.

**Appendix Table 3.3 Activities to raise awareness/ promote work-related activities by institution type**

	<b>Schools excluding 6th forms</b>	<b>Schools including 6th forms</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	180	396	108
Publicised work-related activities via notice boards, websites and newsletters	76%	86%	88%
Done in lessons	76%	72%	90%
Year assemblies	88%	91%	18%
Parents'/carers' evenings	68%	60%	62%
Students who have been on placements, work experience etc. talk to/ mentor other students	48%	51%	51%
Other	4%	3%	5%

**Appendix Table 4.1 Actions taken by the school/ college to prepare students for placements for years 12-13 by institution type**

	<b>Schools including 6th form</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	283	105
Students undertake employability skills in class time before the placement	59%	83%
Supports students drafting their CVs	77%	87%
Develops students' interview skills	70%	76%
Help students understand protocols e.g. turning up on time, communicating appropriately, dress code	85%	93%
Holds an initial meeting between employer and student	32%	50%
Provides one-to-one advice	68%	77%
Health and safety talks/assembly	1%	4%
Dedicated work placement/experience assembly	2%	-
None	1%	-

**Appendix Table 4.2: Main factors that help in the set-up of work experience and work placements by institution type**

	<b>Schools excluding 6th forms</b>	<b>Schools including 6th forms</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	186	409	114
Effective relationship with employers	80%	85%	89%
Having a member of staff/team dedicated to this role	85%	82%	83%
Engagement/ support from Senior Leadership	64%	67%	59%
Engagement/ support from other staff	56%	57%	72%
Engagement/ support from parents	70%	68%	43%
Having a centrally-organised system	53%	60%	67%
Effective relationships with other external organisations that can help build links with employers	53%	63%	42%
Having sufficient budget/ funding available	51%	52%	37%
Flexibility in timing of work-related activities	22%	39%	64%

**Appendix Table 4.3: Main challenges to setting up work experience and work placements by institution type**

	<b>Schools excluding 6th forms</b>	<b>Schools including 6th forms</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	187	409	114
Lack of employers in certain industries/ occupational areas	40%	53%	59%
Lack of staff time	49%	47%	55%
Lack of student engagement	33%	32%	44%
Lack of available funding	29%	35%	18%
Lack of effective relationships with employers	20%	27%	30%
Not having a member of staff/ team dedicated to this role	15%	18%	24%
Lack of support from senior leaders	13%	15%	18%
Staff turnover at employers leading to loss of contacts	9%	19%	12%
No challenges encountered	7%	4%	-

**Appendix Table 4.4: Main challenges when trying to engage with employers by institution type**

	<b>Schools excluding 6th forms</b>	<b>Schools including 6th forms</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	103	283	80
Health and safety issues	67%	55%	49%
Insurance cover	65%	50%	38%
Lack of understanding of what students are able to do	40%	44%	55%
Previous negative experiences	42%	39%	54%
Lack of understanding of what they can offer	35%	46%	46%
Bureaucracy	27%	35%	20%
DBS check delays	16%	18%	41%
Taking LLDD (learners with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities)	23%	15%	29%
Staff turnover, loss of contact person	16%	24%	15%
Poor relations with school or college	2%	8%	12%
Other	10%	9%	9%

**Appendix Table 6.1 Effectiveness at offering a good range of work-related activities by whether the work experience coordinator makes arrangements**

<b>Effectiveness at offering a good range of work-related activities</b>	<b>Whether the work experience coordinator makes arrangements</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	308	403
Very effective	43	34
Quite effective	45	52
Neither effective nor ineffective	10	12
Quite ineffective	2	2



**Appendix Table 6.2 Effectiveness at offering a good range of work-related activities by whether there is a centrally coordinated system for organising and/ or administering work-related activities**

Effectiveness at offering a good range of work-related activities	Whether there is a centrally coordinated system for organising and/ or administering work-related activities	
	Yes	No
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	586	124
Very effective	42	17
Quite effective	48	53
Neither effective nor ineffective	9	23
Quite ineffective	1	6

**Appendix Table 6.3 Effectiveness at offering a good range of work-related activities by the proportion securing employment**

Effectiveness at offering a good range of work-related activities	Percentage of pupils going on to secure employment or an apprenticeship		
	25 per cent or less	26 per cent – 50 per cent	More than 50 per cent
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	446	59	69
Very effective	39	29	53
Quite effective	47	66	37
Neither effective nor ineffective	12	5	7
Quite ineffective	2	-	3

**Appendix Table 6.4: Whether the school or college offers enough placements of the right type by type of opportunity**

	Placements Y10-11	Placements Y12-13	Supported Internships
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	508	402	97
Yes	67%	63%	74%
No	33%	37%	26%

