

# EDUCATION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ENGAGING WITH SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND





## Introduction

Education and skills is a key driver of productivity and businesses across Scotland have a crucial role to play in ensuring our education system equips young people with the attributes they need to succeed. Developing a broad range of skills and an understanding of the world of work, as well as the opportunities it offers, is vital to a young person's success.

Research shows that four or more workplace encounters while at school can make a real difference to a young person's future. This pamphlet summarises new survey data and consolidates a range of existing guidance to highlight the benefits of engaging with schools and help your business make that engagement as effective as possible.

## Why engage with schools?

Access to skills is one of the biggest challenges facing businesses in nearly all sectors and developing a future talent pipeline is more important than ever. Taking a proactive approach to involvement in the education system can play a key role in helping to equip young people with the skills your firm needs. But engaging with schools is not only about developing talent. There are a range of wider benefits for businesses of all sizes – from developing employees' skills to corporate social responsibility and boosting brand loyalty.

There are a number of ways in which businesses can have a positive influence, including careers talks and advice, mentoring, work experience, site visits, enterprise competitions and supporting teacher professional development. Whatever your size or sector, there is something that all businesses can do to help shape the workforce of the future and ensure young people are aware of the vast array of opportunities available to them. With the world of work rapidly changing, businesses have a responsibility to step-up and support schools to keep pace.

Primary school has traditionally been a business blind spot but working with children from a young age can have a powerful impact on their aspirations, attitudes and behaviours. With a shortfall in the number of young people pursuing STEM careers, businesses have a key role to play in helping pupils make the link between their choices at school and opportunities in the world of work. Over the long-term, this can boost workforce diversity and improve social mobility.



# Businesses are playing a positive role in schools but there is room to do more

CBI Scotland conducted a survey of businesses across Scotland to establish the extent, benefits and challenges of business-school interaction. Below are some of the key findings.

Over three quarters

# 76%

of businesses have at least some links with schools

Nearly three quarters

# 74%

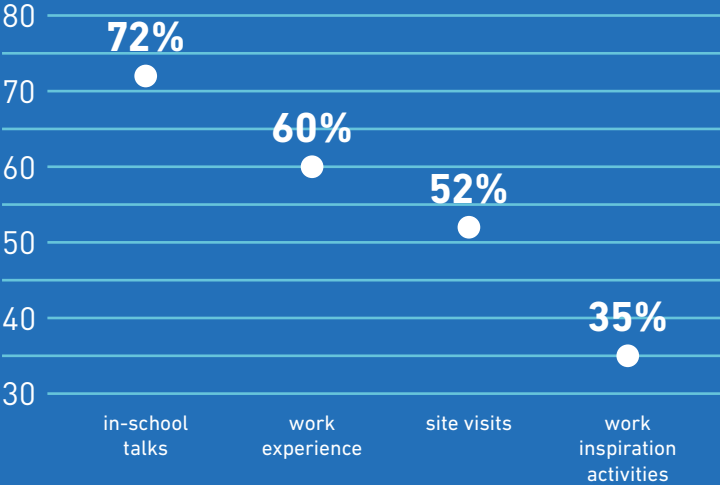
of businesses engage with secondary schools

Less than half

# 48%

of businesses engage with primary schools

The most popular form of engagement is in-school talks (72%), followed by work experience (60%). These are followed by site visits (52%) and work inspiration activities (35%).



Key reasons for not engaging with schools are:

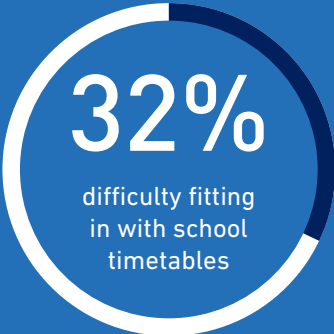
Lack of time because of other business demands

# 20%

Being unsure how the business can help

# 14%

The main barriers businesses face when trying to engage with schools are:







## Case study 1

“At Ceteris, we work closely with the Developing Young Workforce programme in our area and also deliver Business Gateway support in Clackmannanshire. We regularly take part in enterprise sessions in both primary and secondary schools – this includes helping with Dragons Den type competitions, giving talks on enterprise, carrying out mock interviews, and offering work experience. As we own and manage a range of commercial property in Clackmannanshire, through the Developing Young Workforce programme we work with our tenant businesses to encourage more of them to take part in DYW projects, mainly at Alloa Academy. Two members of staff also currently mentor 5th year pupils through the Career Ready programme.”

