

## Parental and Carer Engagement Strategy 2023/24

Parents and carers are key influencers on their child's choices and career decisions and therefore are crucial players in shaping what their best next step might be. Hard evidence tells us that parental engagement leads to better educational outcomes.

In recent research, 67 per cent of Career Leaders told us they wanted to see parental engagement in careers approached strategically and inclusively across the whole school or college.

We understand that engaging and informing parents and carers about careers will require collaboration from a range of stakeholders including a whole school/college approach, careers providers, employers, apprenticeship providers and community groups.

Earlier this year, the Careers Hub established a Parental/Carer Engagement task and finish group to explore opportunities to enhance current practice and we are pleased to share the outcome of that group with you in this strategy including an action plan which will be delivered this academic year.

Good impartial careers guidance doesn't just happen in school or college – it also needs positive, constructive conversations between parents and carers and young people and employers and young people. Careers guidance is key to social mobility. It provides young people – whatever their background – with the skills and information they need to make good decisions about their future education and work options. But it can't be delivered in isolation. The most significant influence on young people comes from their family and social network.

For school and college career programmes to succeed, parents and carers need to be engaged and involved. However, parents and carers often rely on their own experiences from when they left school or college to inform discussions. This means they may only have a partial/limited understanding of the options available to young people today. Many parents and carers need up to date information about the range of opportunities available (for example apprenticeships and T levels) to enable them to have more informed, constructive conversations.

## **Why engaging parents and carers matters**

The Gatsby Foundation recently carried out research into parents' and carers' views on careers education and it highlighted that parents and carers like to feel involved and informed and believe young people should take their views into account when making important decisions.

### **Why parents and carers matter**

- Conversations about careers should start from Year 7.
- Even as young people grow older and parents and carers believe their influence declines, conversations about issues continue.
- Some parents and carers underestimate their influence on young people.
- Parental and Carer engagement about careers may also be a hook for other parental and carer engagement across the school/college.

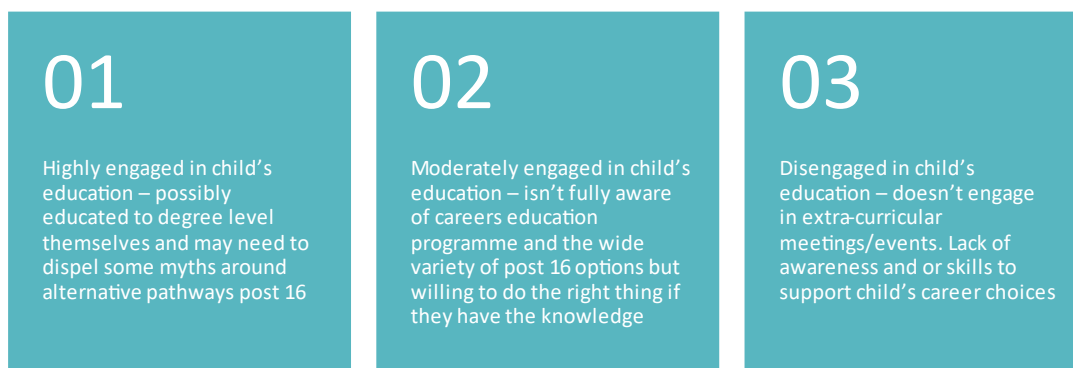
### **Parental and carer engagement is important for students' development of:**

- Information-seeking and research behaviours.
- Self-efficacy, career decision-making and confidence.
- Planning, goal-setting and creating a sense of direction.
- (Career) adaptability, flexibility and employability skills (such as entrepreneurship and team working).

## The Careers Hub approach to parental engagement

In 2023 the Careers Hub established a task & finish group to explore how parental and carer engagement in relation to careers education could be improved. As parents and carers are one of the biggest influencers on students' decisions, it was agreed that the outcomes of this task and finish group should be a priority in the academic year 2023/24.

Members of the group identified 3 groups of parents that have informed our action plan:



The success of our parental/Carer engagement strategy will rely on the engagement of the following stakeholders on a continuous basis:

- Schools and colleges
- Young People
- Cornerstone Employer Group
- Employers
- Employer Representative Bodies
- Wider stakeholder groups including Careers Providers, Social Value Managers, the Local Councils and Stakeholders working with families.

