

## Written evidence submitted by Emma Rosen

### 1. Summary

#### 1.1. Introduction & Evidence

- 1.1.1. This evidence is submitted by Emma Rosen. The introduction will cover my background in more detail, but in summary; I have worked in the Careers Education industry for 7 years, speaking to over 20,000 learners across secondary and tertiary education. I have published a book on Careers Education, given a popular TEDx talk, and currently work in a senior role in the CareerTech startup sector.
- 1.1.2. The evidence presented is sourced from the 20,000 learners I have spoken with over the past 5 years in over 80 educational institutions, as well as the Career Leaders there. This also comes from the many messages I receive as an author and speaker in this sector, as well as the extensive user research I have conducted through my work in the CareerTech industry.

#### 1.2. Work Experience: Discussion

- 1.2.1. The evidence in the submission below establishes that learners do not know which career they wish to pursue while in education. Academic and Government research, alongside professional experience, demonstrates that work experience is the key to both helping learners to figure this out and improving educational and employment outcomes. Yet - Career Leaders find this the most difficult aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks to facilitate.
- 1.2.2. There is, therefore, a gap between the need for wide-scale work experience opportunities, and educational providers' ability to supply work experience placements.
- 1.2.3. A key additional point to consider here is the long term impact of career decisions on later life happiness and the substantial cost saving this provides.
  - 1.2.3.1. Making the wrong choice has been shown to significantly impact physical and mental health, placing immense pressure on the NHS (£11bn p/year is spent on stress-related illnesses and is the NHS' highest cost). This also impacts national productivity - of which the UK is 13% less productive per working adult than other G7 economies.
  - 1.2.3.2. We must think strategically and with a long term view about the importance of career decisions and career happiness on the future workforce.

### **1.3. Key Recommendations**

- 1.3.1. Recommendation 1: A change in rhetoric is needed. Careers must be seen as a core educational priority, to be integrated throughout the curriculum, by school leadership and policymakers if it is to fully prepare all learners.
- 1.3.2. Recommendation 2: The establishment of a national programme for work experience and work shadowing to run during the summer holidays for all learners in secondary education.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. I am submitting evidence as an individual with 7 years experience in the Careers Education sector, covering a wide variety of schools, FE colleges, universities and Job Centres across England.
- 2.2. After beginning my career as a Civil Service Fast Streamer, I moved to work in the Careers Education sector after feeling that I was not well-prepared enough to make informed decisions on my career options after leaving the education system.
- 2.3. I am now the Head of Operations & Marketing for tech startup, [Would You Rather Be](#) - a next-generation careers quiz and mapping tool used increasingly across the sector. The tool has been awarded prize funding through the Department for Education and the funding body Nesta's [CareerTech prize](#). Free licences for the tool are available on request. As part of my work with Would You Rather Be, I have carried out extensive user research, including:
  - 2.3.1. Conducted one-to-one video interviews with 200+ young people and surveyed over 5,000. In terms of geographic spread, they ranged from the Shetland Islands to Co. Tyrone to Cornwall and everywhere in between.
- 2.4. I have published a book on careers and how to find career happiness, called *The Radical Sabbatical* (copy available on request), which was named the Financial Times' Business Book of the Month on publication in January 2019.
- 2.5. I have given a [widely shared TEDx talk](#) aimed at guiding young people to understand what might be the right career for them and how to get into it.
- 2.6. Since working in this sector, I have spoken on CEIAG in over 80 schools and colleges, as well as several universities and Job Centre sessions aimed at young people not in education, employment or training. I run highly interactive sessions, meaning I have now spoken to over 20,000 young people from across the country, with an average age of 16-19. This includes young people from all types of academic achievement, educational and socio-economic backgrounds, with a wide range of the quality of their careers education. Most have had some access to employers and had some work experience at this point.

## 3. Evidence

- 3.1. This has put me in a unique position to hear the perspective of the young people CEIAG is designed to serve and the impact it has had on them as they prepare to leave secondary education. Below are some of the insights I've gained from their answers to the questions put to them, such as:
  - 3.1.1. Do you know which career you would like to pursue after leaving your education?