*“As well as being proud to help develop the next generation of local talent, one of the main benefits we get from engaging with schools is staff development: mentoring skills, interview skills, and experience of working with young people. You don’t have to be a large multi-national to benefit from engaging with schools – there are huge benefits to businesses of all sizes.”*

**Alison Davidson, Business Development Manager, Ceteris (Scotland) Ltd**

Ceteris (Scotland) Ltd. was formed to support businesses in Clackmannanshire and the surrounding area. They provide business property in the form of serviced offices and business/ industrial units, and also deliver the Business Gateway service in Clackmannanshire, providing advice, support and training to new and existing businesses in the region.

## 5 simple steps to improve your school engagement

### 1. Identify one individual within your organisation with responsibility for overseeing your engagement with schools

- This should be a senior staff member with the authority to secure a budget (if necessary) and employee time.
- This will provide a central point of contact for schools, partner organisations and other employees.

### 2. Decide what you hope to achieve and what method of engagement is most appropriate for your business and the school

- Do you want to inspire primary school aged pupils to pursue STEM subjects or provide practical work experience for older students? Deciding what you want to achieve is crucial to selecting the best age group to engage with.
- Be realistic about what is achievable given your own business demands and school timetables. Supporting an existing scheme or collaborating with other businesses which have similar objectives can reduce duplication.

### 3. Identify your key school contact(s)

- Knowing the best person to contact can help you in establishing the most suitable form of engagement, organising timings and promoting activities. Developing multiple school contacts reduces the impact of staff changes.
- You don't need a grand plan to start engaging with schools. Speak with the school early on and discuss what works for you both.

### 4. Consider if an intermediary organisation could help you

- For smaller businesses, using an intermediary organisation is less resource-intensive than contacting schools directly. Further information on this is outlined on page 6.
- Many larger organisations combine working through an external delivery partner with setting up their own scheme.

### 5. Learn from experience

- Review what has worked well and what hasn't. Annual evaluations are a good option but what works best for your business will depend on how frequently you work with schools.
- Don't give up if it doesn't work straight away – get feedback from staff who are actually engaging with schools and consider any training requirements. Feedback and evaluation can be helpful for ensuring continued support from senior management.



## Making it easy...

Intermediary organisations can help businesses of all sizes boost their interactions with the education system. For smaller businesses, using an intermediary organisation is less resource-intensive than contacting schools directly, while some larger organisations undertake a combination of working through an external delivery partner and setting up their own scheme.

Less than a third of businesses

# 32%

currently use a specialist organisation to help with their school engagement



There are a number of organisations that can help you get started or improve your existing engagement with schools across Scotland and the suggestions below do not constitute an exhaustive list.

### Founders4schools

Founders4schools has brokered hundreds of thousands of business-school interactions across the UK. As a charity, they aim to inspire students and prepare them for the rapidly changing world of work by enabling educators to invite business volunteers for encounters with their students. Their services are available online or via a new iPad app. You can visit [www.founders4schools.org.uk](http://www.founders4schools.org.uk) to indicate that you are happy to be invited by local educators to inspire their pupils. The process is simple – it takes 30 seconds to sign up and make a difference to a young person's future.

### Developing the Young Workforce – Regional Groups

DYW Regional Groups were created as part of the Scottish Government's youth employment strategy. Twenty-one regional groups are working across the country to encourage and support employers to engage directly with schools and colleges and to challenge and support employers in recruiting more young people. To find out more about what is happening in your area and how you can get involved visit: [www.dyw.scot](http://www.dyw.scot).

### Marketplace

Marketplace is an online tool that helps connect schools and colleges with businesses. Businesses can register at [www.myworldofwork.co.uk/marketplace](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/marketplace) then start passing on knowledge of their sector through workshops, talks, workplace visits or placements.

### Career Ready

Career Ready is a UK-wide charity linking employers with schools and colleges to open up the world of work to young people. They connect employers with schools and colleges to provide young people aged 14-18 with mentors, internships, masterclasses, and employer-led activities that prepare them for the world of work. For more information visit: [www.careerready.org.uk](http://www.careerready.org.uk).



## Case study 2 : Aviation firm GE Caledonian is tapping into the next generation of talent through Foundation Apprenticeships

Training their own has been a mainstay of the company's success for decades – but the company is now recognising how Foundation Apprenticeships can bridge the gap between the classroom and the workplace. Foundation Apprenticeships provide a pipeline of talent for employers and give school pupils vital skills and qualifications.

