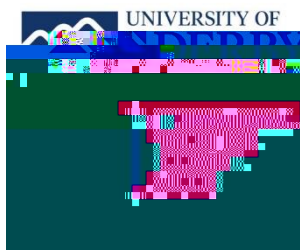


# *Teacher Encounters Programme*



## **About iCeGS**

iCeGS is a research centre with expertise in career and career development. The Centre conducts research, provides consultancy to the career sector, offers a range















## 1. Introduction

Young people face a world of increasing complexity and uncertainty. Reforms to the education system, a turbulent labour market and the educational and psycho-social impacts of the Covid pandemic all pose challenges for young people as they build their care

others who have followed a more conventional pathway into teaching may have spent most of their life in education. Whether teachers' experience is confined to the education system or broader, their ability to support young people and make connections with the curriculum is likely to be enhanced by expanding their experience of the world of work.

To this end, The Careers & Enterprise Company developed a new programme of teacher continuing professional development (CPD), which it describes as '*teacher encounters*'. Teacher encounters bring teachers together with employers for mutual exchange and learning. Where they differ from previous attempts to engage employers directly in the labour market (discussed in *chapter two* of this report), is that they are typically relatively short. Whereas previous work has tended to emphasise the value of giving teachers extended periods in industry, the teacher encounter model builds on the existing evidence that shows that young people benefit from relatively short encounters with the world of work and applies a similar approach to teacher CPD.

This paper discusses the *Teacher Encounters Programme* and provides an evaluation of its impact. It is based on an evaluation of the programme, commissioned by The Careers & Enterprise Company and undertaken by the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS). In *chapter three*, we discuss how the *Teacher Encounters Programme* was organised. *Chapter four* sets out the evaluation approach, *chapter five* explores the participant experience and then *chapter six* discusses the impacts that were observed from the programme. Finally, in *chapter seven* we explore the lessons learnt from the programme.

## 2. Existing evidence on teacher encounters

Teachers can play an important role in the career development of young people.<sup>4</sup> The argument that teachers can and should play such a role is nothing new, with more than a century of career education practice supporting this idea.<sup>5</sup> Yet, many teachers comment that they do not have the knowledge and skills needed to support young people in this way. Recent research by the Sutton Trust found that only 6% of teachers agree that their initial training prepared them to support the career development of their students.

The limited research that exists on teacher engagement with industry in the UK can be supplemented by wider international research which has explored a range of programmes that provide teachers with opportunities to engage with actual places where the knowledge and skills that are developed in the school curriculum are used. Research in France found that teachers undertaking one-year placements in industry increased their self-confidence, acquired technical skills, developed new perspectives and built a new network of businesses to engage with.<sup>10</sup> Through such placements, teachers learn how classroom content and learning strategies are applied in the workplace and increase their knowledge of the labour market and the requirements of employers. It is also suggested by the Career Academy Support Network in the USA that teacher placements (which they call externships) build relationships that support a wide range of other employer encounters for students such as guest speakers, mentors, job shadowing and student internships.<sup>11</sup>

Whilst research has found teacher engagement with businesses to be something that can be highly beneficial to teachers, it has also been found to be challenging in terms of resources, finding industry partners willing to get involved and ensuring that teachers receive useful and authentic experiences.<sup>12</sup> Dodd argues that such placements work best when teachers are no longer passive observers, but rather see themselves as employees of the company. But this creates a high bar for successful encounters.

So, while there is an emergent body of literature from both the UK and overseas that endorses the idea that creating encounters between teachers and employers is valuable, most of this literature is focused on *placements*. Placements vary in length but are usually measured in weeks or months rather than in days. Even if such an approach is valuable for some teachers, it remains impractical as a way of upskilling the whole teaching workforce. However, well-evidenced approaches with young people, suggest a host of alternative ways in which encounters with employers can be organised without the need for high commitment and high levels of resources.<sup>13</sup> Possible approaches suggested by this evidence include employer inputs into initial teacher education, employer inputs into teacher CPD, teacher and employer co-design and delivery of programmes and curriculum, visits to employer premises, employer talks and interactive questions, employer mentoring and engagement

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<sup>10</sup> Zaid, A. & Champy-Remoussenard, P. (2015). Extended business work placements for teachers: between lived experience and barriers to professionalization. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 38:2, 180-198. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2015.1022646>

<sup>11</sup> Career Academy Support Network. (2010). *Teacher externship guide*. University of California, Berkeley, Californian Department of Education.

