

# Advancing Apprenticeships

**Increasing opportunities and overcoming barriers  
for young people**



**Kevin Munday**

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## Summary

There has been a renewed focus on Apprenticeships within the UK over the last decade, with the number of people starting Apprenticeships rising year on year. However, numbers remain low in comparison to Australia, where a third of young people take part in vocational education and training. Whilst historically the Australian system was modelled on that in the UK, whereas we had a significant dip in Apprenticeship numbers during the 1980s and 1990s, their buoyant economy has seen considerable growth and innovation.

So the aim of my Fellowship was to explore how Australia, as one of the world leaders in vocational training, could provide examples of how to engage employers, attract more young people into industry and train them effectively for the workplace. I investigated Australia's system for school to work transition and Apprenticeships and identified lessons on how to increase the number of work-related learning and Apprenticeship opportunities within East London and more widely across the UK.

As a result of the Fellowship I have identified a series of recommendations for both policy makers and organisations that work with young people. Over the next year I will be promoting these and sharing the findings from the Fellowship through further writing and events. I will also be developing a programme called ThinkForward, designed to support young people's successful school to work transition.

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## Introduction

### Background

There has been a renewed focus on Apprenticeships within the UK over the last 10 years, with the number of people starting Apprenticeships nationally rising from 65,000 in 1998/99 to 180,000 in 2008/09 (NAS, 2009). However, whilst London has 16% of the young people in the UK, it has only have 5% of the Apprenticeships (ibid.). I was interested in how Australia, as one of the world leaders in vocational training, could provide examples of how to engage employers, attract more young people into industry and train them effectively for the workplace.

### Aims and Objectives of the Fellowship

My aims were to:

- To investigate Australia's system for school to work transition and Apprenticeships;
- To explore the role of national and local government and the voluntary sector in providing incentives and support to employers and young people; and
- To identify lessons for how to increase the number of work-related learning and Apprenticeship opportunities within East London and more widely across the UK.

To achieve these aims, I explored:

- how young people are prepared for the world of work and the transition from school to work can be eased;

- the marketing and promotion of vocational learning and Apprenticeships to young people and employers;
- the availability of pre-Apprenticeship information, advice and guidance and vocational training, including in schools;
- the positive action to support young people from underrepresented backgrounds, including those from indigenous communities or with disabilities, to access Apprenticeships;
- the financial incentives provided to employers who take on an Apprentice, particularly in areas of skills shortage during the economic downturn;
- the role of voluntary and private training providers and how the quality of their training is assured; and
- how local government can build Apprenticeship targets into planning and procurement agreements.

## **Purpose**

At the time of undertaking the Fellowship I was the Head of 14-19 Development in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and I primarily wanted to use the knowledge I gained to increase the number of Apprenticeships available to young people in my community. However, the visit also changed my views on how best to prepare young people for the world of work and I have subsequently also been able to use my learning from the Fellowship to develop a new programme. ThinkForward, which is currently being incubated in Impetus-The Private Equity Foundation, supports young people to achieve a successful transition from education of employment and is described at the end of this report.

## Itinerary

During the Fellowship I met with government officials, peak bodies, training providers, employers and Apprentices themselves, around the following areas:

- National government – the national policy framework supporting Apprenticeships and the context of Apprenticeships within the Australian system of education and training;
- State government – how each State implements national policy, as well as in employing Apprentices themselves in the public sector;
- Apprenticeship Centres and Group Training Organisations – their role in linking employers and young people; and
- Local registered training organisations and employers – observing delivery on the ground and meeting Apprentices, their workplace supervisors and training staff.

