

## Written evidence submitted by Young Enterprise

### **An overview of Young Enterprise employability programmes**

Young Enterprise have developed two programmes to support careers advice and guidance in schools; Learn to Earn and the Employability Masterclass. We have also developed Company Programme which offers a real-life learning opportunity where students work together to establish their own business.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we created complimentary e-learning resources – Route to Success and Employable Me – to enable a truly flexible blended learning model for schools. These programmes offer hands-on practical learning experiences for young people and are either delivered within schools by a trained team of Young Enterprise Area Managers or, via the digital programmes, set as home learning by teachers. They contribute to a school's stable, structured careers programme by encouraging students to consider a broad and ambitious range of education and career options and explore the attributes that employers are looking for within a spectrum of roles across the economy.

*Learn to Earn and Route to Success* reached 15,539 students across 126 different schools in the 2020/21 academic year and enables students to:

- Gain a clearer understanding of the routes available to a range of jobs and careers
- Consider qualifications they need and how their strengths and preferences fit with different careers
- Widen their horizons by challenging stereotypes and raising aspirations

*The Employability Masterclass and Employable Me* reached 6,826 students across 100 schools in the 2020/21 academic year and enables students to:

- Learn from local employers about the skills and qualities required in different workplaces
- Understand how to access and use labour market information to inform career decisions
- Develop an understanding of how to showcase their skills to employers

In addition, our *Company Programme* reached 6,459 young people from 374 schools, colleges, youth groups and alternative education provisions in the academic year 2020/21 and enables students to:

- Design and run their own business and experience the realities of the world of work
- Develop key employability skills and work-readiness
- Receive advice, support and business insights from a dedicated business advisor

## **Key lessons from our programme evaluations**

Young Enterprise are committed to evaluating the impact of our programmes, which allows us to continually measure young people's progression across a range of employability competencies and work-readiness. This evidence has pointed to several key lessons regarding how careers and skills guidance can be most effectively supported and embedded within schools.

### **1. Offering young people meaningful opportunities to engage with employers**

One of the main themes of our evaluation work was the importance young people attach to hearing directly from employers about the skills they need to pursue different career paths, as well as what it takes to successfully transition and thrive in the workplace. Our programmes offer meaningful encounters with employers, giving students a unique and valuable opportunity to engage directly with local businesses.

Engagement of volunteers from industry and business is a vital ingredient in helping young people develop the confidence and knowledge to start work, and to gain an understanding of the skills and attitudes valued by employers and start-up businesses alike.

Evidence from our programmes illustrates that direct engagement with employers has supported young people to develop a greater understanding of employer expectations and increased their confidence. For example, 90% of the students from the Learn to Earn programme agreed they understood how specific skills and qualifications are needed to get various types of jobs and 89% agreed their participation helped them set goals for the future. 87% of students also agreed that after the programme they felt more confident going for an interview.

We encourage the Committee to reflect on the importance of these direct interactions and consider how we can ensure young people within the education system have more opportunities to benefit from these valuable engagements.

### **2. Supporting the development of partnerships between schools and local employers**

Young Enterprise has access to over 7,000 Business Volunteers across business size, sector and region. Connecting and interacting with local employers and employees is a core part of the programmes we offer. Through our work with schools, Young Enterprise helps to bridge the education and business worlds and our feedback from teachers highlights that this is one of the main beneficial elements of our programmes. For example, 100% of teachers believed the Employability Masterclass challenged students on their employability skills, while also exploring and explaining employers' expectations of young people.

While many schools enjoy positive links with local and/or national employers, this is not the case across the board. Consistency of access to opportunities to work with volunteers from the business

sector are vital in helping young people to prepare for work. We encourage the Committee to consider any further support which could be introduced to enable all schools to foster greater connections with employers.

### **3. Facilitating opportunities for young people to learn about careers in more a practical context**

Through designing and running their own business, Company Programme provides young people with the chance to enhance their employability skills and develop their work-readiness. Evaluations of Company Programme have demonstrated the value that young people attach to gaining this practical, hands-on experience of the working world. Our evidence has shown that 81% had a greater understanding of the world of work, 79% felt ready for the world of work and 83% were able to reflect on the skills they need to develop for the future. This suggests that one of the most impactful ways we can prepare young people for their future careers, is to provide with them with a flavour of the working world and offer them advice and guidance in a real-life context.

Company Programme is delivered with the support of 882 Volunteer Business Advisers and each team benefits from a dedicated advisor who helps them to navigate key decisions and challenges throughout the process. This support and guidance represents a key element of the programme and enables young people to learn what skills and competencies they need to succeed in the working world through a practical real-life context. Our evaluations with educators also highlights the positive impact of these experiences, with 100% of educators considering that Company Programme improved young people's employability skills. Meanwhile, 96% believed that Company Programme had raised young people's career aspirations.

Young Enterprise passionately believe that one of the most effective ways to ignite young people's imaginations and foster a deep and meaningful understanding of what it takes to succeed across different career paths, is to deliver this in a real-life context. We would welcome the chance to work with the Education Select Committee to consider how young people can be provided with more opportunities to learn about careers and skills in a practical, real-life context.

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