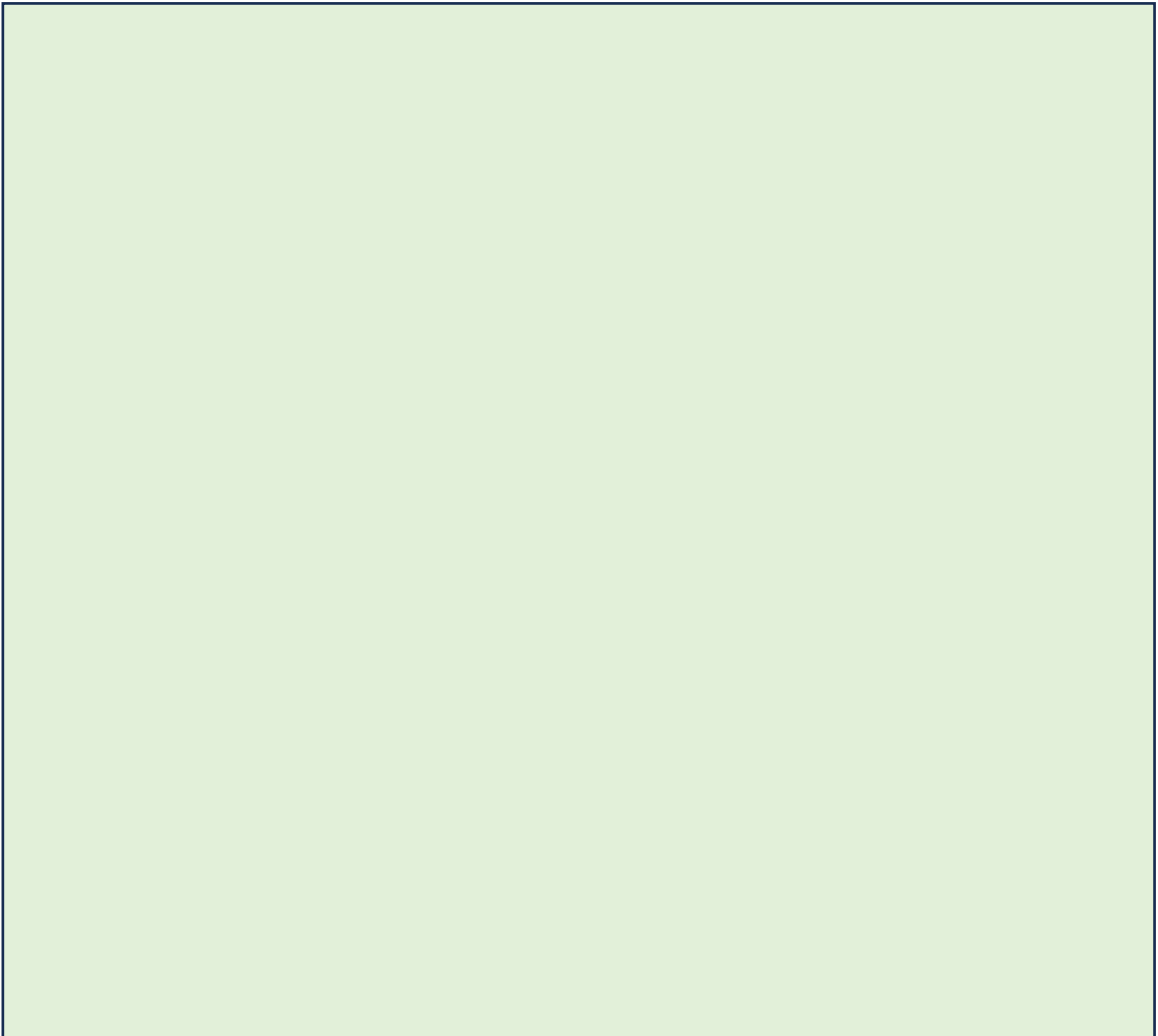
<sup>12</sup> Elmer, R (2002). Learning from a shift of context?: Student teachers on non-school placements. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 25:2-3, 239-250., <https://doi.org/10.1080/0261976022000043387>; Schüller, A & Bergami, R (2020). Teacher industry placement in Australia: Voices from vocational education and training managers. *Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training*, 3(1), 43-66. <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-jovac-et-v3-n1-a6>.

<sup>13</sup> Mann, A., Huddleston, & Kashefpakdel, E. (2019). *Essays on employer engagement in education*. Routledge; Mann, A.; Stanley, J., & Archer, L. (2014). *Understanding employer engagement in education*. Routledge.

through governing bodies and other forms of governance (e.g. employer advisory boards).

