



# Homegrown Talent starts with career education in schools

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[www.cambridgeahead.co.uk](http://www.cambridgeahead.co.uk)

# Research Brief

- Scope included 78 secondary schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- A statistically strong 67% of state schools responded to the survey
- 10 major providers in our patch were interviewed
- Research was intended to:
  - Discover the types of career guidance services available in secondary schools in the area
  - Map the gaps and overlaps in provision
  - Scope how the quality of provision is defined and measured

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# Why was this research commissioned?

- Business expressing continued concern that recruiting locally to the roles they need – at all levels - is challenging
- Employers' need for a pipeline of homegrown talent is only set to increase – with the departure from the EU, and now with the impacts of a global recession
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a “microcosm of the UK” – the inequalities that exist within the region can be tackled by a focus on better career education

## **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review – Dame Kate Barker**

“Human capital is the most important factor in driving labour productivity which in turn, is the most important factor in the development and maintenance of the successful economy...

Our consultation... revealed widespread discontent among businesses with the skills system, the lack of incentives for schools to provide accurate information that enables young people to make decisions on their vocational education and training and the need for high-quality education and training provision, particularly in relation to vocational skills.”

# Resource and capacity within schools is the foundation needed to build an effective system

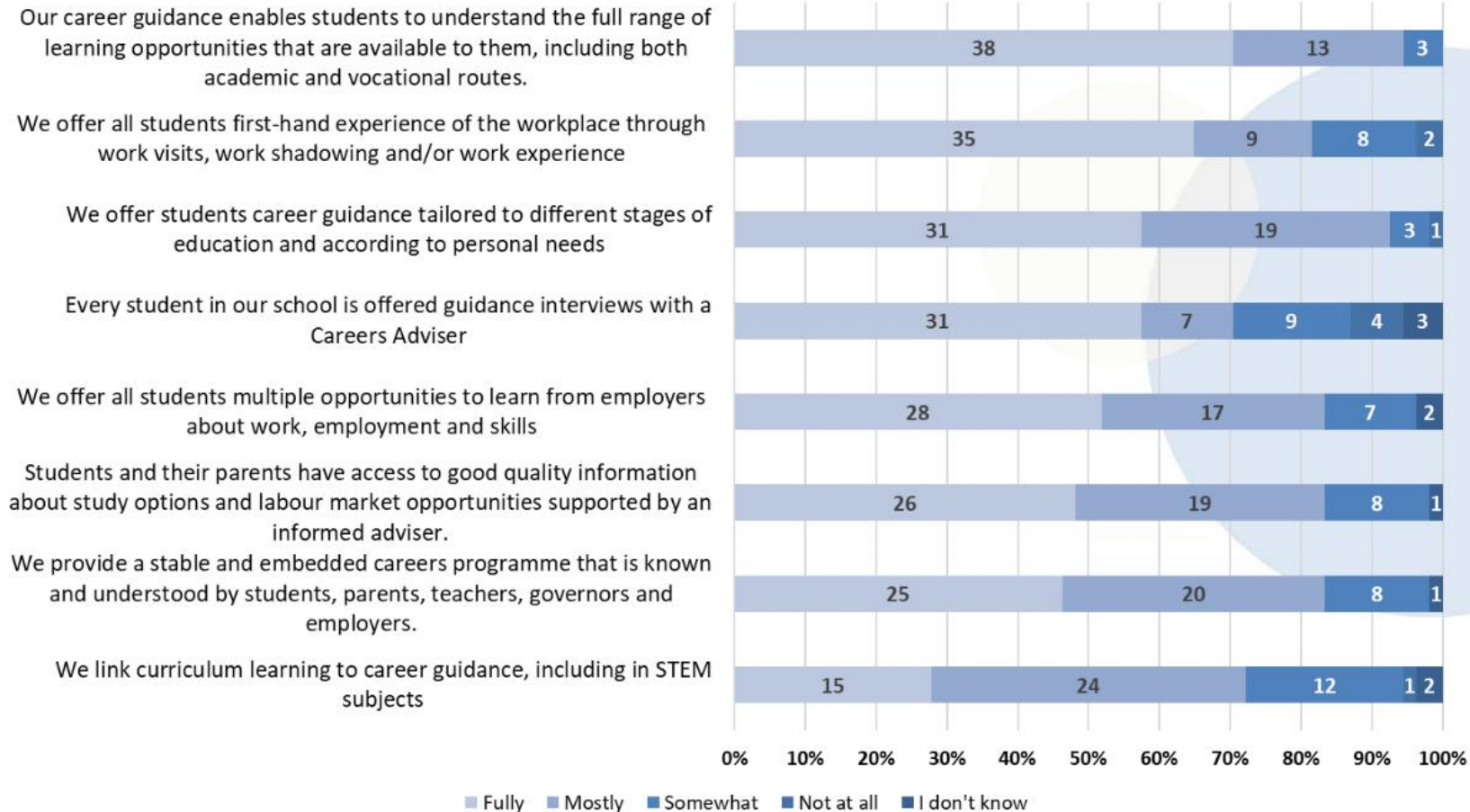
“Having an engaged, knowledgeable and interested careers leader is a key factor enabling providers to deliver high-quality career guidance services. Conversely, it is more challenging... if the **careers leader is over-stretched and time-constrained**, as is often the case when the careers lead is **a member of teaching staff.**”