Appendix Table 7.1 Main impact by institution type

	Schools excluding 6th form	Schools including 6th form	Colleges
<i>Base (unweighted)</i>	186	405	114
Improved employability	9%	16%	29%
Enhanced CV	1%	4%	1%
Team working skills	1%	1%	-
Communication and interpersonal skills	10%	9%	10%
Time management skills	-	*	-
Increased maturity	13%	7%	6%
Increased independence	5%	4%	3%
Increased confidence	25%	20%	8%
Greater motivation to engage in education	5%	6%	-
Improved educational attainment	-	*	-
Better understanding of the world of work/ industries	22%	22%	30%
Clearer sense of career aspirations	4%	6%	7%
Improved understanding of educational and career pathways	4%	4%	3%
Easier transition from education to work	1%	1%	3%

\* denotes a response of less than 1%

# Appendix A: Survey methods

## The Survey

A web-enabled telephone survey (web-CATI) was conducted with work experience staff at sampled schools and colleges between the 23<sup>rd</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016, comprising interviews with 712 individuals.

## Sampling

A sample of open secondary maintained schools and post-16 institutions in England was drawn from an extract of Edubase (the Department for Education's register of educational establishments in England and Wales) in March 2016. A disproportionate stratified sampling approach was adopted. This meant that the sampling frame was first stratified by institution type,<sup>33</sup> then sorted by:

- region;
- neighbourhood deprivation level (tertiles of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index score);
- urban-rural indicator; and
- institution size/ number of pupils in a school.

This stratified approach ensured representativeness of the sample with regards to key characteristics. All colleges were sampled due to the small number operating in England. Finally, a systematic random sample of schools was selected from those with valid contact information (either a telephone number or e-mail address).

The total sample of 2,825 institutions included a sample of 70 schools and colleges approached for the pilot survey, and a reserve sample of 252 schools, which was issued during the main stage fieldwork period.<sup>34</sup>

## Survey design

The work experience survey was developed in consultation with the Department for Education and the project steering group. The content being determined by the study's overarching aims and objectives, captured information on:

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<sup>33</sup> Particularly small strata were oversampled. The small number of post-16 institutions meant that all English colleges were included in either the pilot or mainstage sample.

<sup>34</sup> Another survey targeting secondary schools and post-16 institutions had been launched during the same period as this study, limiting the number of institutions available for the reserve sample.

- the types and duration of work-related activities provided to young people (work experience, work placements and other workplace exposure);
- organisational processes for setting up and managing work experience and work placements;
- delivery issues and challenges; and
- perceived impacts and benefits.

The questionnaire was programmed in Unicom (formerly IBM) Data Collection using the same programme structure for the web and telephone modes, and piloted between 25th April and 12th May 2016, with the intention of testing the questionnaire content and length. In order to further refine the instrument, the pilot survey also offered work experience coordinators the opportunity to provide feedback on aspects of the questionnaire, such as:

- questions and/ or sections that were particularly difficult to answer;
- use of terminology;
- questions and/ or topics they felt were missing; and
- the usefulness of information received in advance of completing the survey.

Qualitative feedback interviews supplemented these open text questions. At the end of the survey respondents were asked whether they would be willing to take part in a short (30 minute) follow-up interview over the telephone. These interviews were conducted by a member of the project team and collected detailed feedback from five respondents.

Feedback from both components was collated and used with feedback from NatCen telephone interviewers to refine the questionnaire for the main stage survey. A copy of the survey is available in Appendix B, below.

## Fieldwork

Invitation letters were sent to all sampled schools and colleges to inform them about the survey. These letters were addressed to the school or college's work experience coordinator/ lead where this information was available, and to the headteacher/ principal where it was not. Invitation letters were followed by emails which were sent to all contacts and included information about the telephone survey and a unique web link to the online version.

The details of all sampled institutions who had not contacted NatCen to opt out of the study were shared with NatCen's telephone unit. All interviewers attended a project-specific briefing in advance of the start of main stage fieldwork. Calls to institutions began on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016, and were initially targeted at colleges, who were a priority group for the Department for Education. The survey closed on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

During the fieldwork period, work experience coordinators/ leads were sent (a maximum of) three reminder emails, using new contact details collected by NatCen’s telephone unit as appropriate.

## Response

In total, 712 schools and colleges took part in the survey; giving an overall response rate of 29 per cent. Most work experience coordinators completed the survey online (although often having received a call from telephone interviewers, who ensured emails were resent to direct email addresses). The final figures by survey mode were 617 online and 95 by telephone (13 and 87 per cent of all completed interviews). Breaking down response by institution type (as in Table 1.1) shows that 34 per cent of sampled colleges took part, compared to 23 per cent of schools without a sixth form and 25 per cent of schools with a sixth form.