- 3.1.1.1. Over ~90% say they do not have any idea
- 3.1.1.2. Please note, the figures provided are qualitative estimations
- 3.1.2. Do you know what skills you a) have and b) enjoy using based on your education, extracurricular activities and/or interests?
  - 3.1.2.1. ~70% are only able to name skills once prompted with examples (e.g. problem-solving, teamwork), and generally repeat those examples back rather than naming other skills. This does not provide confidence in their ability to identify the skills they have and skills they enjoy using.
- 3.1.3. Do you know what might motivate you to want to go to work?
  - 3.1.3.1. There is a clear gender divide here, with over ~75% of boys answering that money is their main driver, and over ~60% of girls answering that making a difference is most important to them.
  - 3.1.3.2. Other regular answers include working with people they genuinely like, working for a company that puts diversity and inclusion first, and a variety of tasks.
- 3.1.4. What type of working environment do you want to be in?
  - 3.1.4.1. ~90% say they do not want to work in an office, but do not know what other options are available to them.
- 3.1.5. When learners are provided with a list of different types of careers and are then asked to name additional types of jobs, virtually all struggle to name jobs outside of traditional white-collar professions (e.g. lawyer, doctor, accountant), and traditional blue-collar professions visible within communities (e.g. Uber driver, postal worker, binman, shop assistant).
- 3.1.6. When asked about jobs of the future and future-proof careers, the most common answer by far is Influencer. I have only ever heard answers related to the tech industry, for example, three times.
- 3.1.7. There is an understanding of educational pathways, e.g. GCSE -> A Levels / FE Qualifications -> Apprenticeships / University / Work etc.
  - 3.1.7.1. However, there is a stark disconnect between exams results and subject choices in those pathways, to the careers they lead to, as well as what steps are involved to enter them. This is a critical missing step.
  - 3.1.7.2. Examples of gaps in their knowledge include what skills they currently have; the behaviours, hard and soft skills that an

employer in that career would value in a new entrant; knowledge of how to build professional networks; the necessity of work experience.

- 3.2. This has also placed me in a unique position to speak informally to Career Leaders in secondary education about their career programmes. Below are the most common conversation points of note:
  - 3.2.1. Little to no additional funding was given for me to carry out an effective careers programme after the Gatsby Benchmarks were brought in and are assessed by Ofsted.
  - 3.2.2. The part of the programme that Career Leaders most struggle to implement is employer engagements and work experience placements - yet these are always identified as the most valuable to learners. This is due to the sheer volume of employer relations needed and the extensive time needed for a Careers Leader to spend on organising logistics.
  - 3.2.3. In one-to-one sessions with learners, it was often felt that when asked what career they'd like to pursue, learners do not give a meaningful, thoughtful answer. They are more likely to give an answer based on the careers that family members do or those based on their peers. It is noticeable that there is an expectation that a learner should have an answer - 'not knowing' or focusing on a skill or subject area they enjoy is not seen as valid.
- 3.3. In addition to the above, there is a wealth of evidence within academic literature and studies specifically around work experience, including within Government.
  - 3.3.1. DWP's paper on [Early impacts of work experience](#), demonstrates a 28% increase in gaining employment for young people on benefits by gaining work experience.
  - 3.3.2. The Careers and Enterprise Company has repeatedly shown, such as in their [What Works?](#) paper, that work experience leads to higher motivation to do well academically at school, greater likelihood of progression to further education as well as leading to a greater likelihood of gaining future employment and an increase in wages.
  - 3.3.3. BEIS's paper on [The Impact of Work Experiences](#) demonstrates a large positive outcome on long term employment due to work experience and specifically recommends that Government "provide some support for policies that aim to increase the number of students who participate in forms of work-based learning during their period of study."
  - 3.3.4. The [European Commission](#)'s study with The Open University found that work experience "has a positive effect on employment outcomes

for graduates in the UK.” It is also clear that up to 65% of employers surveyed said that “work experience acquired during study was an important factor to the employer in recruiting for the first job.”

- 3.4. A key additional point to consider here is the long term impact of career decisions on later life happiness.
  - 3.4.1. Making the wrong choice has been shown to impact physical and mental health, placing pressure on the NHS. Stress-related illness [cost the NHS £11bn p/year](#) and is the single biggest health expenditure.
  - 3.4.2. This also impacts national productivity - of which the UK is 13% less productive per working adult than other comparable economies in the G7 ([ONS](#)).
  - 3.4.3. We must think strategically and with a long term view about the importance of career decisions and career happiness on the future workforce. Committing political will and taxpayer money now to helping learners find the right career for them, saves the taxpayer money many times over through longer-term career happiness by being in the right job through exposure to multiple working environments.

#### **4. Work Experience: Discussion**

- 4.1. The evidence has established that learners do not know which career they wish to pursue while in education. Academic and Government research, alongside personal experience, shows that work experience is the key to both helping learners to figure this out and improving educational and employment outcomes. Yet - Career Leaders find this the most difficult aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks to facilitate.
- 4.2. There is, therefore, a gap between the need for wide-scale work experience opportunities, and educational providers' ability to supply work experience placements.
- 4.3. From my experience, employers are generally happy to provide work experience opportunities for learners when they are in a less demanding business period, such as during the summer when many members of staff take annual leave.
- 4.4. What is missing, is connecting young people to work experience in businesses on the type of scale required to make a significant impact.
- 4.5. Tech businesses in the private sector are trying to fill this gap, such as Springpod and GroundWork. Small tech startups alone, however, are not enough to make the strategic impact needed.