Places/dates	Names of organisations visited
Sydney 19 – 27 November 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ David Collins, General Manager, State Training Services, NSW Department of Education and Communities: the local government role in Apprenticeship planning and delivery <a href="http://www.training.nsw.gov.au">www.training.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>▪ Rosemary Conn, Program Director, Beacon Foundation: inspiring students to choose a positive pathway that enables successful transition to employment <a href="http://www.beaconfoundation.net/">www.beaconfoundation.net/</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jim Whiteside, General Manager, Australian Training Company: school-based Apprenticeships: <a href="http://www.austrg.com.au">www.austrg.com.au</a></li> <li>▪ James Toomey, Executive Leader, Community Services, Mission Australia: ACCESS pre-Apprenticeship training <a href="http://www.missionaustralia.com.au">www.missionaustralia.com.au</a></li> <li>▪ Andrew Williams, General Manager, Australian Business Apprenticeships Centre: visit to an Apprenticeship Centre <a href="http://www.apprenticeshipscentre.com.au">www.apprenticeshipscentre.com.au</a></li> <li>▪ Kevin Harris, Institute Director, North Sydney Institute/TAFE NSW: strategies for developing supportive workplace environments <a href="http://www.nsi.tafensw.edu.au">www.nsi.tafensw.edu.au</a></li> </ul>
<p>Canberra 28 November – 4 December 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daniel Owen, Branch Manager, Australian Apprenticeships Reform, Department of Education, Employment &amp; Workplace Relations: Current context in Australia and plans for future system reform <a href="http://www.deewr.gov.au">www.deewr.gov.au</a></li> <li>▪ Peter Dowling, Executive Officer, National Association of Australian Apprenticeship Centres: why mentoring and screening are key in successfully completing Apprenticeships <a href="http://www.naaac.com.au">www.naaac.com.au</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jim Barron, CEO, Group Training Australia: the 'group training' model and its application and relevance in a modern employment and training market <a href="http://www.grouptraining.com.au">www.grouptraining.com.au</a></li> <li>▪ Penelope Butt, Transitions, Careers and Vocational Learning Manager, ACT Education and Training Directorate: employing Apprentices in local government <a href="http://www.det.act.gov.au">www.det.act.gov.au</a></li> <li>▪ Peter Andersen, General Manager, ACT Apprenticeships: visit to a Group Training Company/Registered Organisation <a href="http://citea.com.au">http://citea.com.au</a></li> <li>▪ Adrian Marron, Chief Executive, Canberra Institute of Technology: effective preparation for the world of work <a href="http://cit.edu.au">http://cit.edu.au</a></li> </ul>
Melbourne 5 – 14 November 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kym Peake, Deputy Secretary, Skills Victoria: Developing a more attractive, flexible, and responsive training model and improving accessibility <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/</a></li> <li>▪ Russell Kerr, CEO, Hands on Learning: engaging the most vulnerable learners <a href="http://handsonlearning.org.au">http://handsonlearning.org.au</a></li> <li>▪ Linda Brown, Director TAFE, Swinburne University of Technology: raising aspirations and achieving higher retention rates through effective mentoring <a href="http://www.swinburne.edu.au">www.swinburne.edu.au</a></li> <li>▪ George Giuliani, CEO, Employment Focus: visit to Melbourne</li> </ul>

	<p>Apprenticeship Centre</p> <p><a href="http://www.e-focus.org.au">www.e-focus.org.au</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Mark Stone, CEO, Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI): engaging employers in recruiting and training Apprentices</li></ul> <p><a href="http://www.vecci.org.au">www.vecci.org.au</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Justine Munro, Executive Director, Education, Social Ventures Australia: partnering with ventures for 'at risk' youth to prevent long-term unemployment</li></ul> <p><a href="http://www.socialventures.com.au/">www.socialventures.com.au/</a></p>
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## **Setting the Scene**

### **Vocational Education and Training in Australia**

Historically the Australian system of Vocational Education and Training (VET) was modelled on that in the UK but, whilst we had a significant dip in Apprenticeship numbers during the 80s and 90s, their buoyant economy has seen considerable growth and innovation.