- Lack of dedicated capacity within schools is a root cause of many issues:
- Schools navigating a **crowded and complex provider market**
- Providing **balanced advice** – across a variety of pathways (e.g. apprenticeships and technical qualifications)
- Building **relationships between schools and employers**
- **Engaging parents** in career advice and decision-making

## High-level recommendations:

- There should be dedicated funding to ensure that schools have sufficient in-house resource to develop and run high-quality careers programmes
- Employers should invest more in their relationships with local schools, building long-term connections
- Providers should be clearer with schools about their own offer

# Career guidance is too far removed from the curriculum – it is not treated as part of education



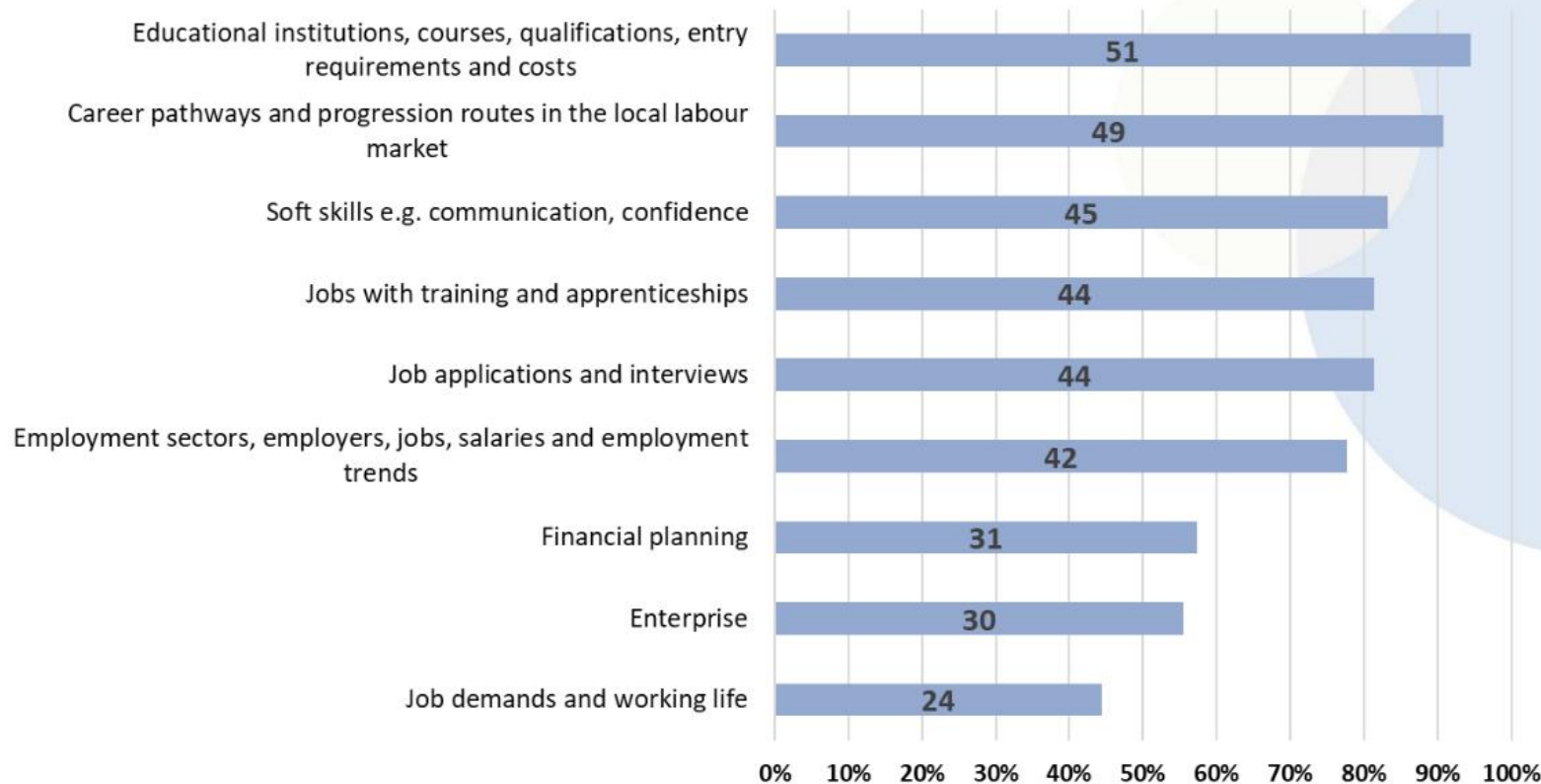
In self-rated progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks – linking curriculum learning to career guidance is least often achieved by schools (left)