The *Teacher Encounters Programme* therefore provided an important opportunity to explore new ways to provide teacher CPD through a variety of different, but relatively resource-

### 3. The



Careers Hubs across the country developed a range of different kinds of activities. These can broadly be grouped into the following categories.

Curriculum design or other forms of input into the curriculum.

Demonstrations of tools, tasks or processes.

Mentoring opportunities.

Recruitment insights.

Site visits/tours of facilities.

Talks with employers.

Training and professional development interventions.





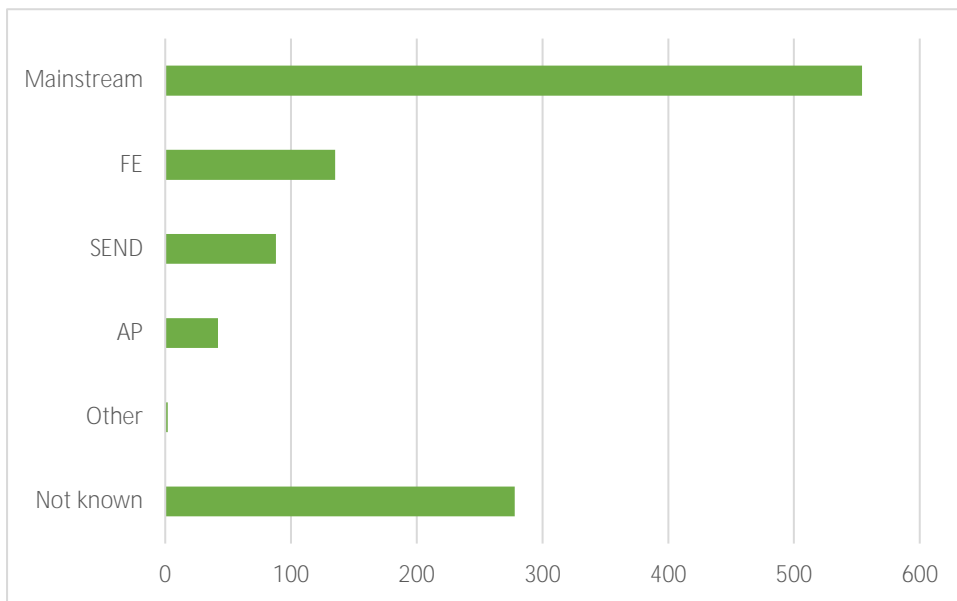


Figure 3.3. Teacher encounters by educational setting

### Case study: Oxfordshire + Oxford Biomedica

The Oxfordshire Careers Hub and OxLEP developed a teacher encounter with Oxford Biomedica, an Oxford-based life sciences company that gave science teachers the opportunity to experience how science subjects are used in industry and learn about local science-related career pathways. The encounter was designed to support schools to embed the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Seven teachers each had two encounters at Oxford Biomedica. In their first encounter, teachers heard from scientists and apprentices about the work that they do and the local career pathways that are on offer. On their second visit, teachers worked with Oxford Biomedica to identify aspects of the curriculum that aligned with what was happening in industry. For example, they explored where in the curriculum it would be possible to discuss the company's work using DNA technology and genetic screening.

Oxford Biomedica is now working to create resources that can be used in schools.







*into education and work (see*

Figure 5.3). Linking their subject to careers and improving their knowledge of employment were also popular reasons for engaging.

*Figure 5.3. Reasons for engaging with the Teacher Encounters Programme. (N= 796, multiple selection allowed)*

Respondents to the pre-encounter survey were also given the opportunity to specify the three learning goals that they were hoping to achieve through participation in the

Learning goal	Examples
<b>Building relationships and networking</b>	<i>'to build closer relationships with [the business]'</i>

Most interventions that took place were conducted face-to-face. Teachers were able to take part in multiple encounters and activities. In their post-encounter survey, they were asked to select all types of activities that they took part in during their encounter(s). Whilst most encounters that were delivered included a mix of activities that all teachers would be involved in, we can see that talks with employers (n=323), recruitment insights (n=304) and site visits (n=311) were the activities that were most frequently undertaken. The activities with the lowest response rate were mentoring and work experience.

The overwhelming majority (84%) of respondents also stated that they preferred face-to-face interventions to online (2%) or combination (14%).