The VET system aims to deliver a productive and highly skilled workforce to enable all working age Australians to develop the skills and qualifications needed to participate effectively in the labour market and contribute to Australia's economic future. Training providers within the VET system include technical and further education (TAFE) institutes, adult and community education providers and colleges, as well as private providers, community organisations, industry skill centres, and commercial and enterprise training providers. In addition, some universities and schools provide VET. Data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2012) shows that in 2011 1.9 million students were enrolled in the public VET system, with around a quarter undertaking Apprenticeships.

Australian Apprenticeships combine employment with training leading to nationally recognised qualifications. They are available in over 500 occupations, from traditional trades to emerging careers, across almost every industry. In 2011-12 around 470,000 Apprentices were in training, with both commencements and completions up on previous years (ibid.). Through a combination of national and state funding, around \$1.2 billion per annum is spent on training and incentives.

Apprenticeships are provided through a partnership between the state/territory governments and the Australian Government, along with industry, public and private training providers, who work together to provide a nationally consistent programme across Australia. The diagram below shows examples of the key players in, for example, New South Wales:



## Findings

Through my Fellowship visits I identified seven lessons we can learn from our Australian counterparts. I outline each lesson below, together with case studies from some of the organisations I visited.

### Employer-led Approach

We should make employer's needs more central to the vocational training and Apprenticeship system. In Australia although some money still goes to the training provider, most of the financial support for Apprentices is aimed at employers. As recommended in the Richard Review, the bulk of skills funding in the UK should go to employers, so that they can then invest in the training provider of their choice.

#### **Australian Apprenticeship Centres**

Australian Apprenticeships Centres are contracted by the Australian Government to provide one-stop shops for employers seeking to hire Apprentices (and also those wanting to take up Apprenticeships).

Australian Apprenticeships Centres market and promote Apprenticeships in their local area and work with both the State Training Authorities and Registered Training Organisations to provide an integrated service. They assist with the signing of training contracts and also, assess, approve and process the payment of Australian Government incentives to eligible employers, and personal benefits to eligible Australian Apprentices specifically to assist them in the early years of their Australian

Apprenticeship when their wages are generally at their lowest. Australian Apprenticeships Centres also provide information which may assist employers and/or Apprentices with placements. However, they don't provide training or matching themselves, instead referring such enquiries to appropriate organisations such as Job Placement Organisations and Group Training Organisations.

An example of an Australian Apprenticeship Centre I visited was the Australian Business Apprenticeship Centre in Sydney. As a wholly owned subsidiary of the New South Wales (NSW) Business Chamber, it is a specialist and independent provider of Australian Apprenticeships services and operates under a contract funded by the Department of Industry. With 28 offices and over 200 staff around NSW and over 15 years' experience as an Apprenticeships Centre, they have the skills and resources to simplify the entire process, saving employers time and ensuring that the appointment and management of Apprentices is streamlined and easy. At no cost to business, they provide guidance and assistance, including:

- A network of locally based consultants who can visit business workplaces to advise on training opportunities for new and existing staff;
- Advice on government incentives and benefits for which business may be entitled;
- Assistance with all the necessary paperwork;
- Access to a secure online portal, 'Apprenticeships Direct', to easily track apprentice and company incentive payments;
- A range of resources to assist in inducting, coaching and mentoring Apprentices;
- Connection to recruitment options and services if required.

For more information visit: <http://www.apprenticeshipscentre.com.au>

## **Financial Incentives**

We should use other financial incentives sparing and to encourage the employment of disadvantaged groups, including 16/17 year olds, young people with disabilities and, in some professions, young people of underrepresented gender/ethnicity. In Australia there is a complicated system of financial support, which at first sight appears very attractive. However, over time they have come to be seen as entitlements and a review by Deloitte seemed to show that they had very little incentivising power.