### School and College Support

The Careers Hub team will continue to work closely with Career Leaders in our 53 Institutions to help them develop their parental engagement strategy.

This will include:

- Understanding who in the school/college is responsible for the overall parental and carer engagement strategy and what that looks like;
- Understanding how visible the careers education programme is to parents and carers who want to engage;
- Establish if career conversations are currently included in the parental engagement strategy;
- If careers is included, evaluate the engagement levels; if not, agree how careers can be included in the school/college parental engagement strategy;
- Agree when parents and carers should be involved in careers and how;

- Identify if there are any learnings from past evaluation of the careers provision;
- Identify who will ultimately be responsible for driving forward the parental engagement programme for that school/college;
- Encourage Career Leaders that have completed the Level 6/7 Career Leader Training to complete the two free online Parental Engagement modules aimed at improving confidence and capability in parental engagement. The two modules build on the Talking Futures resources and provide further tools, resources and videos to support engagement.

### **Action Plan**

The actions taken forward under the next section of the strategy will help to contribute towards our aim to ensure that every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

## Group 1

Highly engaged in child's education, possibly educated to degree level themselves and may need to dispel some myths around alternative pathways post 16.

Challenge	Solution	Action	Delivery Team	Outcome/Output
Parents/Carers may believe their child should study A-Level/Degree and don't feel alternative pathways are a viable option	Educate Parents/Carers on the different pathways post 16/18. Focus on Apprenticeships and T levels in order to amplify these as highly valued alternative qualifications.	Create an online Pathways brochure which will include details of all pathway options, Cumbria case studies of each pathway, provider information. This will be shared with all schools and through partners.	Cumbria Careers Hub, Schools and Colleges, Training Providers	Parents better informed about all pathways post 16 and willing to consider technical and vocational routes. Providers will complete feedback forms that will measure level of understanding from Parents and Carers. Potential increase in Apprenticeship and T-Level enrolments with Providers. Assuming a cohort of approximately 5,000 in each year there will be a 30% open rate of the Pathways brochure.
		Distribute the <a href="#">Talking Futures</a> Toolkit for Schools to use in school with their parents/carers.	Cumbria Careers Hub	Parents/Carers will ask better informed

		Provide schools with a questionnaire to collect feedback from parents/carers. Ask a sample of 10 schools to share data back to us.		questions at career events when discussing all the options. Parent/Carer Survey will show an increase in engagement and knowledge (this year will be the baseline data)
		Encourage Schools to highlight the <a href="#">U-Explore</a> Platform on their websites for parents/carers to use with their child	Cumbria Careers Hub	Increased number of visits to U-Explore and increased number of personal profiles being saved. The parent/carers survey will capture number accessing the U-Explore platform. This data will be used as baseline data for future years.
		Partners to share the U-Explore platform on their own websites.	Partners and Stakeholders	Increased number of visits to U-Explore and increased number of personal profiles being saved.

				Aim for 50% of partners to host the platform.
		Roll out Case Studies as posters in schools (alumni) of young people following the different career pathways.	Cumbria Careers Hub	Each school will have at least one poster of a member of their alumni. 50% of schools will display alumni posters.
		Encourage parents/carers to attend events that will give them accurate and up to date information about all pathways including technical and vocational qualifications i.e. apprenticeships (Careers Fairs, College open days etc)	Cumbria Careers Hubs and Stakeholders	Parents/Carers will ask better informed questions at career events when discussing all the options. Providers/Employers have more meaningful conversations and evaluation of the event improves. ITPs and Colleges engage in Cumbria Careers Day (6 <sup>th</sup> March) and monitor level of engagement from Parents/Carers.

	Help Parents/Carers see the value of extra-curricular activity that is available and will support their child with progression.	Highlight extra-curricular opportunities to parents/carers that will help young people develop life skills	All Stakeholders	
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## Group 2

Moderately engaged in child's education, isn't fully aware of careers education programme and the wide variety of post 16 options but willing to do the right thing if they have the knowledge.