Furthermore, **only a third of schools ask employers to input into career guidance** (and all forms of employer engagement are more common in schools where the Careers Leader has a dedicated budget)



# The mismatch between guidance and the reality of the economy is seen again in the lack of focus on the demands of working life

## Topics covered by schools as part of the career guidance programme:

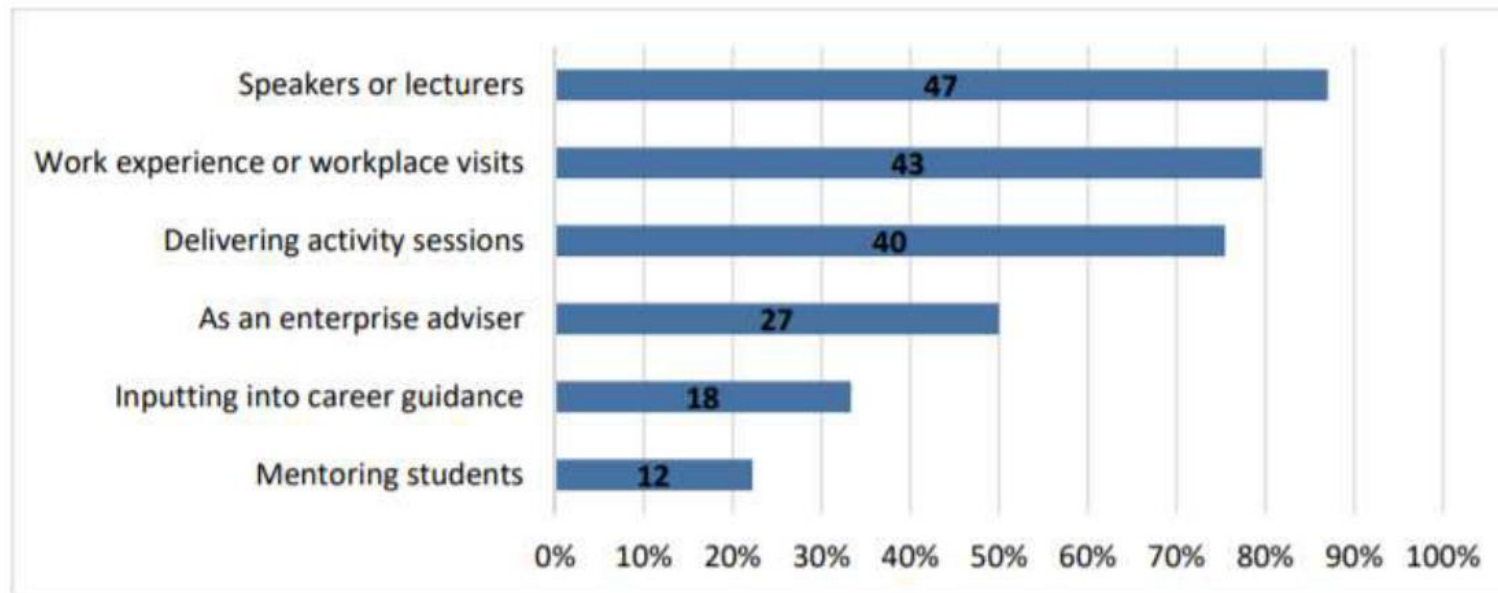


**“It’s vital that industry supports education providers by offering young people the opportunity to explore career opportunities and gain insight into different sectors and industries. This ensures students are gaining invaluable real-world experience – boosting their chances of securing employment, and deepening their understanding of their