

MINUTES
Outreach Programmes and Skill Development

Women and Work APPG Meeting, Monday 25 March 2019
3:30pm-4:30pm, Committee Room 18, House of Commons

Chair: Virginia Crosbie, Senior Researcher for Maria Miller MP, Director of Women2Win

Parliamentarians in attendance:

- Baroness Garden of Frognal

Virginia Crosbie convened the meeting as Chair.

Minutes

Assistant Headteacher and Careers Lead at Whitefield School, Chris Young provided some background on his school. He said it was a diverse school with a large number of students with English as a second language. They also have more children with special educational needs and disabilities than the national average.

He highlighted the work of the Careers Cluster, which is a set of standards that schools need to reach. The school had increased contact with businesses, higher education institutions and apprenticeships and the whole of year 10 have a careers day. The school had also been working with BNP Paribas to develop a range of skills to enhance careers advice for students.

Year 10 student at Whitefield School, Shivali said that BNP Paribas had held four workshops. Prior to these workshops, working in finance had little appeal to her because she had always wanted to work in film. However, these workshops had changed her view. She said they were taught simple things that students would not have considered before, such as the importance of handshakes. The second workshop was on CV building. She said they had been taught about skills that would look good in a workplace, and that these did not need to be limited to just work experience, as skills are applicable to everyone. The third workshop was on mock interviews. She said that the person interviewing her was a female and she was surprised by how friendly the atmosphere was. Shivali said she had had her eyes opened through the experience with BNP Paribas, because it had challenged her perceptions of people in the workplace. Whilst she said she still does not see herself working in finance, she stated that the experience was greater than this: it had taught her how to conduct herself in a professional environment. The fourth workshop involved visiting the BNP Paribas headquarters in Marylebone, which was an opportunity to discover what work is actually like. She said that she got to see diversity in action, as they were shadowing people doing their jobs. She stressed the value of seeing someone from the same background as her working in that environment and the value of these experiences, and that more opportunities like this should be made available.

Year 10 student at Whitefield School, Kowser said that the experience had broken stereotypes that she had about bankers. She had found the workshops and visit to their

headquarters to be an eye-opening experience, because she saw diversity in ways that she had not imagined. There was an equal balance of males and females in the headquarters. She was particularly impressed by the female director who came to all of the workshops. She said that this showed her that, even if you are female and there may be stereotypes set against you, you can prosper even in a male dominated field. She found it interesting how traders on the floor were multi-lingual, but, even here, she said that there needed to be a greater diversity of languages, including ones outside of Europe. She said that, coming from a school which is diverse, it was really helpful to see a wide range of people in the workplace. Overall, she said the experience was inspiring.

Virginia asked **Chris** for further information on the initiative.

Chris said the scheme had come through Young Careers which was commissioned by the Greater London Authority and the programme had been delivered through Reed in Partnership. He highlighted that, two years ago, the school did not have a broad range of contacts with employers. BNP Paribas had been keen to make a longer-term commitment to the school through its corporate social responsibility.

He spoke about the impact that the programme had had on the school and the inspiration it had fostered in breaking down barriers and stereotypes. He said it was particularly important because it was impacting students who would not normally be able to access work experience in the centre of London. He was impressed with the range of people who had come into the school to help and share their experience. He highlighted that the combination of activities had been helpful in giving the children the confidence to introduce themselves and learn how to present themselves in person.

Virginia said she has been the governor of a school for many years and stressed the importance of investing in careers advice. She emphasised the importance of week-long work placements. Whilst it involves a lot of time and effort matching up students, it has been incredibly successful in encouraging students to think about tertiary education. She asked the floor how we could give all students this experience.

Stephen Parkinson from Kingsley LLP said that his organisation had sought to devise a competition that would reach as many schools across the country and showcase the skills of a solicitor, and make children realise that, whatever background they come from, they could succeed as an employee. They launched the legal apprentice competition and had 3,000 students registering from 600 schools. There were three phases to the competition which encouraged students to think about the skills involved in being a solicitor. He highlighted the success of the competition in reaching a range of children, as only 2% of the schools registered were private schools. He hoped that the programme would reach children who had not previously considered becoming a solicitor.

Charlotte Taylor from the Federation of Small Businesses said that there was a gap between urban and rural areas. She said that much of what had been discussed at the meeting was around big businesses, but she stressed that people should not forget about the importance of small businesses in offering work experience, because this is often

people's first experience of the work place, and small businesses are keen to offer work placements.

Katherine Riggs from Thames Skills Academy said that her organisation has been working with London Youth Rowing to help school children to enter the workforce. They had a 10-week work programme with one hour a week where children could learn new skills. She indicated the importance of coming into the workplace and for girls to see themselves there. It is equally important for the workplace to see their bias and the need for diversity. She asked how we can reach schools to make these opportunities more accessible.

Chris stated that it was a difficult area for schools because of resources and it is often problematic to schedule time in the curriculum. He stressed the importance of having both a supportive headteacher and a member of the school staff to timetable it. He said it was also difficult to have conversations with teachers who are meant to be teaching at that time, but these conversations need to take place, to balance that with the wider benefits of career advice.