Teachers agreed that the registration process was easy, they received sufficient information about the programme beforehand, and the information about the programme was useful. The majority (87%, n=391) of the teachers who answered the post-survey said that they would recommend the programme to colleagues. After participating in the programme 91% of teachers stated that they agreed to some extent that employer engagement is a good use of their time and they would want to do it more frequently.

### Employers

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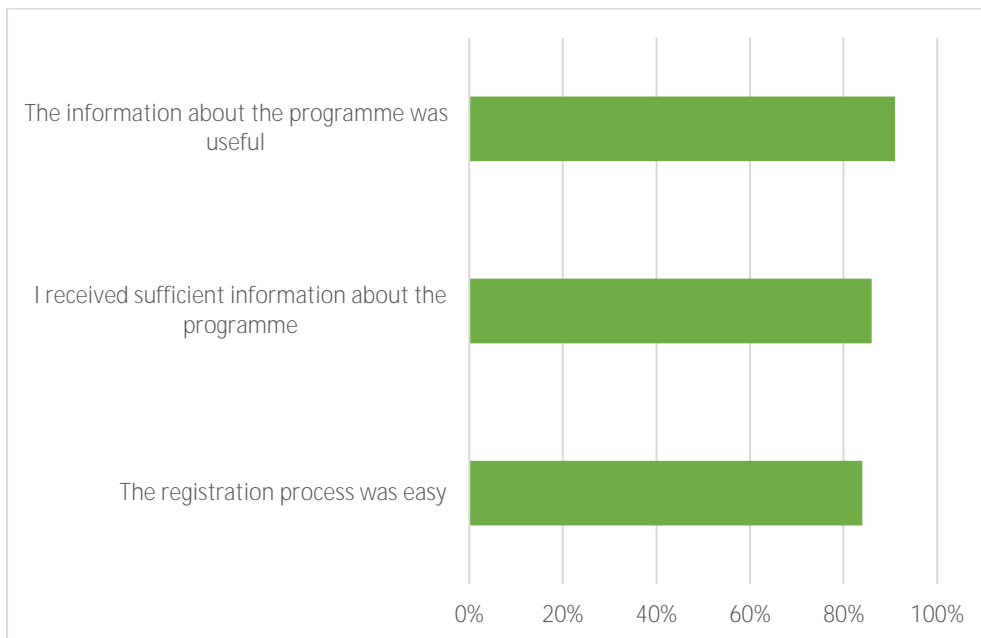


Figure 5.5. Employer feedback on the registration process (n=77)

Participating in the *Teacher Encounters Programme* was considered by employers to be a worthwhile activity with 94% stating that they would be eager to engage with teachers again in the future. 95% of employers (n=71) stated that they would recommend participating in activities like this to a colleague or another employer.



