

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 FRIDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2012

CALL FOR EMPLOYERS TO PLAY BIGGER ROLE IN THE CLASSROOM

- Research reveals school teachers and parents want more involvement from businesses
- Over two thirds of parents want educators to put greater focus on preparing their offspring for employment

School teachers and parents are calling for UK employers to increase their involvement in education by playing a greater role in advising – and providing work experience for - young people (1). That's according to new independent research released today by the Association of Colleges to mark Colleges Week 2012, which runs from 11-18 November 2012. The research finds:

- 93% of school teachers and 94% of parents want pupils /their child to have more access to employers and businesses whilst in education
- 72% of parents think education should be more focused on preparing young people for employment
- 82% of parents believe work experience is essential in helping young people develop the skills needed in the work place
- 34% of parents would like *their own* employer to offer work experience to their child
- But 16% say their employer only offers work experience to the children of non-employees , whilst 5% say their employer only offers it to the children of senior staff members
- More than a third of parents (38%) believe it is the responsibility of the school to prepare their child for the working world. Something that nearly a quarter (23%) don't feel is currently happening

The research also revealed a mismatch in what parents and school teachers believe employers want from young recruits. Both parents and teachers ranked work and life experience low on a list of attributes they believe most important to employers recruiting from education. However, according to data from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2), this attribute actually tops the list of qualities employers feel is most lacking in young recruits.

Joy Mercer, Association of Colleges Director of Policy, said: "In the face of continued high youth unemployment rates, it appears school teachers and parents agree with recommendations published last week that employers should play a bigger role in education. Whether it's providing more work-

experience placements, getting involved in the shaping of the curriculum or just having more presence in the classroom, employers should be working hand in hand with educators to better prepare young people for employment and improve their job prospects.”

“That’s why, this Colleges Week, we are calling on colleges, schools and employers to sign up for the [Inspiring the Future](#) service. The service aims to inspire young people by getting volunteers from all sectors and professions to go into their local state secondary schools and colleges and talk about their jobs, careers and the education routes they took.”

Valerie Todd, Director of Talent and Resources at Crossrail and Commissioner at the UK

Commission for Employment and Skills, said: “Among most UK employers, particularly smaller ones, an employee’s experience is valued above all other criteria when it comes to recruiting. However, there are declining numbers of young people who get experience of work while in education. Sectors which have traditionally employed young people are in decline, resulting in fewer opportunities for them to gain experience.

“This means that businesses which want a highly skilled workforce for the future must take a conscious decision to help young people make the move from education into work. Most companies can do at least one thing in their community to support this transition – offering apprenticeships, hosting some form of work experience or visiting schools to give talks.”

One of the main reasons behind the call for greater involvement from employers in advising young people is that both school teachers and parents admit to struggling to provide careers advice. Indeed, the research also found:

- 44% of school teachers admit to giving a pupil bad or uninformed advice in the past, whilst 82% say they don’t feel they have the appropriate knowledge to advise pupils on careers
- One fifth of parents (20%) feel out of their depth advising their children about careers, and 32% say they only feel comfortable talking about jobs with which they are familiar
- Some parents readily admit their offspring are ill-prepared for work, with more than one in 10 (11%) confessing they wouldn’t even employ their own child
- Nearly one fifth (19%) of parents say they give their child the same careers advice they received from their parents, despite major changes to the UK jobs market

To help address this advice gap and as part of Colleges Week 2012, a brand new Facebook application launches today for young people. Quizl - www.quizl.co.uk - is aimed at 14-18 year olds and aims to get them thinking about their future. The app has been developed in conjunction with careers advice experts from Babcock Lifeskills and is intended to be a first step for young people to help them understand the different choices and options available to them.

Colleges Week 2012 is supported by The Skills Show, the UK's biggest careers and skills event. Held at the NEC Birmingham from 15-17 November, The Skills Show will play host to a range of skills competitions, awards and activities. www.theskillsshow.com.

- Ends -

Notes to editors

(1) Omnibus research of 777 parents of children aged 11-18 and 500 teachers of Key stages 3&4 in the UK. Research conducted online by ResearchBods from 10th to 22nd October 2012.

(2) [UKCES – 'Employer Skills Survey 2011 UK results – chapter 3'](#)

For more information please contact Victoria Dickson on 0207 097 1879 or 07879 815308 / Victoria@collegesweek.org

For more information and facts on Colleges in England, visit the Association of Colleges website at www.aoc.co.uk

About Colleges Week

Now in its fifth year, Colleges Week aims to showcase the vital role that Colleges play in providing young people, adults and businesses in the UK with the opportunities they need to succeed.

www.collegesweek2012.org

About The Skills Show

The Skills Show is a unique annual celebration that inspires people with exciting opportunities in further education, skills and Apprenticeships. The Skills Show at the NEC Birmingham from 15-17 November is the culmination of many WorldSkills UK skills competitions, awards and activities. The Skills Show provides a platform for the best of the nation's young talent to perform, as well as providing opportunities for visitors to have a go at new skills, get careers advice and access Apprenticeships or real job opportunities from employers. The show is premier sponsored by City & Guilds, with support and funding from The Skills Funding Agency, European Social Fund and the National Apprenticeship Service.

There is a 3 year commitment to stage the Skills Show to inspire people with exciting opportunities in further education, skills and Apprenticeships. As part of the wider WorldSkills UK annual cycle of activity, this unique national event provides us with the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of

those competing at the end of the cycle as well as well as recruiting visitors to become the competitors and partners of the future.

For more information visit: www.theskillsshow.com

About Inspiring the Future

Inspiring the Future is a new free service which will see people from all sectors and professions volunteering to go into state secondary schools and Colleges to talk about their jobs, careers, and the education routes they took.

Everyone from CEOs to apprentices can volunteer for Inspiring the Future. Recent graduates, school leavers and people in the early stages of their career can be inspirational to teenagers - being close in age they are easy to relate to; while senior and recently retired staff have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. Volunteering for Inspiring the Future is free, easy, effective and fun.

Volunteers and schools/Colleges are connected securely online, and volunteering can take place near home or work as you specify the geographic locations that suit you. Criminal Records Bureau checks are not needed for 'career insight' talks.

Registration is now open for Inspiring the Future at <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/>