### **Australian Apprenticeships Incentive Program**

The Australian Government provides significant financial support to Australian Apprenticeships through the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive Program (AAIP), as well as through the broader provision of publically funded training. In 2011, \$1.02 billion was spent through the AAIP to encourage and support the commencement and retention of apprentices and trainees. The objective is to contribute to the development of a highly skilled and relevant Australian workforce that supports economic sustainability and competitiveness. This is achieved by:

- providing opportunities for skills-based training and development of employees by providing incentives to employers who employ eligible Apprentices; and
- encouraging people to enter into skills-based training through an Apprenticeship by providing personal benefits.

Current incentives include for commencement, retention and completion of Apprenticeships. There are also incentives for rural and regional skills shortages, 'mature-aged' workers Apprentices with disabilities.

In 2012 the Australian Government commissioned Deloitte to undertake an econometric analysis of its impact on the behaviour of employers and individuals. Their analysis of Apprenticeship commencements showed that all the incentives offering more than \$1,000 in the first year proved to have a significant, positive effect on commencements. For those under 20, they had a much larger effect around summer when the traditional school year finishes and the supply of potential Apprentices is highest.

On the other hand, the findings of the Apprenticeship retention/completion analysis suggest that for the most part these incentives were ineffective, as they were associated with an increase in the probability of cancelling an apprenticeship, and a decrease in the probability of completing an apprenticeship. They also found that retention rates were reduced where commencements were inflated, implying that mismatches between individuals and training emerge in these circumstances.

As a result an Expert Panel has recommended that incentives be discriminately targeted to apprentices and their employers in occupations that are priorities for the Australian economy. The Panel also recommended that investment be used to provide structured support services such as mentoring and pastoral care, rather than solely for cash incentive payments.

For more information visit: <http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au>

## Group Training

We should develop the system of group training organisations, so that in industries where there is a high turnover of employees, for example construction, Apprentices can be passed between host companies more easily. In Australia, about 10% of Apprentices are now employed through a group training organisation. They provide a particularly attractive option for employers who find it difficult to add additional permanent employees to their headcount or who simply want more support.

### Group Training Australia

Group Training Australia Limited (GTA) is the national association representing a network of around 150 group training organisations (GTOs) located throughout metropolitan, regional and remote areas of Australia. Collectively the national network employs around 35,000 Apprentices at any one time and over 100,000 businesses have used a GTO to manage the employment of their Apprentices. GTA provides advocacy and professional development services for the GTO national network, working closely with the state group training associations. GTA also promotes the benefits of the group training model of Apprentice employment and highlights the contribution of the group training network to skills development.

For more information visit: <http://www.grouptraining.com.au>

One example of a RTO I visited is the **Australian Training Company (ATC)**. ATC engages over 1,200 Apprentices each year and operates in all eastern states and territories.

ATC began in 1994 providing structured employment opportunities for sports people. Over time their group training operation has progressively grown by offering the same opportunities to a broader market. In 1998, in response to increasing industry demands for tailored education programs, ATC also commenced a training operation and has provided education and learning to more than 20,000 students.

ATC's group training operation assigns Apprentices to commercial, community and government organisations. ATC recruits, employs, arranges training and monitors the progress of the Apprentice. For example one of their clients, Service Stream Communications Pty Ltd provides a range of network and specialist services to the telecommunications industry including labour hire, installation and maintenance of telephony and broadband networks. Since 2005, they have utilised the services of ATC on a national scale, regularly hiring staff in every Australian state and territory. Their NSW Human Resources Manager Robin Williams says:

“The program allows us to provide and nurture raw young talent with the skills the business requires. These staff have carved themselves a career path with the majority gaining a permanent position at SSC. A recent success occurred when an ATC trainee who graduated 4 years ago was promoted to a supervisor position with the company.”

For more information visit: <http://www.austrg.com.au>

## Progression Planning

Progression planning should begin much earlier, with the first conversations about the world of work starting in primary school and occurring regularly thereafter. By the time young people enter Key Stage 4, they should have clear post-16 pathways mapped out and know how to get there. In Australia they ensure this by establishing links between schools and businesses, so that young people and teachers have access to industry knowledge. In the UK, all young people, and particularly those who come from workless families, need to have access to engagement opportunities with employees, work skills training and workplace experiences.

