

Positive Destinations

Think Local

Glasgow City Council

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A five year strategy has been established (2013- 2018) for every secondary school to have a business sponsor to improve future employment opportunities for school leavers.

Background

Glasgow City Council and Chamber of Commerce set out a five-year vision for schools and businesses to develop partnerships that will ensure young people have the specific skills needed by public, private and third sector employers.

Examples of existing working partnerships with perspectives from pupils, teachers and businesses, have been developed to lead the roll out across all mainstream and specialist secondary schools.

Our joint strategy outlines plans to embed employability and industry sector-skills based learning within the school curriculum from primary to post-school, with the intention of creating new opportunities for specialist learning in the senior phase, between S4-S6.

Joint activities planned and delivered in collaboration between schools and lead business partners, will not only prepare pupils for employment, but also help young people learn more about the many different roles available in the job market.

Glasgow Chamber of Commerce's Youth Employment Action Group was set up to address the issue of unemployment among young people, aged 16 - 24. Over 25 employers are directly involved including Scottish Power, Scottish Water, Marriott, the Weir Group, GTG Training and Network Rail analysing the cause, implications and potential solutions to youth unemployment.

Initially 5 schools have been linked to one main business sponsor each, with a further 10 schools to be introduced during 2015-16, and a more extensive roll out planned during 2016-17 and beyond.

Actions and Approach

Initially five early adopted schools have been paired with five sponsoring business partners to develop a school, business partnership framework which is used to support the audit of a

baseline study of existing joint activities. Each school and business partnership works towards auditing joint activity according to 5 thematic areas- Enterprise, Employability; Skills and Aspirations; Inclusion and Transitions.

Once the audit is completed and action plan is devised outlining areas for development.

By linking the baseline audit to other relevant school, local authority and national data, priority actions were able to be developed, which influences specific tasks which will impact on the achievement, attainment and post school destination figures for the school.

Examples of activity which can be prioritised include more accurate targeting of business led activity such as work experience, occupational placements, workplace visits, guru lecture and master classes. Activities can be focused on particular pupils and identified groups of individuals at different stages of their learning, to better integrate to qualifications and course/ career choices. Mentoring and internships can be allocated towards those pupils who will be more likely to achieve the maximum value from these types of interventions at the right time and place.

Results

The initial piloting of this approach has benefited from the enthusiasm of all partners involved and from the expert facilitation from lead officers within the Chamber of Commerce and the Employment and Skills Partnership Team, an integrated resource within the local authorities city wide education department. Employers have been able to benefit from a dedicated focus within a central team to support the strategic and operational implementation of the project.

Ongoing roll out of the approach across a greater number of schools will begin to build up momentum based on initial successes and ongoing tracking of the progress of the partnership. The introduction and development of the school, business framework approach will help to embed this system even further.

Careful matching of the school and business partner also ensured that the needs of the school can be supported well by the employer selected as the main sponsor.

There is also the facility for wider sharing of good practice between other employers currently engaged with each school. The ethos of school business collaboration has allowed for an increase in employers' contribution to school career and learning choices events. Cluster schools can also benefit from knowledge exchange activities between businesses and neighbouring schools, with the longer term intention of building capacity for more extensive involvement across more schools and increased numbers of

employers in joint activity. It is hoped that this will lead the way for Centre of Excellence developments.

Obstacles and Issues

The timescale and pace of anticipated progress has proved to be an initial slow starter. This may be due to a number of factors including service redesign within local authority education services and the introduction of new national qualifications.

Policy direction from Scottish Government regarding the interim and full publications of the Developing Scotland's Young Workforce report have acted as a welcome stimulus to the scope and range of school and business links, however, the staged introduction of various announcements and potential funding allocations has meant that some activities especially regarding the introduction of Foundation and Advanced Apprenticeships have been slower off the ground.

Opportunities to integrate activities between schools and businesses with other early adopter work with the colleges within Glasgow have also been introduced, whereby scholarship programmes in specific occupational areas have been developed. Young people have been able to participate in programmes which combine school, college and work based learning, working towards achievement of SCQL level 5 National Certificate awards in Engineering, Food Preparation and Events Coordination. Timetabling issues have required to be overcome in order to facilitate this new approach.

Learning

Identified team members at school, employer and facilitator level are necessary to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the project.

Head teacher involvement in the strategic benefits of the project is crucial. Wider leadership groups within the Community Planning Partnership ensure more business buy in.

Day to day trouble shooting of partnership activities is required within the school to ensure effective coordination of tasks, especially when there may be out of school based activities. Early health and safety risk assessments of off site visits, placements and work experience venues are crucial.

What were you most pleased about in relation to this initiative?

The genuine difference the project can make to real job and training opportunities with long term prospects for young people. It is inspiring to have young people motivated to raise their aspirations and ambitions as a result of the involvement of businesses.

Next Steps

The introduction of the schools and business framework document can be further developed to ensure that there are minimum standards of engagement set for each school and business to achieve. Once this is in place we will be able to drive up further quality assurance measures. We anticipate that the introduction of the Invest in Young People Accolade will also promote the approach across Scotland.