



POLICY BRIEFING NOTE: 4

This is the fourth of a series of short Policy Briefing Notes prepared by Patrick Watson, MONTROSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSULTANTS LTD, and published by Careers England.

CONTRASTING VIEWS THIS SUMMER FROM HMG & BUSINESSES ON YOUNG PEOPLE:

(A) THE BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE wants careers education on the curriculum, and says Ofsted should judge employability skills too

(B) “POSITIVE FOR YOUTH” (Government Progress Report): The Cabinet Office takes co-ordinating youth role & says youth policy is primarily a matter for local government

This Policy Briefing Note brings together two highly contrasting views on Government policies for young people:

- Here we summarise the concerns of Businesses (as articulated by the British Chambers of Commerce and echoing the views already made strongly known by the CBI – see Careers England Policy Briefing Notes 1 & 2)
- Contrasting these with the views of the Cabinet Office.

(A) THE BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE WANTS CAREERS EDUCATION ON THE CURRICULUM, and SAYS OFSTED SHOULD JUDGE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TOO

1. The OECD recently warned that youth unemployment was the UK’s biggest challenge.
2. The **President of the British Chamber of Commerce, Nora Senior**, blogged in July this year, asking *why is it that our young people are being left behind while Britain gets back to work, and who is to blame?*
3. Businesses she speaks to, up and down the country, want to work with young people, and are happy to train and employ them.



4. She writes that businesses *'are often disheartened if not downright frustrated, to find school leavers and graduates do not have the minimum skills they need to join the workforce. Poor literacy and numeracy, behaviour and attitudes that don't meet business expectations – the list goes on.'*
5. Senior suggests that the government should *'stop fixating on academics alone, and ensure that soft workplace skills are taught in our schools, or young people will continue to be left out in the cold. Getting businesspeople into schools to provide a real world insight into the world of work is the way to get pupils excited'*.
6. Senior goes as far as to suggest that *'Ofsted should be judging schools on students' employability skills rather than exam results alone.'*
7. She adds that *'we must also put a stop to the constant tinkering around the edges by successive governments to a qualifications system that baffles teachers and employers alike. O Levels, GCEs, GCSEs, A-Levels, A2 Levels, SATS, Baccalaureates - is it really any wonder that we are being left adrift?'*
8. Senior is also critical of current careers advice available to young people. She writes *'In England, the government has removed the duty on schools to provide young people with work experience placements, and has replaced the 'Connexions' face-to-face careers advice with information that is only available online. This is because the Education Secretary believes that head teachers know what is best for their pupils. Unfortunately, when it comes to the real world of work, the truism is that head teachers don't always know best whichever education system they are working to, and some continue to prioritise time and money on boosting performance in exam league tables.'*
9. She adds *'Young people cannot match their talents and interests to a future career without understanding the full range of jobs available to them – those where their skills will be most in demand and best rewarded, and the qualifications required to gain those jobs. **Careers education should be added to the national curriculum to help advise and educate these young people as they make the choices that will shape their lives – that means talking about the world of work before they make subject choices, not after they have been made.'***

Source BCC Blog- 22 July 2013

<http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/policy-maker/blog/getting-our-young-people-back-into-work-is-crucial-for-economy.html#.UhYl-4xwa2w>



(B) “POSITIVE FOR YOUTH” Government Progress Report - JULY 2013

CABINET OFFICE TAKES COORDINATING YOUTH ROLE & SAYS YOUTH POLICY IS PRIMARILY A MATTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. The **Positive for Youth** report sets out what HMG calls ‘*an ambitious vision in which the whole of government and society would support young people to realise their potential. The vision sets out how – locally and nationally, and in all sectors – we would work together to make sure that young people have the supportive relationships, strong ambitions and good opportunities they need if they are to succeed; and how we should focus on supporting success rather than preventing failure*’.
2. The report urges an holistic approach: ‘*We need to stop seeing youth issues through the prism of education. Education will continue to play an important role but every government department, every agency, every authority and every community has an equally important role*’.
3. On education the report lists some government achievements ,like the pupil premium and says ‘*Putting the power and resources in the hands of those working closest with young people enables them to design and deliver an education that meets the needs of each young person, helping to narrow the attainment gap.*’
4. On its controversial reforms to careers guidance ,in schools, it says ‘*We have issued guidance to schools and colleges to help them secure high quality, independent careers guidance for young people up to the age of 18 years. Well informed decisions about education, training and work options are critical to young people realising their potential. Opening the eyes of young people to the wealth of opportunities available to them can raise their ambitions and encourage them to overcome barriers to success and to pursue the qualifications and skill development ‘necessary to realise their highest potential.*’
5. The report states, interalia, ‘*Youth services, which are often pillars of their communities, are rightly led and shaped within those communities. They and the organisations working in them know their needs and those of their young people much better than central government. Decisions about the prioritisation of funding and the provision of young people’s services are best made at the local level, taking account of the local context. Central government’s role is to give them the freedom*



and flexibilities to make the most effective decisions such as providing local authorities un-ring-fenced funding and reducing bureaucracy. For that reason, “youth policy is primarily a matter for local government”.

6. The report says that the challenge to all those responsible for designing and delivering services, at national and local level, is to continue to:
 - engage with and involve young people;
 - speak up when they see unfair or unbalanced media reporting;
 - take ownership of the vision and leadership of its delivery;
 - innovate and evolve as society and its needs change;
 - become self-sustaining;
 - reduce the dependency on Government for direction, intervention and/or resources;
 - actively engage with each other to join up activities and services and avoid unnecessary duplication;
 - share information and work in constructive partnerships for the benefit of young people and their communities;
 - use and adapt successful initiatives and learn from others; and
 - think about the contribution that new partners can make and then draw them in
7. Crucially, the lead role goes to the Cabinet Office. The report says *‘the Cabinet Office is better placed, through its role of “supporting collective government, helping to ensure the effective development, coordination and implementation of policy” to **coordinate government departments’ work on youth issues** and champion across government with the Youth Voice arrangements and Youth Action Group.*
8. The report concludes *‘We will therefore be transferring these roles to the Cabinet Office with effect from July 2013 whilst ensuring that other departments have responsibility for areas of work which they are ideally placed to lead.’*

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210383/Positive-for-Youth-progress-update.pdf

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