## 6. Impacts



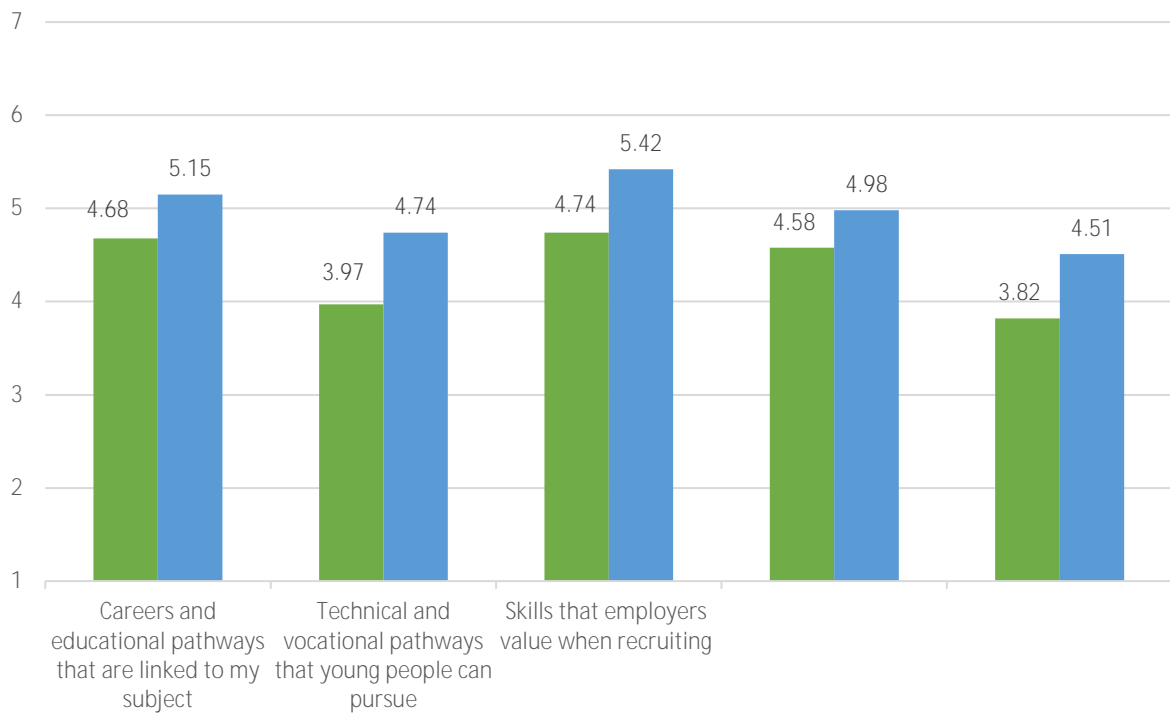


Figure 6.2. Pre- post-encounter change in the level of career-relevant knowledge<sup>19</sup>

All five knowledge areas were found to be statistically significant.<sup>20</sup>

The focus groups with teachers supported these findings with participants stating how *'it was a real insight speaking to the employers and apprentices directly'* and explaining the value that they gained from hearing directly from young apprentices. One teacher explained how they hoped that the links and relationships that had been built through the programme would be sustained and grow stronger with the aim of developing more knowledge about apprenticeships.

#### Confidence

Teachers also reported an increase in confidence in delivering careers in the classroom and communicating with students, parents and employers about career-related issues. The largest changes can be seen in their confidence in *'engaging employers in my practice'* which has seen a 93% increase (44 pp), and their confidence to *'communicate with parents about their children's careers and future pathways'* which increased by 63% (33 pp).

<sup>19</sup> Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge level using a 1-7 scale.

<sup>20</sup> Significance was tested by treating the knowledge variable as continuous data and using a paired sample t-test. All tests had a p-value of less than 0.05.

Figure 6.3. Pre- post-encounter change in the level of confidence<sup>21</sup>

All four areas were found to be statistically significant.<sup>22</sup>

The overwhelming majority (91%) agreed to some extent that it has improved their confidence in holding career related conversations, and 78% agreed to some extent that employer engagement improved their skills to deliver their subjects. One teacher expressed how *'the day was an invaluable use of my time, providing insight which I can use to inform future planning of our career programme'*.

Following their encounters, teachers were eager to continue to build their relationships with the organisations they had engaged with. One teacher stated that they were *'eager to sit down and learn about other ways we could engage with [the business] as a school'*. Another teacher explained how following their encounter they *'have a lot of new knowledge and hopefully an employer that we can develop a longer relationship with'*.

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Most participating employers (77%) were clear that they were now much more able to engage with schools effectively. They reported that due to participating they were better able to explain to schools and young people the skills that they needed (97%) and that they would know how to deliver more effective teacher encounters in the future (76%).

For a minority of employers, the learning went further with 42% reporting that the encounter with a teacher had given them a better idea about how to deliver more effectively to young people, 39% saying that they now had a better idea about the needs of young people from diverse backgrounds, and 35% saying that they now had a better idea about how to get involved in curriculum.

Through the programme, employers gain a greater understanding of schools and teacher responsibilities. One employer stated that participating in the programme has allowed them to *'build better links with schools and understand school challenges'*, whilst others explained that *'we gained a clear insight into the way that teachers view and engage with their students'* and *'there is a better understanding of the challenges teachers face when trying to explain the relevance of their subject to the real world'*.

As well as more effective relationships with schools, the employers who participated in the programme also reported a range of other benefits for themselves and their organisation. Most reported that they had learnt useful skills (68%), while almost all reported that engaging with school or college teachers had been beneficial to their organisation (91%). A breakdown of all of the impacts identified by employers is set out in Figure 6.4.