GE Caledonian has 600 employees and employs 27 Modern Apprentices – with that number set to grow again next year. The company has been supporting Foundation Apprenticeships for over two years now.

Stephen McNab, who has worked as an engineer for 37 years, explained that offering Foundation Apprenticeships has had a positive effect on GE Caledonian as an organisation. He said: "It is about Foundation Apprenticeships giving us a solid talent pipeline a year in advance. We get an idea of people's potential a year earlier and, without a doubt, it helps us find the right people."

Greenwood Academy pupil, Fraser Wallace, is a great example of the talent pipeline in action. The 18-year-old completed his engineering Foundation Apprenticeship this year and has now been offered a Modern Apprenticeship job with the firm.

Fraser said: "My Foundation Apprenticeship has been a great way to make the transition from school to the workplace. I've learned so much on the practical side and even more from the people I am working with.

"I chose engineering because it was always something I was interested in. All the people who work here at GE Caledonian are very supportive and, if you ask, they are willing to help you as much as they can. When I got a phone call to be told I had secured my Modern Apprenticeship starting next year I was really very excited."

**For more information on Foundation Apprenticeships visit: [www.apprenticeships.scot/fa](http://www.apprenticeships.scot/fa)**

---

*"My Foundation Apprenticeship has been a great way to make the transition from school to the workplace. I've learned so much on the practical side and even more from the people I am working with."*

**Fraser Wallace, Greenwood Academy Pupil**

---

## School engagement isn't just about pupils...

Research shows that teachers are second only to parents when it comes to influencing a young person's career decisions. The more industry experience teachers have, the better the advice they will be able offer young people about the career options available to them and how the skills they are developing at school can be applied in the world of work.

only 4%

of businesses offer secondment opportunities for teachers

However, despite the large number of businesses engaging with school pupils, just 4% of those who responded to CBI Scotland's business-school interaction survey are offering opportunities for teachers to experience their work environment. Improving this figure is a challenge for business, government and education providers.

**The Scottish Government should work with businesses, education authorities and teachers to consider how it can support increasing opportunities for teachers to gain industry experience – without adding to teachers' workload.**

**Businesses should consider how they can support teacher professional development, which can indirectly reach a much larger number of young people than focusing solely on school pupils.**

There are a number of ways for businesses to engage with teachers – from business-led CPD courses to teacher placement schemes in industry. However, with teacher workload already a concern, considerations as to how improvements can be made should include the option of teacher training courses including time for trainee teachers to gain industry experience.



### Case study 3

The **Academy9** framework was introduced by Transport Scotland in 2015 to run in parallel with the upgrade of the A9 between Perth and Inverness. It highlights a progressive programme of STEM related activities covering pre-school, school, college and universities. It is aimed at pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community along the A9 corridor.

Teachers are the mainstay of career advice to young people and it is recognised that upskilling, inspiring, and forging strong relationships with education professionals is crucial to addressing the present and future skills shortage in the UK. Acknowledging this, Transport Scotland has developed a dedicated distance learning, online Education Practitioners Unit covering the engineering and other skills required in managing a large infrastructure project.

**This unit has been completed by Sharon McLean, Physics Teacher and PT Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, who said: "As a physics teacher of 15 years, completing the A9 module gave me a real insight into potential careers that are directly related to the subject that I teach. Careers that I hadn't brought up in discussion with the young people in my care before. Together we enjoyed bringing the subject to life with a relevant, real life case study. Pupils were engaged, knowing that the A9 will play a part in their lives."**

A pupils' module has now been added and is delivered by the teachers who have completed their module. The next activity to build upon these initiatives will be an Educational Practitioners Industry Experience Week, which is being funded by Transport Scotland and Project Enthuse, STEM Insight. A small group of teachers, technicians and DYW staff will spend five days experiencing life in a busy multidisciplinary consultancy and on-site. They will work together to form a plan of how they will share their experience on return to their school and regroup after 4 months to review the success of the programme.

© Copyright CBI 2019  
The content may not be copied, distributed, reported or dealt with in whole or in part without prior consent of the CBI.

For further information please contact:

CBI Scotland

T: 0141 222 2184

E: scotland@cbi.org.uk

[www.cbi.org.uk](http://www.cbi.org.uk)