Teresa Boughy from Jungle HR asked how schools have worked with parents to educate them on career prospects.

Chris said it is important to have an understanding from parent. Parents might have a view of what their child is going to do or not going to do when they are older. To help, the school had put on a parents' evening with careers material, and a careers adviser and universities coming in.

Sarah Welfare from Reed in Partnership stated how important it is to pilot ideas. She spoke about how Transport for London had brought apprentices along to parents' evenings to talk to parents and break down stereotypes about what apprenticeships can offer. She said that there was much work to do on the point of gender stereotyping, and considerable work had been done through this programme by engaging young women with STEM careers, the armed forces, and opportunities in transport, amongst others.

Clare Gray from Shaw Trust stated that there was a lack of careers advice for disabled young people. Only 6% of disabled children and children with SEND go into full time employment. Shaw Trust has developed the Power 100 which showcases influential disabled people in different industries. She said that it is hard for disabled people to look at what they can aspire to; whilst there is a lack of visibility for women, there is even less in terms of disability. She stressed that careers advice for disabled young people is needed.

Jean Duprez from Duprez Consulting said she has held a focus group with parents to highlight the importance of showcasing people as role models for young people. With their work with Transport for London, 50% of all apprenticeships had come from non-traditional routes.

Ashley from the Young Women's Trust spoke about how she had just entered into the construction industry and was the only black female in the route. She said that she

previously had a stereotype that she would not be well received but this was not the case. She stated that she would like to see greater diversity and more women on building sites.

Kath Moore from Women in Construction said work experience is vital, not just for confidence -building but also for companies to see talent that they would not normally see. She stressed that, with the ongoing refurbishment work in the House of Commons, it would be very positive to see more women involved in this and that work experience should be included in companies’ corporate social responsibility.

A member of the audience said that the language in job adverts also needs to be considered to make job opportunities more accessible and to attract a wider range of talent. She said that more supportive language needed to be used.

Jenna Haddad from the University of Sussex said that, on the point about intervening at schools, most opportunities for work experience were only offered to students who could get the grades. However, some students struggle to gain good grades, perhaps owing to disability or mental health issues, but they are not encouraged in the same way as students who have good grades when it comes to careers advice.

Jane van Zyl from Working Families, said that offering flexible work was critical for the debates about inclusivity and intersectionality.

Verona Blackford from Action for Children said that she was a trainee on a charity work graduate scheme which was set up in the face of the dominance of unpaid internships of people trying to get into the charity sector. She spoke about the insecurity of unpaid internships and called for more schemes to be set up which can help young people get into the sectors they are interested in but do not have the funds to otherwise support themselves.

Vanessa Pine from Atlas Communications said that the only way to improve diversity especially with regard to BAME, is by asking companies to look internally at themselves. She said that it was unfair to put the responsibility on under-represented groups to argue their case. Instead, employers should be forced to take responsibility for their actions; collecting data on these issues can force employers to explore this in greater detail and to address them.

Virginia Crosbie thanked panellists and speakers for their contributions and closed the session.

Non-parliamentarian attendees

Name	Organisation
Jennifer Liston-Smith	My Family Care
Alison Field	University of Sussex
Sarah Whitehead	University of Sussex
Elisabeth Kelan	University of Essex
Ryan Barrett	IPSE
Sarah McConnell	TSSA
Verona Blackford	Action for Children

Lysha Boucher	RSSB
Hilary Compton	V Formation
Diana Adamczyk	ABI
Clare Gray	The Shaw Trust
Harry Curzon	Salvation Army
Michelle Lowe	Shaw Trust
Nina Atwal	Bombardier
Rebecca Lees	House of Commons
Hayley Bennett	Business in the Community
Brandusa Tataru-Marinescu	Kingsley Napley LLP
Stephen Parkinson	Kingsley Napley LLP
Cari Rosen	Gransnet
Kamala Mackinnon	Vodafone
Eliz Arkut	Simmons and Simmons LLP
Gill Thomas	Royal Academy of Engineering
Samantha Louis	CIMA
Harriet Khataba	Her Story Matters
Teresa Boughey	Jungle HR
Jane Moffett	Kangaroo Coaching
Nicki Seignot	The Parent Mentor
Mark Gale	Young Women's Trust
Joy Lancaster	Young Women's Trust
Preeti Kaur	Young Women's Trust
Morgan Sykes	Young Women's Trust
Alexi Ozioro	RSSB
Gorki Duhra	REC
Ornella Nsio	REC
Thalia Ioannidou	REC
Katherine Riggs	Thames Skills Academy
Jean Duprez	TfL & Thames Skills Academy
Dr Subashini Suresh	University of Wolverhampton
Madeleine Field	FDM Group
Jenna Haddad	Sussex University
Pam Iannotti	Winchester University
Rachael Anderson	How Do You Do It
Carolina Brière	Childcare Levy UK
Ben Cook	Southbank Centre
Alice Devlin	GEO
Debbie Petford	BESA
Janet Shelley	BESA
Sandi Rhys Jones	Women in Property