

Developing the Young Workforce

School/Employer Partnerships

Guidance for employers

September 2015

Why be involved?

Across Scotland many businesses have formed meaningful partnerships with schools and other education providers. There are lots of good reasons to be involved:

- helping young people develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge for your business
- inspiring young people to work for you and securing a talent flow
- promoting a positive awareness of your business in the community
- promoting improved career choices and supporting diversity in the workplace
- giving something back to your community
- applying the perspective and skills of young people to your business challenges
- providing development opportunities for your staff
- it makes good business sense!

All employers, regardless of size and type, can make a valuable contribution to preparing young people for the world of work, and it makes good business sense to get involved in developing your potential workforce. This is equally true for employers in the public, private and third sectors.

This employer guidance is intended to promote and support successful partnerships with schools (including those catering for young people with additional needs) that bring mutual benefit and evolve to respond to local circumstances. As such, the advice may also be relevant to college/employer links.

Guidance on School/Employer Partnerships is also available for Schools, and for DYW Regional Groups and Local Authorities.

Your involvement with a school may be extensive or small. What matters is that it brings mutual benefit to your business and the young people who are the workforce of tomorrow.

What can employers offer?

You and your workforce can use your skills, knowledge and experience to enrich learning across the curriculum, and help young people to improve their understanding and readiness for employment. You can help young people directly or by engaging with the people who support and influence them, such as teachers, lecturers and parents. In particular helping to keep them up-to-date on the changing workplace and opportunities available and how to access them.

Young people can benefit from your involvement at all stages of their education. These are some of the ways you could contribute:

- quality work placements, visits, or work shadowing opportunities
- internships in holiday periods
- talking about careers and opportunities, current and future
- information on (local/regional) labour market needs and opportunities
- participating in careers events
- developing skills for applications or interviews
- providing references and recommendations
- developing and recognising skills and attributes for employment
- developing entrepreneurship skills
- mentoring
- delivering employability awards (e.g. Certificate of Work Readiness).
- developing and delivering recognised qualifications
- working with teachers and lecturers to provide real business problems for young people to solve
- showcasing the latest developments in your business to young people
- enhancing lessons in specific subject areas (e.g. STEM, languages)
- supporting numeracy or literacy
- helping school leaders to shape the curriculum.

You might also want to enter a flexible long term relationship which supports the success of a specific school in these and/or other ways.

Who can help me get started?

A network of employer-led DYW Regional Groups (initially referred to as 'Invest in Young People' Groups) is being established across Scotland to facilitate employer links with education. To get started speak to the DYW Regional Group in your area. They can advise you of the current needs of schools to help you with initial scoping, and introduce you to schools if appropriate. If a DYW Regional Group is not yet established then speak to the DYW contact in your local authority.

If you have existing relationships with education and you have the support you need, there might be no need to approach the Regional Group or DYW contact. For example, you might have the assistance of an organisation which links you with a school (e.g. Career Ready, Scottish Business in the Community or a voluntary organisation).

These contacts can also help you expand your involvement when you are ready.

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What does a partnership look like?

The aim of the partnership is to support young people in their understanding and readiness for work. Every partnership will be different and should be developed collaboratively, considering the needs and constraints of employers and education providers alike. It is involvement rather than financial support we are looking for, although we recognise your time and involvement does equate to a cost.

It will help to discuss and refine your ideas with your partner and develop a shared understanding of what is being offered and delivered by the partnership. No matter how or when the partnership originated, it is essential to be clear about what you want it to achieve. Be realistic and start small if necessary, taking account of pressure points for your business. If circumstances change and you cannot deliver a planned programme, then speak to your partner and those supporting you as early as possible. They may be able to identify another employer who can step in, and you might be able to assist with this.

Due to business interests an employer might link with a school through one department. A focused relationship can be valuable, but also consider if there is merit in a wider relationship.

It is unlikely that one employer, however large, can meet the needs of every learner. Schools can expect to have a number of employer partners to cater for different aspects of learning, and for particular individuals or groups of young people.

An employer might choose to be in partnership with any number of schools, in any number of regions. If you would like to connect with a number schools, the DYW Regional Group in your area (or the DYW contact in your local authority) should be able to help. Small employers may choose to work together to provide an input to a school.

How do we ensure and maintain quality partnerships?

Partnerships and the resulting learning activities should evolve and develop over a number of years. Although there is no need for a signed agreement, there should be clarity on expectations and roles of partners, and the intended outcomes. You might find it helpful to use a template and to record what you have agreed. Over time you should reflect on the partnership, the activities delivered, and if they had the impact that was intended. It is important to manage expectations throughout the process.

A partnership with a school may provide an opportunity for employers in the area to meet and benefit from sharing approaches to developing the young workforce to meet business needs.

Do I need to change an existing partnership?

There is no need to change an approach that is working well. As with any partnership, it is important to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of all parties and adapts to changing circumstances. The value of your contribution is likely to grow with your experience of the partnership. Refer to the new standards for careers education and work placements, and reflect on the opportunities you offer in the light of these. You should be alert to equality issues to help achieve diversity in the workforce.

Where do I find out more?

The DYW contacts in your area will be a useful source of information and will be able to help with issues that are a challenge for you, or signpost you to assistance (e.g. on health and safety aspects).

Examples of successful school/employer partnerships will be shared on the Education Scotland website. Additional support materials will also be provided.

A new Standard for Work Placements and a Standard for Career Education (3-18) available on the Education Scotland website. <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/dyw/index.asp>.

For more information and background on DYW visit the Scottish Government website.

For background <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungple/ScottishGovernmentResponse>.

For blog <http://blogs.scotland.gov.uk/developing-the-young-workforce/>.

For CfE information for employers <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/Employers>.

You might find the SQA employer guide to CfE and the national qualifications helpful http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/BD7048_CfE_Employers_guide.pdf.

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