



POLICY BRIEFING NOTE: 10

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Solve the skills mismatch or risk future prosperity, says BCC

BCC calls for quality careers education for all

1. **The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)** on 30 January published its **Skills and Employment Manifesto**, setting out ways to radically transform the systems that educate young people, and recommendations for training the adult workforce.
2. The BCC's Manifesto seeks to address the 'skills mismatch' described by many UK employers.
3. BCC President, Nora Senior said: *"Although we believe that successive governments have failed our young people by not properly equipping them for their future careers, it is time to break away from the blame game."*
4. Employers consistently tell the BCC that there is a mismatch between what they are looking for in their staff, and the skills, experience and attitude offered by too many prospective candidates.
5. The Prime Minister regularly refers to a "global race", yet the BCC believes that in the 21st century, it is the countries with the most skilled workforces – both young and old – that will be the ultimate winners.
6. **The Manifesto calls for:**
 - Ensuring that 'employability' skills are at the heart of how schools are assessed and rated
 - Investing in **quality careers education for all young people, including regular, quality contact with a variety of employers**
 - Using Chambers of Commerce to offer independent advice and support to SMEs to increase investment in apprenticeships and workplace training
 - Clear, universally understood qualifications for literacy, numeracy, computing and foreign languages
 - Qualifications to be consistent and clear, to enable employers to understand an individual's competencies
 - Tax incentives for the development of foreign language and export skills
 - All employment policy to become the responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
 - Universities to work with Chambers of Commerce to promote enterprise among a wider range of students, and to ensure university courses are relevant to future job opportunities
 - The government to give employers a choice on how they receive government funding for apprenticeships – either directly through the tax system or via their chosen training provider
7. Commenting further, Nora Senior, President of the BCC said:



“Skills will decide who wins and who loses in a 21st century economy – yet employers across the UK constantly say they struggle to find prospective employees, particularly those leaving education, who have the right skills to succeed in the workplace.

“Although we believe that successive governments have failed our young people by not properly equipping them for their future careers, it is time to break away from the blame game. Various organisations and sectors continue to blame each other for a lack of ‘work readiness’ among young people, but it is time for everyone to accept some responsibility, and find ways to move forward.

*“The world has changed at a rapid pace. If Britain doesn’t keep up, employers who are unable to access the skills they need or those unwilling to invest in training will lose business to other firms at home and abroad, putting us at a disadvantage. **Simple measures, such as investing in quality careers education, making employability a key measure for schools, and supporting interaction between pupils and local employers, will deliver more jobs and growth in the long-term.***

“Government, schools, colleges and employers must all work together in the coming months and years to ensure that the UK has a workforce that is ‘fit for purpose’. Failure to do so risks consigning generation after generation to a less prosperous future.”

8. The report says on Careers Guidance:

‘Careers education should start in Key Stage 2 and build to form a statutory element of secondary national curriculums. Every young person should gain work experience of different lengths in different sectors. Chambers of Commerce can facilitate these placements with local and national businesses.’

“Publicly funded careers services should be fully extended to cover anyone over the age of 13, including face-to-face advice.”

“National Insurance numbers should be used to track the average earnings of each school’s alumni as a proxy for success in the labour market.”

“ ‘Destination measures’ should be extended to include longer-term outcomes. Although there is value to understanding the destination of students after 12 months, this encourages some schools to find any destination rather than the right one for each individual. Destination measures should be extended to show five-year destinations ”

SEE FULL DETAILS: http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/J4108_Skills%20Manifesto_v4.pdf

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