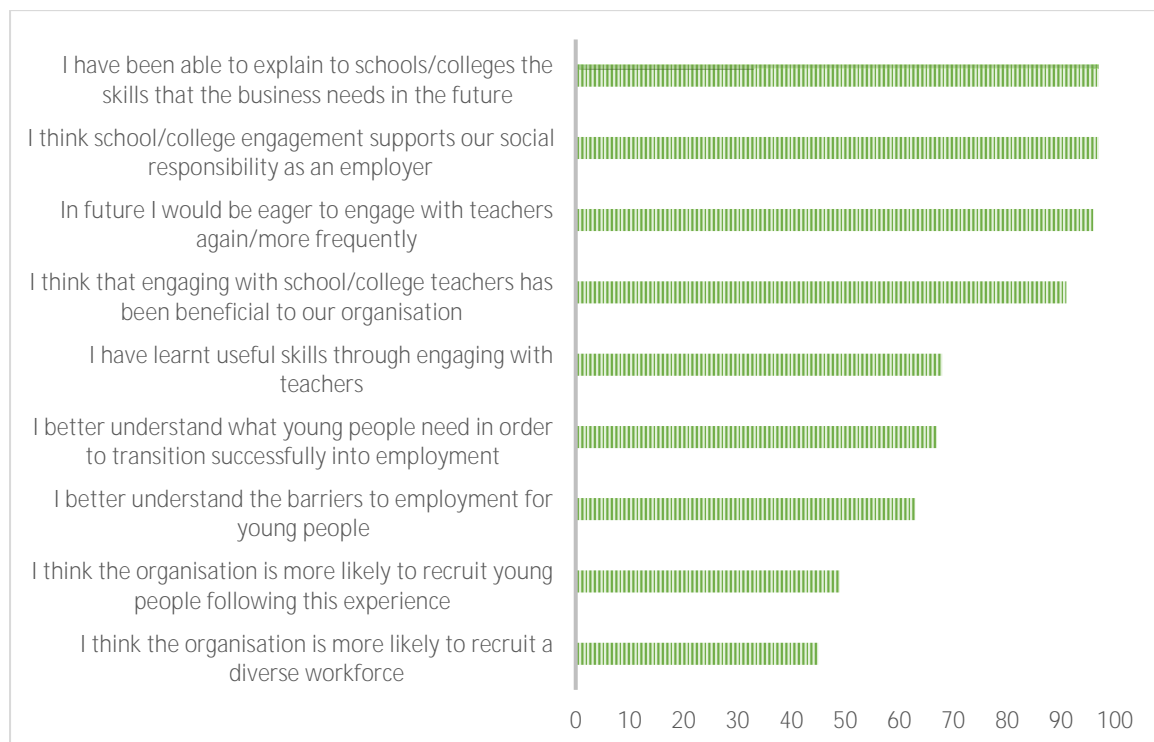


Figure 6.4. Impacts identified by employers

Development of employer knowledge has also been demonstrated in resources that they have developed due to participating in the *Teacher Encounters Programme*. The following example from Ruddock's in Greater Lincolnshire provides a good example of the kinds of resources that were developed.

### **Ruddocks Creative Production Agency**

As part of their participation with the *Teacher Encounters Programme* in Greater Lincolnshire, Ruddocks, a creative production agency, produced an educational handbook which was provided to teachers following their encounter.

The handbook contains several curriculum-related activities that can be used by teachers to bring their subjects to life, with each task being directly related to the work of the company. Tasks include a design brief, providing quote estimates, sales aef,064 194.66 447.79 394.27 r3(Rud)4(d)-3(o)-3(ck)(lat[re)04 46it/F7 12 To)

## 7. Lessons learnt

Employers stated that recruiting enough teachers was challenging as *'it was difficult for them to make time in amongst their teaching priorities'*, with one employer stating how *'we offered 20 places on teacher encounters and only two were taken...the programme had to be completely reworked due to lack of uptake'*.

To address this, one option may be for Careers Hubs to start the *Teacher Encounters Programme* by actively engaging with SLT. The aim of such engagement would be to explain to SLT what the purpose of the encounters are and to use the evaluation evidence to demonstrate some of the impacts of the programme.

#### Refine the teacher encounters

The pilot saw a wide range of different approaches to teacher encounters being trialled. While the numbers of participants in each approach are not sufficient to provide us with a definitive quantitative answer on which approaches work most effectively, the data does provide a range of insights about how the intervention could be refined in future years.

**Increase the hands-on components.** Teachers were keen to participate in more hands-on activities and would like to have seen more opportunities for this incorporated in the encounters as opposed to talks/discussions. One teacher explained how *'I would have preferred to do a more hands-on task to help me understand the different roles in the factory, rather than just have a chat about the challenges of recruitment'*, with another teacher stating that *'once we actually went into the workplace, this is when the*







tool for bringing education and employment into better alignment through empowering a whole school approach, gaining teacher and SLT buy in, and embedding careers in subjects and the curriculum.