### **ACT Education and Training Directorate**

In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government, the Education and Training Directorate supports students, staff and schools in the implementation of career education programs, career development strategies, Pathways Planning and the successful transitions through the stages of schooling and beyond to further education, training and/or employment. They:

- coordinate Work Experience placements for students in ACT high schools and colleges;
- manage an annual CareersXpo in partnership with the Rotary Club of Canberra;
- offer support and professional development opportunities for Careers Advisors to assist them in providing quality outcomes for students;
- assist students at risk to achieve nationally accredited qualifications through an Alternative Education Programs; and

- support the Transitions and Careers Office in each ACT college.

The recent ACT 'Youth Commitment' requires all agencies that serve young people to the age of 17 to commit to ensuring that no young person is lost from education, training or employment. An important component of this for young people is the 'Pathways Planning' process. By 2014 it is expected that all young people from 11-16 years of age will have an active Pathways Plan. The plans:

- provide opportunities for young people to explore their unique set of needs and capabilities through identifying their personal strengths, interests and goals;
- support young people to define their goals and outline the necessary steps to attain their goals; and
- enable young people to explore the pathways available to them.

Agencies may decide to add an appendix to the pathways plan for situations specific to the young people they are working with, e.g. high schools may decide to add an appendix that focuses specifically on high school to college transition. It is recognised that for pathways planning to be an effective process for young people, regular review (at least annually) is required, especially at times of change or transitions. As such it is essential that a young person's Pathways Plan be retained and transferred from one year to the next and from one agency/school to the next and web-based options are being explored.

For more information visit: <http://www.det.act.gov.au/home>

## **Transition from School to Work**

We should provide more support for young people to stay in school and improve their behaviour and attendance. In Australia I saw work which aims to help young people make informed, high aspiration decisions about their future pathways. High quality pastoral support from a school-based tutor/mentor, backed up by life skills development and access to a network of specialist support, is the best way of ensuring all young people leave with the best possible achievements.

### **The Beacon Foundation**

Beacon aims to help young people make informed, high aspiration decisions about their future pathways. They have an established track record of helping inspire and motivate students to either stay in school and increase their educational engagement and attainment or choose a positive pathway that enables successful transition to employment, further education or training. Their unique program works in secondary schools to support young people to develop this focus through engaging and influencing the attitudes and behaviour of the broader community. By harnessing community involvement, it works within schools to ensure young people are either earning or learning at vulnerable transition points in their lives.

Post school transition support has generally been the joint responsibility of the school, family, business and community, however for young people in disadvantaged communities who are less likely to have parental, business and community role models and networks, the school must play a greater role in providing this support.

The Beacon Foundation has scaled to a large, national presence with deep school and business/community relationships, so it is therefore well placed to support them in this work.

Beacon's 'Core Programs' comprise a range of activities and events that support careers curriculums in the school and their additional 'High Impact Programs' are specifically targeted to those young people in greatest need. When compared to other youth attainment and transition initiatives, a distinguishing factor of the Beacon model is the provision of direct support and one-on-one resources for schools. A key resource is extensive in-school support to the Beacon coordinator in the participating school, supported by tools, templates and best practice information for schools participating in Beacon programs.

As an active participant in the school environment, Beacon has the established credibility and connections to significantly leverage across clusters of schools in each regions. Their evaluation process rigorously measures three main outcomes – retention, engagement and employment. Beacon schools have comparatively better retention, employment and participation than the national rates, which is particularly compelling considering Beacon schools are in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. 96.8% of Beacon students were still in education nine months after completing Year 10 (14.9 percentage points higher than the national average), while 97% of students reported that Beacon activities helped them to gain industry knowledge, learning aspirations or employability skills.