- 4.6. Virtual work experience placements, developed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic have also created a plethora of opportunities to help learners access work experience from anywhere in the UK, removing at least some of the barriers of cost with unpaid work experience far from home.

## 5. Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1. I, therefore, draw on my professional experience and the evidence cited above, and throughout the rest of my submission, when drawing the following conclusions and recommendations.
- 5.2. Conclusion: For many schools, there is a missing link between education and careers. Despite the absolute best efforts of Career Leaders, careers is often seen as a tickbox required by Ofsted, rather than being the cornerstone of helping young people become valuable members of society. This missing link is clear in the many young people that I interact with; careers are as much of a vague and abstract concept for a Year 8, as they often are for a Year 12 or 13. This is due to a near-total lack of meaningful work experience.
  - 5.2.1. Recommendation 1: A fundamental change in how careers education is viewed is necessary. Careers must be seen as a core educational priority if it is to fully prepare all learners. Both educational institutions and young people need to understand the foundational link between subjects and grades, to career choices and pathways. This needs to be fully applied to all areas of the curriculum - both in technical and academic education - and for all ages.
  - 5.2.2. Recommendation 2: The best way to achieve this is by prioritising work experience. When supported with a foundation of careers information, advice and guidance, practical work experience is the most effective method for properly preparing all learners for the world of work.
    - 5.2.2.1. At scale, this could be creating a formal, national programme for work experience to run during the summer holidays for Years 10 - 13, with all companies over a certain size taking on learners for one to two weeks. For Years 7-9, this could be a formal programme of standalone work shadowing days within the workplace. The key here would be for learners to carry out work experience or shadowing every single year for every learner, to encourage the exposure to a variety of types of career and workplace, to allow for comparison.
    - 5.2.2.2. In terms of timings, this is when businesses are quieter and have more capacity to manage alternative demands (like managing interns).

- 5.2.2.3. In terms of feasibility and funding, grants could be awarded to businesses to assist with costs from the Apprenticeship Levy. Alternatively, the Levy could be increased slightly to help businesses set aside funding for these costs, with the knowledge that helping young people make more informed career choices will help to address the skills mismatch between employers and young people, as well as aiding retention and productivity in the longer term.
      - 5.2.2.4. Subsidies and/or bursaries could be established for learners who would require free school meals during term time to cover lunch and travel costs. Placements should be either virtual or in their local area.
- 5.3. Conclusion: Careers Leaders do their best for young people with the resources and budgets that they have access to. However, significantly more investment is needed if we are to successfully help learners make effective career decisions.
  - 5.3.1. Recommendation 3: Core areas of additional funding include utilising technology, building programmes from work experience and shadowing and attracting top talent into Career Leader roles.
  - 5.3.2. The professionalisation of Career Leader roles through qualifications such as degree and masters level awards, such as those listed by the [Careers Development Institute](#), are a positive way to ensure quality. However, there is a trade off here, as despite having a higher level of qualification, Career Leaders are amongst the lowest paid within schools as they are often part-time roles, or are employed as lower paid Career Coordinators, and roles are therefore unlikely to attract talent.
- 5.4. Conclusion: The use of private-sector technology, with career management platforms and assessments, do provide some assistance to Careers Leaders and young people. They help career leaders efficiently implement and manage careers programmes, and they centralise Labour Market Information for learners. However, they have limited impact in helping young people make career decisions as this type of technology is essentially content management rather than real innovation.
  - 5.4.1. Recommendation 4: Substantially greater investment is needed into the CareerTech industry to create genuinely innovative solutions for young people. The benefits of AI and machine learning, for example, have not yet reached careers education.
  - 5.4.2. Recommendation 5: Work with the CareerTech industry on understanding how Government and the private sector could create higher impact partnerships, as well as understanding what data it

would be helpful for the Department for Education and the Department of Work and Pension to release to aid innovation.

5.5. Conclusion: Learners are expected to know which career they wish to pursue whilst still in secondary education. In tertiary education, they are expected to double down on this as soon as possible. This is not realistic and does not reflect the complexity of career decisions - the impacts of mistakes at this age are felt by individuals in their twenties and thirties. There is also no awareness of career change as a concept - learners are made to feel they need to choose one career for life, leading to a highly stressful decision-making process based on very limited knowledge of the working world.

5.5.1. Recommendation 6: The careers curriculum needs to allow for learners to not know what they want to do yet, and reassure them that this is normal. Statistically, adults will [change careers completely three to seven times](#) in their lives. Enabling learners to explore multiple careers through research, work experience and conversations with employers should be encouraged, with a focus on keeping as many doors open as possible.

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