**Table A 1 Survey Response Rates by Mode and Institution Type**

	<b>Schools excluding 6<sup>th</sup> forms</b>	<b>Schools including 6<sup>th</sup> forms</b>	<b>Colleges</b>
Issued sample	804	1611	340
Total completions	187	410	115
Online completions	166	355	96
Telephone completions	21	55	19

# Appendix B: The Questionnaire

## SURVEY OF WORK EXPERIENCE AND PLACEMENTS

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### **Questionnaire contents:**

Section 1: Introduction	119
Section 2: Organisation and management of work-related experiences	126
Section 3: Facilitators and challenges	131
Section 4: Satisfaction with opportunities for work-related activities	136

#### **Questionnaire conventions:**

- Question names are given in bold
- Routing instructions are given in {brackets} above each question.
- Where a 'textfill' of some kind has been used this is flagged by {TEXTFILL}. For the purpose of this document the textfills are described inside the brackets as opposed to literally stated. e.g. {TEXTFILL: sample forename} represents the respondent's first name, for example, Andrew.
- Interviewer instructions are included in capitals after the question. These instructions apply only to the CATI survey.
- Don't know and refused responses are permissible at every question unless otherwise specified.
- The instruction CODE ALL THAT APPLY indicates a multi-coded question. If this is not stated then a single code only should apply.

## Section 1: Introduction

### Aims:

- To check eligibility of respondent, and
  - Gather basic background information about the respondent and the types of work-related activities offered by schools/colleges
- 

### CATI ONLY

*{Ask all}*

#### **Intro**

Good morning/afternoon, my name is ...

I am calling about a study we are conducting on behalf of the Department for Education about work experience and work placements.

Please could I speak to {TEXTFILL: Sample Forename} {TEXTFILL: Sample Surname}?

1. Respondent answers phone
2. Transferred to respondent
3. No answer
4. Wrong number
5. Refused
6. Not available during entire fieldwork period
7. Not available at the current time (appointment)
8. School/college does not offer any work experience activities

### CATI ONLY

*{If Intro = 1. respondent answers phone or 2. Transferred to respondent}*

#### **Intro2**

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

We'd like your help with an important research study we recently wrote to you about. The study seeks to gather evidence on work experience and placements for students. The Department for Education has commissioned NatGen Social Research and SQW to undertake this study for them. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes and will be confidential. It can be completed online or over the telephone. Are you happy to take part?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT (EXACT WORDING NOT REQUIRED)

This research is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. Also, I'd like to assure you that any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence in line with the Data Protection Act (1998) and will only be used for research purposes. You won't be identified in any research findings.

INTERVIEWER: ADD IF NECESSARY:

More information is also available on the project website

1. Yes, will take part now

2. Yes, will take part but not available now – make APPOINTMENT
3. Would like email to be resent before deciding whether to take part
4. Respondent will complete survey online
5. No, definitely does not want to take part

CATI ONLY

*{If Intro2 = 5 No, definitely does not want to take part}*

INTERVIEWER: THANK RESPONDENT FOR THEIR TIME AND END CALL.

CATI ONLY

*{If Intro2 = 2. Appointment}*

INTERVIEWER: MAKE APPOINTMENT, THANK RESPONDENT AND END CALL.

CATI ONLY

*{If Intro=1. Respondent answers phone or 2. Transferred to respondent}*

*{CAWI - Ask all}*

**RoleCheck**

Can you please confirm whether you are the work experience coordinator at {TEXTFILL: name of school/college}?

1. Yes
2. No

*{If RoleCheck = 2. No}*

**RoleOther**

Would you say that in your role you...

1. Have some involvement with organising work experience at {TEXTFILL: name of school/college}?
2. Have no involvement with organising work experience at {TEXTFILL: name of school/college}?

*{If RoleOther=2. No OR Intro=7. Not available at the current time}*

**NewCorNam**

Can you please provide the name and contact details of the staff member who coordinates or helps to organise work experience at {TEXTFILL: name of school/college}?

CATI ONLY: Can I take their name please?

CAWI ONLY: Full name:

:

OPEN <100 characters>

*{If RoleOther=2. No OR Intro = 7. Not available at the current time}*

**NewCorEm**

CATI ONLY: And their email address?



CAWI ONLY: Email:

:

OPEN <100 characters>

*{If RoleOther=2. No OR Intro = 7. Not available at the current time}*

**NewCorPh**

CATI ONLY: And their phone number or extension number?

CAWI ONLY: Phone number / extension number:

:

Numeric

*{If RoleOther=2. No}*

**IneligEnd**

INTERVIEWER: THANK RESPONDENT FOR THEIR TIME AND END CALL.

FOR CAWI: Thank-you very much for taking the time to complete our initial questions. As this survey is aimed specifically at staff members who organise work experience, we will be contacting the coordinator at your school or college.

*{Ask all}*

**JobTitle**

What is your job title?

:

OPEN <100 characters>

*{Ask all}*

**HowLong**

How long have you been involved in coordinating work experience in schools or colleges, in total?

FOR CAWI: (Please give the number of years, or if you have been coordinating work experience for less than a year the number of months).

INTERVIEWER: COLLECT NUMBER OF YEARS, OR, IF LESS THAN ONE year, NUMBER OF MONTHS.