For more information visit: <http://beaconfoundation.com.au>

## **School-Based Apprenticeships**

We should explore the options for School/College-based Apprenticeships, perhaps within a 'Technical Baccalaureate' framework, so that young people are able to start high quality work-related learning earlier. Although the UK's Young Apprenticeship programme was stopped following the recommendations of the Wolf Review, in some Australian states it has provided a high quality alternative route to employment. It may also enable young people to tap into the growing part-time job market and, if paid, offset recent reductions in financial support for 16-to-19 year olds.

### **Australian School-based Apprenticeships in Victoria**

Young Australians can get a head start with their careers by beginning an Apprenticeship while still at school. School-based Apprenticeships allowing young people to gain paid employment and commence training for a vocational qualification while completing their senior secondary certificate.

An Australian School-based Apprentice undertakes a combination of secondary school subjects, work experience and training undertaken on or off the job. Training delivered by a Registered Training Organisation may be undertaken for a couple of hours every week or for a longer block of time, less frequently. Apprentices negotiate time-release from their school subjects to attend work and training, arranging to catch up on any school material they miss at a later date.

The number of hours an Australian School-based Apprentice needs to be employed per week differs between States and Territories based on their legislation. Some Australian School-based Apprentices can undertake their paid employment outside of school hours, such as on the weekend, however others must take time during school hours to work and this depends on the requirements of the employer.

An Australian Apprenticeship can take from one to four years to complete, depending on the type, the industry and the qualification undertaken. Some Australian School-based Apprentices will be able to complete their training when they finish their secondary schooling, while others will need to finish their training after they graduate from secondary school. This depends on the qualification undertaken and the speed at which they progress through their training.

For example, Joel a student in Victoria started a School-based Apprenticeship in Automotive Mechanical Technology. In addition to his core school subjects, the 17-year-old learns skills covering a large range of farm equipment, including combine harvesters, broad acre tractors, hoes, slashers and seeding implements. In addition to his studies, Joel works at a motorcycle business on weekends where he immerses himself in his love of motorcycles. When he leaves school he would like to complete the Advanced Automotive Certificate and in the long term he hopes to open his own business.

For more information visit:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/curriculum/pages/apprentice.aspx>

## **Pre-Apprenticeship Training**

The proposed new system of Traineeships in the UK should provide high quality pre-Apprenticeship training for young people who are not yet work-ready. The current foundation learning offer should be enriched to be more like the Australian approach, which includes qualifications more directly leading into Apprenticeship opportunities and some real, paid work experience.

### **Pre-Apprenticeship Training in New South Wales (NSW)**

A Pre-Apprenticeship program is a training pathway that prepares an individual for entry into an Australian Apprenticeship. Approximately 28 per cent of Apprentices in the trade occupations (where they are most prevalent) reported that they had completed a pre-apprenticeship program. They typically consist of off-the-job training with a Registered Training Organisation and an element of work experience with an employer (Australian Government 2009). However, in practice, like in the UK, there is no formal definition that distinguishes a pre-apprenticeship program from other training activity in the Australian vocational education and training system.

The NSW Youth Attainment and Transitions Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program is designed to assist young people in NSW seeking to transition into an Apprenticeship. Funding is available for the delivery of training by partner Registered Training Organisations and the recruiting, screening and for the referral of suitable applicants for pre-apprenticeship training by Group Training Organisations, with the view to them employing participants on completion.

The program aims to facilitate a smooth transition from school to vocational training and employment for young people, by enables students to familiarise themselves with trade vocational choices and the requirements of the workplace. They can also receive support and advice to see whether a particular type of Apprenticeship is suitable prior to making a full commitment.