chosen career path, and their employer’s expectations in the workplace. Ultimately, this will help young people to pursue a more rich and rewarding career that is in line with their expectations and ensure they are prepared and better equipped to enter the workplace.”**

- Bob Ensich, Morgan Sindall Construction

# Employers could be doing far more to engage in career education

Figure 14. How employers are integrated into the career guidance programme



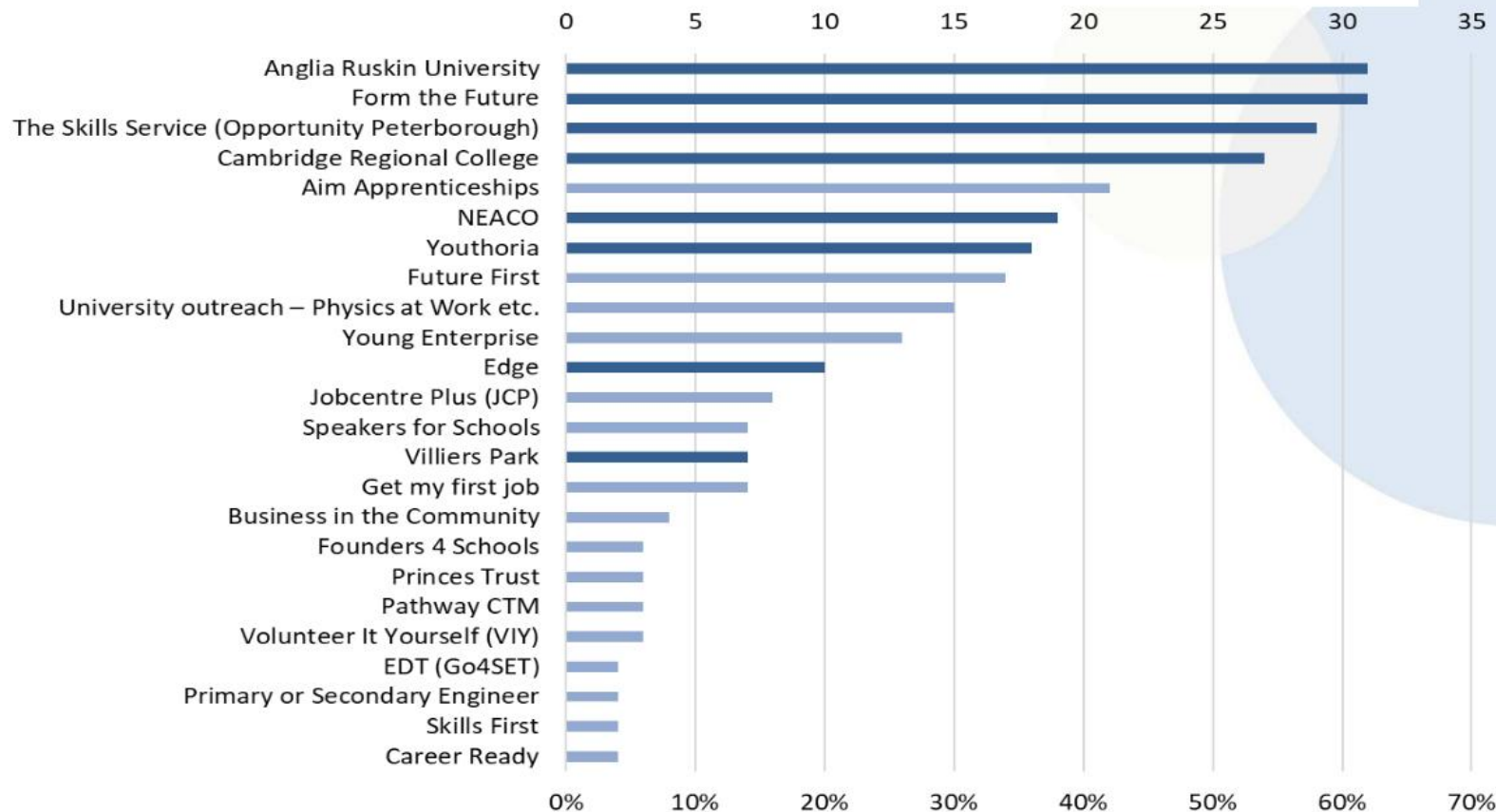
“The most commonly cited ambition of survey respondents in expanding or enhancing their career guidance programme is to develop the work experience offer. In addition, some schools still face difficulty persuading local employers to engage and participate in career guidance activities.”