:

OPEN <100 characters>

*{Ask all}*

**PrePost16**

Does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} provide work-related experiences for students who are aged under-16 only, over-16 only or both?

1. Under-16 only (INTERVIEWER INCLUDE: school does not have a sixth-form/CAWI: (please select this option if your school does not have a sixth form))
2. Over-16 only
3. Both under and over-16

*{If PrePost16=1. Under-16 or 3. Both}*

**TypePre**

Which of the following types of work-related activities are offered to pupils in years 10 and 11?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE AND WAIT FOR RESPONSE BEFORE CONTINUING.

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. taster days
2. employer visits/ employers in the classroom
3. work simulations (e.g. industry weeks, skills competitions)
4. enterprise projects
5. visits to workplaces
6. job shadowing
7. volunteering (in a work context)
8. careers fairs/ conventions
9. careers talks
10. mock interviews
11. CV sessions
12. recruitment skills with employers
13. work experience placements (for years 10 and/ or 11)
14. business mentoring
15. any other type? (please specify)

INTERVIEWER IF NEEDED RE: OPTION 2: This means that employers come into the school or college to deliver classes or projects as opposed to the student going out into the employer's environment

CAWI HELP TEXT (ATTACHED TO OPTION 2): This means that employers come into the school or college to deliver classes or projects as opposed to the student going out into the employer's environment.

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements for years 10 and/ or 11}*

**Years1011**

Are the work experience placements available to just year 10s, just year 11s or both? :

1. Just year 10
2. Just year 11
3. Both

*{If TypePre=15. Other}*

**TyOthPre**

Please give a brief description of the other type of work experience offered by {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} for students aged under 16

:

OPEN <200 characters>

*{If PrePost16=2. Under-16 or 3. Both}*

**TypePost**

Which of the following types of work-related activities are offered to pupils in years 12 and 13?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE AND WAIT FOR RESPONSE BEFORE CONTINUING.

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. taster days
2. employer visits/ employers in the classroom
3. work simulations (e.g. industry weeks, skills competitions)
4. enterprise projects
5. visits to workplaces
6. job shadowing
7. volunteering (in a work context)
8. careers fairs/ conventions
9. careers talks
10. mock interviews
11. CV sessions
12. recruitment skills with employers
13. traineeships
14. work experience placements (for years 12 and/ or 13)
15. business mentoring
16. any other type? (please specify)

INTERVIEWER IF NEEDED RE: OPTION 2: This means that employers come into the school or college to deliver classes or projects as opposed to the student going out into the employer's environment

CAWI HELP TEXT (ATTACHED TO OPTION 2): This means that employers come into the school or college to deliver classes or projects as opposed to the student going out into the employer's environment.

INTERVIEWER IF NEEDED RE: OPTION 13: A traineeship is an education and training programme involving work experience, which aims to help young people prepare for an apprenticeship or employment. They last a maximum of 6 months and the **core content** is: a high quality work experience placement with a real employer; a focused period of work preparation training (e.g. CV writing, interview preparation, job-search, self-discipline and inter-personal skills) and English and Maths for young people without a GCSE A\*-C.

CAWI HELP TEXT (ATTACHED TO OPTION 13): A traineeship is an education and training programme involving work experience, which aims to help young people prepare for an apprenticeship or employment. They last a maximum of 6 months and the **core content** is: a high quality work experience placement with a real employer; a focused period of work preparation training (e.g. CV writing, interview preparation, job-search, self-discipline and inter-personal skills) and English and Maths for young people without a GCSE A\*-C.

*{If TypePost=16. Other}*

**TyOthPost**

Please give a brief description of the other type of work-related experience offered by {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} for students aged over 16

:

OPEN <200 characters>

*{If TypePost=14. Work experience placements for years 12 and/ or 13}*

**Years1213**

Are the work experience placements available to just year 12s, just year 13s or both?

1. Just year 12
2. Just year 13
3. Both

*{Ask all}*

**SEND**

Are (additional) work-related activities offered to students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

*{If SEND = 1. Yes}*

**Supplnt**

Does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} offer Supported Internships to students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements}*

**LengthPre**

How long do the work experience placements for years 10 and/or 11 tend to last in total?

FOR CAWI: (Please give the average number of days).

