

*Bringing business and education together
to shape the workforce of the future*

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Dear Ms Ballinger,

Reasons why the government should not remove the statutory duty to deliver work related learning at Key Stage 4

For the past three decades Hounslow Education Business Partnership (HEBP) has striven *"to ensure that all young people are able to gain real experience and knowledge of the workplace."* We work with all secondary schools in our borough and over 700 companies including a number of FTSE100 companies. Our Hon' President Garth Buckle was recognised with an MBE in 2009 for his pioneering work in the field and the organisation received the Award for Education Business Excellence (AEBE) accreditation in 2011 from the IEBC. Committed to professional excellence in the field we are a pioneer IEBC Employability Hub and widely recognised as a national leader amongst EBPOs.

In March 2011 Professor Alison Wolf published the "Review of vocational education - The Wolf Report". We welcome many of the recommendations and the goal of ensuring that England offers genuine, high-quality, vocational education that guarantees access to further and higher education and rewarding employment.

Furthermore we welcome trialling innovations such as considering "how local employers could be reimbursed as part of the 16-19 funding formula consultation".

Consultation Question: *The Government is seeking to remove the duty to provide every young person with work related learning at Key Stage 4. Do you think that work related learning should be removed as a statutory duty?*

Like the Government, HEBP is committed to ensuring that all young people are able to gain real experience and knowledge of the workplace. However, the notion of "genuine work experience" needs further definition. We quality assure all of our placements and increasingly underpin both KS4 and KS5 work experience programmes with Employability qualifications from WJEC, City and Guilds and ASDAN, under the banner of "The WEX Factor". We believe this approach maximises the prospect of delivering the "genuine work experience" that young people, schools and employers seek.

We are concerned that the Government and the Wolf Review has confused the specific intervention of "work experience" with the broader concept of Work Related Learning (WRL). WRL is defined as "planned activity designed to use the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work, including

learning through the experience of work, learning about work and working practices and learning skills for work".

There is no need – and it will be counterproductive to advancing the employability of our young people – to remove this statutory duty. The existing statutory duty does not put schools in a straightjacket of having to deliver KS4 work experience if this does not meet their students' or local economic needs. Instead we find schools in Hounslow deliver on the WRL duty by choosing to run Industry days, business speed dating events, enterprise challenges and many other employability and enterprise-related activities. Some schools deliver KS4 work experience programmes with HEBP, others choose KS5 work experience, and some a blend, including targeted placements. We believe these flexible outcomes, already delivered under the statutory duty, should be supported by the Coalition government by maintaining the statutory duty.

Like Countec (Milton Keynes EBP) already do, in 2012 we hope to start using quantitative indicators to measure the employability skills of our young people against CBI metrics – as well as how our programmes contribute to improvements in these capabilities.

“To deliver the whole recommendation from Professor Wolf, Government is seeking to remove the statutory duty to provide every young person at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) with work-related learning. However, schools will still be free to determine whether and how work experience for young people at Key Stage 4 is provided.”

In summary, our view is that schools are already “free to determine whether and how work experience for young people at Key Stage 4 is provided.”

Additional comments

“Local authorities are already under a duty to encourage work experience for students 16-19 and Government has begun working with partners to promote this.”

This duty is useful but insufficient. Removing the statutory duty on WRL is undermining this otherwise positive signal and risks reversing many years of progress on WRL at a time when it could not be more important to the UK's economic progress.

“The review of lower attaining pupils will consider how work experience and internships can support progression for these young people.”

All students, even the most academically able, need exposure to Work Related Learning if they are to develop employability skills and successfully transition to the work place after their student years.

Recommendation 21 of the Wolf Review proposed that Government should *“evaluate models for supplying genuine work experience to 16-18 year olds who are enrolled as full time students, not apprentices, and for reimbursing local employers in a flexible way, using core funds. Schools and colleges should be encouraged to prioritise longer internships for older students, reflecting the fact that almost no young people move into full time employment at 16; and government should correspondingly remove their statutory duty to provide every young person at Key Stage 4 with a standard amount of “work related learning”.”*

KS4 work experience and broader WRL activities can be a vital motivator for many students and a foundation to longer term internships and KS5. The two rarely work in isolation.

The Government might want to explore making a contribution towards businesses securing the IEBE's newly launched ‘Education Ready’ accreditation, particularly supporting smaller businesses that may struggle to afford the accreditation. This would drive Quality Assurance forward nationally and would recognise the contribution of businesses as work experience providers.

We hope that are comments, supported by our local education and business partners consulted through our advisory board, are duly noted and considered actively by the coalition government.

www.hounslowebp.org.uk



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London Borough
of Hounslow



Yours sincerely,



Philip Miller

Chair, Hounslow Education Business Partnership

Cc: Mary Macleod MP, Brentford & Isleworth constituency

Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education

Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills

Sarah Teather MP, Minister of State for Children and Families

Dame Julia Cleverdon, Vice President, Business in the Community

Declan Swan, Chief Executive, Institute for Education Business Excellence

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