High-level recommendation:

Employers could better recognise the long-term benefits of engagement with schools – increasing their involvement in school settings, as well as offering more meaningful workplace opportunities through work experience and industry placements

# Overlaps in provision – a crowded marketplace that is difficult for schools to commission effectively from

Providers active in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and how often they are used by schools:



High-level recommendation:

There should be national or regional (Mayoral area) accreditation or standards developed for providers – so that schools can more easily make a judgement on quality of provision

This should at the very least differentiate between information and training providers



# What this adds up to

1. All institutions (schools, employers, providers) recognise failings in the system and want to do more for young people
2. This is a fundamentally deeper and more complex issue than can be tackled by careers advisers entering schools
3. Devolved areas and local authorities are well placed to take the lead in reform – it is rooted in better connections within a local system

# Headline finding, recommendations, and actions

Findings	What should be the most important factor – quality – is often missed in the current system	Vocational and Technical Pathways are not given equal weighting to Academic routes	Career guidance is too separate from the school curriculum	Employers are not well enough engaged with schools	Schools struggle to navigate a crowded and confusing provider market
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity needs to be built within schools – with a dedicated Careers Lead and budget in every secondary school</li> <li>Employers should build lasting relationships with schools, and offer more meaningful opportunities to students</li> <li>Providers should be accredited based upon quality to enable schools to better commission their services</li> <li>Devolved administrations and Local Authorities should be empowered to generate closer working within their local systems</li> <li>Parents are better engaged in career education by providers and schools</li> </ul>				
Proposed Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government works with Mayors to develop a <b>funding pilot for dedicated career education</b> within secondary schools – aligned and complimentary with <b>local skills service initiatives</b></li> <li>Government develops a <b>quality accreditation standard</b> for career guidance providers</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government <b>review the Gatsby Benchmarks</b> with a focus on quality and discuss with <b>Ofsted</b> how best to include career education as an <b>integral part of the evaluation regime</b></li> <li>Business Networks and Representative Groups take a lead in working with employers and providers to <b>build better connections between business and schools</b>, and pilot new <b>work experience and industry placements</b></li> </ul>		