INTERVIEWER: COLLECT NUMBER OF DAYS

:  
Numeric [range 0-365]

*{If TypePost=13. Traineeships}*

**LenPstTra**

How long do the traineeships tend to last in total?  
FOR CAWI: (Please give the average number of days).  
INTERVIEWER: COLLECT NUMBER OF DAYS

:  
Numeric [range 0-365]

*{If TypePost=14. Work experience placements}*

**LenPstPla**

How long do the work experience placements for years 12 and/or 13 tend to last in total?  
FOR CAWI: (Please give the average number of days).  
INTERVIEWER: COLLECT NUMBER OF DAYS

:  
Numeric [range 0-365]

*{If SuppInt = 1. Yes}*

**LenPstSup**

How long do the supported internships tend to last in total?  
FOR CAWI: (Please give the average number of days).  
INTERVIEWER: COLLECT NUMBER OF DAYS

:  
Numeric [range 0-365]

ALL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED WHERE THE RESPONDENT  
SELECTED THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

- TRAINEESHIPS
- WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS (STRUCTURED PERIODS IN A  
WORKPLACE)
- SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

WHERE QUESTIONS HAVE THE FOLLOWING ROUTING: *{If TypePre=13. Work  
experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work  
experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

EACH WILL BE ASKED SEPARATELY FOR WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS  
(PRE-16), TRAINEESHIPS, SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS AND WORK EXPERIENCE  
(POST-16)

## Section 2: Organisation and management of work-related experiences

### Aims:

- To gather further information about work experience placements and how they are organised at schools/colleges
- 

*{Ask all}*

### Staff

Which option which best describes who organises work-related activities at {TEXTFILL: name of school/college}?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

1. The work experience coordinator/ coordinating team
2. The work experience coordinator/ coordinating team with other teaching staff/ tutors
3. Teaching staff/ tutors
4. Business development staff
5. Other staff
6. Parents/ carers
7. Students
8. Students with staff
9. Other

*{If Staff = 9. Other}*

### StaffOth

:

OPEN <200 characters>

*{Ask all}*

### CentSyst

Is there a centrally coordinated system at {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} for organising and/ or administering work-related activities?

1. Yes
2. No

*{Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9}*

### Organised

Which of the following best describes how you find employers to work with at {TEXTFILL: name of school/college}?

1. Individual staff have their own systems/contacts
2. Each department or faculty has their own system/contacts
3. Something else (SPECIFY BELOW)

*{If Organised = 3. other}*

**OrgOth**

In which other way/s are work-related activities organised at your school or college?

:

OPEN <200 characters>

*{If Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9}*

**ExtOrgs**

Do you work with external organisations to source any of the work-related activities you offer to students?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

*{If ExtOrgs = 1. Yes}*

**TypeOrg**

Which external organisations do you work with?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Education Business Partnership (EBP)
2. Job Centre Plus
3. Local Education Partnerships (LEP)
4. Enterprise Adviser
5. National Careers Service
6. Young Enterprise
7. Inspiring the Future
8. Business Class
9. Connexions
10. Other (SPECIFY BELOW)

*{If TypeOrg = 10. Other}*

**TyOrgOth**

Which other organisations do you work with?

:

OPEN <200 characters>

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt = 1. Supported Internships AND Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9}*

**Sector**

Do you offer students {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} in any of the following employment sectors?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Business, Administration and Finance
2. Construction and the Built Environment
3. Creative and Media
4. Engineering
5. Hair and Beauty
6. Hospitality and Catering
7. Information Technology
8. Land-based and Environmental
9. Manufacturing
10. Public Services
11. Retail
12. Society, Health and Development
13. Sport and Leisure
14. Travel and Tourism
15. Other

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt = 1. Supported Internships AND Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9}*

**DiffSect**

In which sectors or vocational areas do you have **difficulties** finding {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT IF NECESSARY

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Business, Administration and Finance
2. Construction and the Built Environment
3. Creative and Media
4. Engineering
5. Hair and Beauty
6. Hospitality and Catering
7. Information Technology
8. Land-based and Environmental
9. Manufacturing
10. Public Services
11. Retail
12. Society, Health and Development
13. Sport and Leisure



14. Travel and Tourism
15. Other
16. None

*{If Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9}*

### **EmpSize**

Thinking of all the employers that offer work-related activities to your students are these mostly:

1. Micro employers – fewer than 10 employees
2. Small – 10-49
3. Medium – 50-249
4. Large – 250+
5. A mix/ varies too much to specify
6. Don't know?

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt = 1. Supported Internships}*

### **Timing**

When do {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} tend to happen in the school year?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

1. Throughout the year
2. Autumn Term
3. Spring Term
4. Summer term

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt = 1. Supported Internships}*

### **Block**

Do {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} tend to happen in a single block of time or on separate days over a period of time?

1. Single block
2. Separate days
3. Mix
4. Rolling programme
5. Other

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt = 1. Supported Internships}*

### **TimeReas**

Are the timings and length of {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} set in this way to:

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply).

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Fit in with employers
2. Fit around coursework
3. Fit around examination periods
4. Fit around programmes of learning
5. Fit around school/college terms
6. Other?

*{If TimeReas = 6. other}*

**TimeReOth**

Please briefly describe the other reason or reasons

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt = 1. Supported Internships}*

**Arrange**

Who makes arrangements for {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply).

