

BCC's Workforce Survey

Key findings from the survey:

- 88% of businesses believe school leavers are unprepared for the world of work, in comparison to 54% of businesses that think graduates are unprepared for the workplace
- More than three quarters of firms (76%) believe a lack of work experience is the reason young people are unprepared for work
- However, more than half of businesses (52%) say they don't offer work experience placements
- Reasons for this include cost and time (25%), too much school admin (23%) and a lack of information (22%)
- 60% of firms that offer work experience said 'preparing the future workforce' was a key motivation
- More than half of businesses (57%) said a lack of soft skills, such as communication and team working, were reasons why young people were not 'work ready'
- Almost half of businesses (46%) said there was a lack of careers advice available for young people
- Due to fears around the work readiness of young people, more than a quarter of firms (27%) said they have not recruited a young person (aged between 16 and 24) in the last year
- Just over one third of businesses (39%) said they offer apprenticeships
- An additional 32% of firms would consider offering apprenticeships in future, while 54% say funding for additional training would encourage them to hire more young people.

To better prepare young people for work, the BCC has made the following recommendations taken from its 2014 / 2015 Business Manifesto:

- Introduce experience of work in all secondary schools, through links with Accredited Chambers of Commerce, to help ensure a smooth transition from the education system to the world of work
- Assess secondary schools according to the future jobs and earnings of their pupils, through the appropriate school inspectorates in the devolved administrations. This would reform school measurement and accountability to focus on employability skills and preparation and exposure to work
- Work with government and devolved administrations to place a business governor on secondary school boards to increase business engagement
- Allow all university students to choose business and enterprise modules as part of their degree programmes, to encourage and train potential entrepreneurs and business people from a more diverse range of academic backgrounds
- Increase the take up of apprenticeships by extending the £1,500 apprenticeship grant for employers beyond 2016. Demand from candidates has outstripped supply of apprenticeship vacancies by as much as 11 to one.