Pre-Apprenticeship programs have generated interest as one means of improving apprenticeship completion rates. Dumbrell and Smith (2007), for example, found strong support for Pre-Apprenticeships among employers and prospective Apprentices. Employers they spoke to saw the programs as an effective and efficient screening device. However, the evidence of the effectiveness of Pre-Apprenticeships is mixed. The Australian National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) found that participation in such training overall had minimal effect on the propensity to complete a subsequent Apprenticeship (Karmel and Oliver 2011). Apprentices in the construction and food trades and Apprentices whose highest previous level of education is Year 10 or Year 12 were more likely to complete their training if they have undertaken a Pre-Apprenticeship. For other occupations and levels of education, notably hairdressing and those with higher qualifications, completing a Pre-Apprenticeship appears to reduce the likelihood of completing an Apprenticeship. However, research by Group Training Australia found that providers of Pre-Apprenticeship training reported that many of their students who did progress, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, would not have been able to gain an Apprenticeship without having done the Pre-Apprenticeship.

For more information visit:

[http://www.training.nsw.gov.au/programs\\_services/funded\\_apl/preapp/yat.html](http://www.training.nsw.gov.au/programs_services/funded_apl/preapp/yat.html)

## Conclusions

As a result of the Fellowship I have identified a series of recommendations for both policy makers and organisations that work with young people. Over the next year I will be promoting these and sharing the findings from the Fellowship through further writing and events.

### Recommendations for Policy Makers

1. Make employer's needs more central to the vocational training and Apprenticeship system. The bulk of skills funding should go to them, so that they can then invest in the training providers of their choice.
2. Use other financial incentives sparingly and to encourage the employment of disadvantaged groups, including 16/17 year olds, young people with disabilities and, in some professions, young people of underrepresented gender/ethnicity.
3. Selectively develop the system of group training organisations, so that in industries where there is a high turnover of employees, e.g. construction, Apprentices can be passed between host companies more easily. Group training organisations also provide an attractive option for employers who are unable to add additional new employees to their headcount.
4. Explore the options for School/College-Based Apprenticeships, so that young people not engaged by the English Baccalaureate offer are able to start high

quality work-related learning earlier. These may also enable young people to tap into the growing part-time job market and, if paid, offset recent reductions in financial support for 16-19 year olds.

### **Recommendations for Organisations that Work with Young People**

5. Provide more support for young people to stay in school and improve their behaviour and attendance. High quality pastoral support from a school-based tutor/mentor, backed up by life skills development and access to a network of specialist support, is the best way of ensuring all young people leave with the best possible achievements.
6. Begin progression planning much earlier, with the first conversations about the world of work starting in primary school and occurring regularly thereafter. By the time young people enter Key Stage 4, they should have clear post-16 pathways mapped out and be clear how to get there.
7. Increase the links between schools and businesses, so that young people and teachers have access to the world of work. All young people, and particularly those who come from workless families, should have access to engagement opportunities with employees, work skills training and workplace experiences.
8. Develop higher quality pre-Apprenticeship training for young people who are not yet work-ready. The current foundation learning offer should be enriched to include qualifications more directly leading into Apprenticeship opportunities and some real, paid work experience.

## ThinkForward Programme

In addition I have begun to develop a programme to put into practice some of the lessons I learnt in Australia about supporting successful school to work transitions.

ThinkForward is a breakthrough programme which intervenes early to significantly improve the chances of those most at risk of dropping out as they navigate the often challenging journey through school and into their first job. These young people are given a 'super-coach' from age 14 through to 19, who work one-to-one providing personalised, sustained support to overcome challenges at home and at school. The coaches help young people decide what they want to do when they finish school, and to build the skills, characteristics, contacts and confidence they'll need to get there.

The programme doesn't duplicate effort, rather connects young people with the most relevant local services and networks. One key to the programme's success is building bridges between the often separate worlds of education and the workplace. Our employer partners host office visits, offer work shadowing and provide mentors. Feedback from our coaches suggests that these experiences can be transformational for students, while also benefiting the businesses.

ThinkForward will be in 14 schools by spring 2013 and once the programme's impact is proven, we believe it has the potential to improve the prospects of disadvantaged school leavers nationwide. For more information visit: <http://www.think-forward.org.uk>, email: [kevin.munday@impetus-pef.org.uk](mailto:kevin.munday@impetus-pef.org.uk) or follow us on twitter

@ThinkForwardUK

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