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. I do
2. Other staff members
3. Students and/or parents
4. External organisation/s (e.g. connexions)
5. Other

*{If Arrange=5. other}*

**ArrangOth**

Please briefly describe the who the other people are

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If Arrange includes 3. Students and/ or parents}*

**PropStud**

What proportion of students/ parents wholly or partly organise {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} for themselves?

INTERVIEWER: Please include a broad percentage from 0-100.

FOR CAWI: (Please include a broad percentage from 0-100).

:

Numeric [0-100]

## Section 3: Facilitators and challenges

### Aims:

- To explore factors that may help and hinder the setting-up and operationalisation of work-related activities
- 

*{Ask all}*

### Facilit

In your experience what are the main factors that help in the set-up of work-related activities for students?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Having a member of staff/team dedicated to this role
2. Having a centrally-organised system
3. Having sufficient budget/ funding available
4. Engagement/support from Senior Leadership
5. Engagement/support from other staff
6. Engagement/support from parents
7. Effective relationships with employers
8. Effective relationships with other external organisations that can help build links with employers
9. Flexibility in timing of work-related activities
10. Other

*{If Facilit=10. other}*

### FacilOth

Please briefly describe the other factor or factors that help in the set-up of work-related activities

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If > 1 option selected at Facilit}*

### MainFacil

And which of these factors would you say is the most important?

{TEXTFILL: options selected at Facilit}

*{Ask all}*

### Challenge

What are the main challenges to setting up work-related activities?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Not having a member of staff/team dedicated to this role

2. Lack of staff time
3. Lack of support from senior leaders
4. Staff turnover at school leading to loss of expertise
5. Staff turnover at employers leading to loss of contacts
6. Lack of available funding
7. Lack of effective relationships with employers
8. Lack of effective relationships with other external organisations
9. Lack of employers in certain industries/occupational areas
10. Lack of employers offering certain roles
11. Lack of student engagement
12. Other
13. No challenges encountered

*{If Challenge=12. other}*

**ChalOth**

Please briefly describe the other challenge or challenges to the set-up of work-related activities

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If > 1 option selected at Challenge}*

**MainChal**

And which of these challenges would you say is the most important?

{TEXTFILL: options selected at Challenge}

*{Ask all}*

**EmpChal**

Do you face any challenges when trying to engage with employers in relation to providing work-related activities to students?

1. Yes
2. No

*{If EmpChal=1. Yes}*

**MainEmpChal**

What are the main challenges you face when trying to engage with employers in relation to providing work-related activities to students?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. DBS check delays
2. Health and safety issues
3. Insurance cover
4. Taking LLDD (learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities)
5. Previous negative experiences

6. Poor or no existing relationship between school and employers
7. Staff turnover
8. Loss of contact person
9. Lack of understanding of what they can offer
10. Lack of understanding of what students are able to do
11. Other

*{If EmpChal=11. Other}*

**EmpChIOth**

Please briefly describe the other challenge or challenges faced when engaging employers

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If >1 option selected at MainEmpChal}*

**MainEmpCh**

And which of these factors would you say is the most important?

{TEXTFILL: options selected at *MainEmpChal*}

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16}*

**OpenAllPre**

Are all students offered {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre}?

1. Yes – all years 10 and 11
2. Yes – all year 10
3. Yes – all year 11
4. No

*{TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16}*

**OpenAllPost**

Are all students offered {TEXTFILL: response at TypePost}?

1. Yes – all years 12 and 13
2. Yes – all year 12
3. Yes – all year 13
4. No

*{If OpenAllPre=4. No}*

**NotAllPre**

Why aren't all students offered {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Not enough opportunities available
2. Not offered to students with low attainment

3. Not offered to students with high attainment
4. Students have work experience already
5. Students don't want to go on placements
6. Students are on an academic study programme
7. Parents/carers don't give permission (for under 16s) to go on placements
8. Other

*{If OpenAllPost=4. No}*

**NotAllPost**

Why aren't all students offered {TEXTFILL: response at TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Not enough opportunities available
2. Not offered to students with low attainment
3. Not offered to students with high attainment
4. Students have work experience already
5. Students don't want to go on placements
6. Students are on an academic study programme
7. Parents/carers don't give permission (for under16s) to go on placements
8. Other

*{If NotAllPre OR NotAllPost=8. other}*

**NotAllOth**

Please briefly describe the other reason or reasons not all students are offered work experience placements?

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt=1. Supported Internships}*

**PropTkUp**

Of those offered {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} what proportion of students undertake them?

INTERVIEWER: Please include a broad percentage from 0-100.

FOR CAWI: (Please include a broad percentage from 0-100).

:

Numeric [0-100]

*{Ask all}*

**Aware**

Does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} do anything to raise awareness of, or promote, work-related activities among students and parents?