Challenge	Solution	Action	Delivery Team	Outcome/Output
Parents/Carers aren't aware of the careers education programme available to their child in school	Approach parental engagement through non-school routes	<p>All of the above actions plus:</p> <p>Work with employers to deliver a parental engagement programme to their staff who are parents/carers of children in secondary education (part of their "Employee Assistance Programme"/support to their employees).</p> <p>Develop and distribute a toolkit employers can use on their intranet/ employee communication channels including hints and tips, podcasts and pre-recorded webinars.</p> <p>Topics to include (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What careers education is my child entitled to at school?</li> <li>▪ How do I help my child prepare for mock interview days?</li> <li>▪ How do I help my child prepare for a careers fair at school?</li> <li>▪ What do I need to consider when my child is choosing their options in Year 9?</li> <li>▪ My child has to find a week's work placement, where do I start?</li> <li>▪ What are my child's options post 16?</li> <li>▪ My child has no idea what they want to do – how do I manage that?</li> </ul>	Cumbria Careers Hub Employer Representative Bodies and Employers	A minimum of 4 employers/employer representative bodies pilot the first year of this programme.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why would I go to a school/college/training provider open event?</li> <li>▪ What are the top employability skills employers are looking for and how can I support my child to develop these?</li> </ul>		
		Include Careers information and support (links to) on the Local Offer website.		Increased Parents/Carers traffic using the local offer website to access careers support and guidance.
	Educate Parents/Carers on the different pathways post 16/18. Focus on Apprenticeships and T levels to amplify these as highly valued alternative qualifications.	Encourage parents/carers to attend events that will give them accurate and up to date information about all pathways including technical and vocational qualifications i.e. apprenticeships (Careers Fairs, College open days etc)	Cumbria Careers Hubs and Stakeholders	Increased Parents/Carers traffic using the local offer website to access careers support and guidance. Parents/Carers will ask better informed questions at career events when discussing all the options. Providers/Employers have more meaningful conversations and

				evaluation of the event improves.
	Help Parents/Carers see the value of extra-curricular activity that is available and will support their child with progression.	Highlight extra-curricular opportunities to parents/carers that will help young people develop life skills	All Stakeholders	

### Group 3

Disengaged in child's education, doesn't engage in extra-curricular meetings/events. Lack of awareness and or skills to support child's careers choices.

Challenge	Solution	Action	Delivery Team	Outcomes/Outputs
Parents/Carers rarely, never or can't engage with extra-curricular activity related to their child's education	Establish reasons for disengagement and help parents/carers engage in a way that is accessible and they feel comfortable in engaging with.	<p>All of the above actions plus: A social media campaign that schools, colleges and partners can deliver despite limited time. Cumbria Careers Hub will create a toolkit of social media posts that will be shared with schools, colleges and partners to distribute at their own pace.</p> 	Cumbria Careers Hub, Schools and Colleges, Training Providers Stakeholders	<p>Increased and growing number of visits to the U-Explore platform as a result of the campaign.</p> <p>Monitor the traffic to the platform and look to increase by at least 30% this academic year.</p>
	Provide Careers information through partners that work with this group of parents/carers	Careers Hub to share U-Explore link and Pathways magazine with partners who can share with the groups they support.	Careers Hub, Partners including DWP, Inspira	Assuming a cohort of approximately 5,000 in each year there will be a 30% open rate of the Pathways brochure.

<p>Some families don't engage with the traditional education system and it is likely they and their children won't have access to a school careers education programme.</p>	<p>Work with Partners who work with this group of families to provide up-to-date and relevant information and resources and ensure they have equal access to careers provision</p>	<p>Materials and resources to be shared with Local Authorities and their delivery partners to provide access to up-to-date careers information such as the U-Explore Platform, Local labour market information, access to careers fairs and open events.</p> <p>Work with LA and partners to increase engagement with these hard to reach families.</p> <p>Include Careers information and support (links to) on the Local Offer website.</p>	<p>Careers Hub, Partners</p>	<p>There will be increased traffic to the U-Explore Platform and attendance at careers fairs and open events by parents and carers wouldn't normally engage.</p>
<p>Do we have a clear understanding of why some parents/carers don't/can't engage with their child's careers education</p>	<p>Work with Partners to gain a greater understanding of some of the reasons for disengagement and look to provide practical support where feasible.</p>	<p>Careers Hub and Partners to meet to discuss potential reasons and agree an action plan for delivery to this group of parents/carers.</p>	<p>Careers Hub and Partners.</p>	<p>Action plan updated to include actions based on findings.</p>