

Response to the 2015 Careers and Enterprise Fund Evaluation Report

We are delighted to publish an independent evaluation of the Company's first Careers and Enterprise Fund, launched in December 2015. The report shows that the fund has helped to expand the scope, scale and reach of existing careers activity nationally, has provided benefits to providers, employers, schools, LEPs and most importantly suggests longer-term impacts for young people through improved careers and enterprise provision.

Whilst the report highlights the huge success of the fund, the evaluation was also designed to capture lessons for the Company and as such, the report sets out a number of recommendations for us going forwards. We are committed to learning from the lessons highlighted in the report and have taken time to reflect on our approach to future funds. Our response to each of the recommendations is detailed below:

Recommendations

1. The Careers & Enterprise Company should consider introducing an element of risk into the portfolio by allocating a proportion of future funding to testing new approaches.

To date our funds have had a clear focus on investing in proven models and helping them to scale into areas of greatest need. This will continue to be an objective of future funds; however we have put significant importance on testing new approaches.

As part of our Careers and Enterprise Fund 2016, we are working with The Education Endowment Foundation and Bank of America to run a randomised controlled trial with two of our grant recipients, Envision and CSW Group to test what type of delivery works best.

We have also invested in two providers, Young Ladies Club and Generation Medics with relatively new programmes and linked them with a proven organisation; Reach Out, who are supporting them on programme design and delivery.

As part of the Careers & Enterprise Fund 2018 (CEF18) there will be £2.5m invested in new approaches including:

- the importance of engaging young people with careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)
- targeted support for specific groups of disadvantaged young people, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

2. | The Careers & Enterprise Company should ask future bidders to consider potential contribution and alignment of their activities to all Gatsby Benchmarks.

The application process for the CEF18 will require applicants to outline which of the Gatsby Benchmarks their programme and activities align to and this will be considered during the assessment process, ensuring a diverse spread of activities and benchmarks being delivered in schools.

Activities are also filtered by Gatsby Benchmark on The Career & Enterprise Company's new resource, 'Find an Activity Provider' available on our website for all schools to use, enabling them to contact and work with organisations which fill gaps in their provision.

3. | The Careers & Enterprise Company should work with grant recipients at the contracting stage to ensure that delivery targets are realistic and achievable, and that the expectations around the support available to engage schools and employers are appropriately managed.

Since this funding round, we have added several processes which give grant recipients more support on ensuring their targets are realistic and maximise delivery.

We have added clear expectations around delivery requirements in prospectuses published before each funding round and these are explored in more depth at interview stage.

The Investment Team have implemented an account management process to provide further support to grant recipients, to help them understand the contracts and programme characteristics at the beginning of the funding period and to act as a single point of contact for mid-funding contractual changes or requests.

However, grant recipients will still be expected to take responsibility for their own delivery targets. We expect honesty and transparency throughout the application process from applicants about what is achievable and will commit to closely managing any underperformance.

To manage expectations on support grant recipients can expect to receive in engaging schools and employers, the Investment Team will provide a fund Welcome Pack to both grant recipients and Enterprise Coordinators (ECs) ensuring both parties are clear on their roles and expectations. A Grant Recipient Road Map has also been developed and distributed which outlines the start-to-finish menu of support The Careers & Enterprise Company will provide each grant recipient over the course of their funding period.

4. The Careers & Enterprise Company should consider options for supporting better coordination of employer engagement at regional level, which could include a role for regional partners such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The Careers & Enterprise Company should consider options for giving LEPs a more formal role in coordinating funded activity within their areas.

When CEF 2015 was launched, the Enterprise Adviser Network was still in its infancy. In the three years since, we have worked with the LEPs to grow the Network to 125 ECs and over 2,200 Enterprise Advisers (EA). To support better regional collaboration, during the commissioning process of subsequent funds the Investment Team have involved the LEPs to make sure that the grant recipients who receive funding meet the needs of the local area. Contracts between CEC and the LEPs have also been amended to encourage ECs to provide further regional support

linking them to known employers and helping to build relationships.

Beyond coordinating more closely with the LEPs, the Investment Team is working with the Employer Engagement Team to join up requests for business support from grant recipients with interest shown from businesses in providing support.

Investment Team Account Managers also keep an up to date record of which grant recipients require support (e.g. employee volunteers) and in which area.

5. The Careers & Enterprise Company should consider options for the provision of additional support to schools to enable them to resource the management and delivery of careers and enterprise activities.

As set out in the Careers Strategy, every school will be required to appoint a Careers Lead by September 2018. This is a welcome move and the Investment Team will have £4m available to provide training programmes and bursaries for at least 500 schools.

The Investment Team trialled a Virtual Wallet approach to funding, giving schools more power to choose services that will work best in their communities and address gaps in their careers and enterprise activity. This has been well received by schools and funding will follow the same approach in 2018.

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