1. Yes
2. No

*{If Aware=1. Yes}*

**HowAware**

How do you raise awareness about work-related activities among your students and their parents/carers?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. In lessons
2. Year assemblies
3. Parents'/carers' evenings
4. Students who have been on placements, work experience etc talk to/mentor other students
5. Publicise work-related activities via notice boards, website, newsletters
6. Other

*{If HowAware=6. other}*

**HowAwOth**

Please briefly describe the other way or ways in which you raise awareness

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If TakeUp<100%}*

**MoreProm**

Do you think more could be done to promote take-up of work-related activities at your school or college?

1. Yes
2. No

*{If MoreProm = 1. Yes}*

**MorePromHow**

Please briefly describe the other way or ways in which take-up of work-related activities could be promoted at your school or college

:

OPEN <300 characters>

## Section 4: Satisfaction with opportunities for work-related activities

### Aims:

- To ascertain respondents' opinions about how well their school/college provides work-related activities and to explore perceived impacts
- 

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships AND Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9}*

### Match

How does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} decide which students go on which {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. By matching students' career ambitions with a placement in that sector
2. By looking at students' strengths and matching them with an employer who wants those skills
3. By matching students on the basis of subjects studied
4. By identifying placements that will stretch students/challenge their view of work
5. By ease of access or location (near to home)
6. By random allocation
7. SPONTANEOUS: Not applicable: placements primarily arranged by students/parents
8. Other

*{If Match = 8. Other}*

### MatchOth

Please briefly describe the other way or ways in which {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} decides which students go on which of the {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 OR Match NE 7. Not applicable}*

### EffRange

How effective is {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} at offering a good range of work-related activities to students?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

1. Very effective
2. Quite effective
3. Neither effective nor ineffective



4. Quite ineffective
5. Very ineffective

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships AND Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 OR Match NE 7. Not applicable}*

**EffMatch**

How effective is {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} at matching students to their {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

1. Very effective
2. Quite effective
3. Neither effective nor ineffective
4. Quite ineffective
5. Very ineffective

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships AND Staff = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 OR Match NE 7. Not applicable}*

**Enough**

Do you feel {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} sources enough {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} of the right type for your students?

1. Yes
2. No

*{If Enough=2. No}*

**NotEnough**

Why not?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT AND CODE ALL THAT APPLY

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

1. Don't have contacts with enough employers
2. There isn't a wide enough range of employers in the area
3. Staff don't have the time
4. Lack of engagement/support from Senior Leaders
5. Other

*{If NotEnough=5, Other}*

**NotEnOth**

Please briefly describe the other reason or reasons

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt=1. Supported Internships}*

**Prepare**

Does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} do anything to prepare students for their {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

1. Yes
2. No

*{Prepare=1. Yes}*

**PrepWhat**

What does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} do to prepare students for their {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Students undertake employability skills in class time before the placement
2. Supports students drafting their CVs
3. Develops students' interview skills
4. Help students understand protocols e.g. turning up on time, communicating appropriately, dress code
5. Holds an initial meeting between employer and student
6. Providing one-to-one advice
7. Other

*{If Prepare=7. other}*

**PrepOth**

Please briefly describe the other way or ways students are prepared

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt=1. Supported Internships}*

**AgriIntro**

INTRODUCTION: Please state how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about opportunities for work-related experience at your school or college

INTERVIEWER READ OUT: THE OPTIONS ARE:

- STRONGLY AGREE
- AGREE
- NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
- DISAGREE
- STRONGLY DISAGREE

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

### **AgrAims**

Staff ensure that each {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} has clear aims and objectives that are relevant to individual students' programmes of study

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

### **AgrRole**

Roles and responsibilities between employers/ the school/ the student for {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} are agreed up front

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

### **AgrEmp**

Employers are made aware of the capability of the student, so that expectations for {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} are managed

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

### **AgrConBe**

There is regular contact between the employer and the school/ college **before** {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

### **AgrConDu**

There is regular contact between the employer and the school/ college **during** {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}

6. Strongly agree
7. Agree
8. Neither agree nor disagree
9. Disagree
10. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

### **AgrTime**

The student is provided with support and is contacted by {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} whilst taking part in {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

### **Support**

What type of support does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} offer students whilst on {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE AND WAIT FOR RESPONSE BEFORE CONTINUING.

1. Travel expenses paid
2. Meal expenses paid
3. Provision of work clothes
4. Mentoring

5. Keep in touch visits
6. Keep in touch calls
7. Supervision during placement
8. Post placement review
9. Other

*{If Support = 9. other}*

**SuppOth**

Please briefly describe the other type or type of support offered to students

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

**Purpose**

Are the work-related activities offered by {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} intended to help students:

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Establish what range of careers/jobs are open to them

Find out what the world of work is like

Work out which subjects/qualifications are needed for particular jobs

Understand the different pathways that can be followed to a career/job

Developing employability skills

Improve educational attainment

Increase motivation

Other

*{If Purpose=8. other}*

**PurpOth**

Please briefly describe the other purpose of work-related activities for students

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}*

**Monitor**

What monitoring methods does {TEXTFILL: name of school/college} use whilst students are attending {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE AND WAIT FOR RESPONSE BEFORE CONTINUING.

1. Collect feedback from students
2. Collect feedback from employers
3. Placement visits by staff
4. Evaluate and review outcomes
5. Record work activities undertaken
6. Record range of skills gained
7. Carry out assessments to gather evidence for student portfolios
8. Use students' Individual Learning Plans (ILP)
9. Other
10. No monitoring undertaken

*{If Monitor = 9. other}*

**MonitOth**

Please briefly describe the other type or type of monitoring used

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If Monitor NE 10. No monitoring}*

**SatCons**

How satisfied are you that this monitoring process is effective across {TEXTFILL: name of school/college}?

1. Very satisfied
2. Quite satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Quite dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR Supplnt=1. Supported Internships}*

**AgrRele**

To what extent do you agree that students' {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} are relevant to their study programme?

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **AgrAspir**

To what extent do you agree that {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost} are relevant to their career aspirations?

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **ChalStu**

What are the main challenges for students taking-up {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: CODE AS MANY AS APPLY

1. Lack of confidence
2. Fear of the unknown
3. Fitting in work placements along with part time work
4. Fitting in work placements along with study
5. Cost of travel
6. Distance of placement from home
7. Time management
8. Not being 'work ready'
9. Other

*{If ChalStu = 9. other}*

**ChStOth**

Please briefly describe the other challenge or challenges experienced by students

:

OPEN <300 characters>

INTRODUCTION: Thinking about how students' time is recorded and monitored whilst undertaking work-related activities, please indicate which of the following take place

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **Evaluate**

Employers evaluate student's performance and feedback to them

1. Yes
2. No

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **Reference**

Employers provide a reference

1. Yes
2. No

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **Assess**

Students assess their own performance at the end of their placement

1. Yes
2. No

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **Objective**

Progress towards objectives is reviewed at the end of the placement

1. Yes
2. No

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **FollowUp**

What follow up activity do you do with employers that provide {TEXTFILL: response at TypePre/ TypePost}?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT OPTIONS 1 TO 4

1. Provide feedback on progress students have made following their time with the employer
2. Feedback students' perceptions of their experiences while with the employer
3. Hold a review meeting with employers to discuss what went well and areas for improvement
4. Other
5. No follow up activity

*{If FollowUp = 4. other}*

**FollUpOth**

Please briefly describe the other follow-up activity or activities

:

OPEN <300 characters>



*{Ask all}*

**BenEmp**

What benefits do you think employers get from providing work-related activities?

FOR CAWI: (Please select all that apply)

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Increased capacity
2. Staff development
3. Further recruitment of apprentices
4. Community involvement
5. Fulfils their 'corporate social responsibility'
6. Building skills of future workforce
7. Other

*{If BenEmp = 7. other}*

**BenEmpOth**

Please briefly describe the other benefit or benefits

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{Ask all}*

**Impact**

What impacts do you think work-related activities have on students?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE AND WAIT FOR RESPONSE BEFORE CONTINUING.

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Improved employability
2. Enhanced CV
3. Team working skills
4. Communication and interpersonal skills
5. Time management skills
6. Increased maturity
7. Increased independence
8. Increased confidence
9. Greater motivation to engage in education
10. Improved educational attainment
11. Better understanding of the world of work/ industries
12. Clearer sense of career aspirations
13. Improved understanding of educational and career pathways
14. Easier transition from education to work
15. Other

*{If Impact = 15. other}*

**ImpactOth**

Please briefly describe the other impact or impacts

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{If > 1 option selected at Impact}*

**MainImpact**

Where do you think the greatest impact has been?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH CODE GIVEN AT Impact

{TEXTFILL: options selected at Impact}

*{If TypePre=13. Work experience placements pre-16 OR TypePost=13. Traineeship OR TypePost=14. Work experience placements post-16 OR SuppInt=1. Supported Internships}* **EmpApp**

What proportion of students go on to secure employment or apprenticeships following their work-related opportunity?

INTERVIEWER: Please include a broad percentage from 0-100.

FOR CAWI: (Please include a broad percentage from 0-100).

:

Numeric [0-100]

*{Ask all}*

**Comment**

Is there anything else you would like to feed back about work experience activities and/or work placements?

:

OPEN <300 characters>

*{Ask those not in sample 2}*

**Qual**

We are hoping to speak to a small number of participants in more detail about work-related opportunities at their school/ college as part of qualitative case studies. We would like to collect your contact information now, and if you are selected, will contact you with further information and to confirm you are still happy to take part.

Are you happy to share your contact information?

1. Yes
2. No

*{If Qual = 1. yes}*

**ContName**

Please enter your full name

:

OPEN <100 characters>

{If Qual = 1. yes}

**ContEmail**

Please enter your preferred email address

:

OPEN <100 characters>

{f Qual = 1. yes}

**ContNo**

Please enter your preferred contact number

:

Numeric



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