

Evaluation of EM3 LEP's Careers and Enterprise Service

Final report to EM3 LEP



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Executive Summary

Background

1. The EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service is part of a national model known as the Enterprise Adviser Network. In high level terms, the model works by linking schools and colleges with senior-level business volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) and supporting Careers Leaders working in schools and colleges. Its aim is to develop and improve schools and colleges' careers programmes and, specifically, the level and quality of employer engagement with young people.
2. EM3 LEP brought the service in-house in September 2018 with a two-year contract to deliver the Careers and Enterprise Service¹. It was awarded £688,000 to deliver over the two years, half funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company and half by the LEP.

The evaluation

3. In summer 2020, EM3 LEP asked SQW to evaluate the delivery of the Careers and Enterprise Service across parts of Surrey and Hampshire, focusing especially on progress over the last year. The research was to focus on how the Careers and Enterprise Service was working within the Enterprise M3 LEP area and how it fit with the local context and LEP priorities.
4. To inform the evaluation, research was undertaken between November 2020 and February 2021 and included:
 - a review of project documentation including monitoring data and action plans
 - a focus group of three Enterprise Coordinators and one Business Development Coordinator
 - consultations with five stakeholders from the Skills Advisory Panel
 - consultations with three Enterprise Advisers
 - a short e-survey of 26 Careers Leaders.
5. The evaluation was a small-scale study. It should be read as an initial, light-touch review of the Careers and Enterprise Service.

Progress in developing the model

6. By the end of April 2021, the Careers and Enterprise Service had a team of seven (six Enterprise Coordinators and one Business Development Coordinator)². Between them, they

¹ EM3 LEP. Tender Document for the Evaluation of the Careers and Enterprise Service (May 2020)

² EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Institutions - in network and matched' (April 2021), and EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Enterprise-Advisors' (April 2021)

were managing relationships between 77 education institutions, and 77 Enterprise Advisers³. For context, there were 115 education institutions in the EM3 area⁴.

7. Progress in developing the model is best understood from two perspectives: the recruitment of Careers and Enterprise Service team members, education institutions and Enterprise Advisers; and the achieved 'matches' between education institutions and advisers. Evidence suggests that on both fronts, activity grew slowly in the first year or so of the service, but rapidly thereafter. This process of improvement was driven by an increasingly effective team⁵.

Outcomes

8. All education institutions across England are expected by Government to submit data to a central database (compass) on their performance against Gatsby Benchmarks. The eight Gatsby Benchmarks provide a framework for good careers guidance.
9. Across all education institutions in the EM3 area, the number of compass submissions for Gatsby Benchmark 1, 5 and 6⁶ increased substantially from 97 in 2018 to 146 in 2020. Over this period, results against these benchmarks also improved.
10. Within this context, compass data do not point to clear results from the service. This is likely to be because:
 - many institutions had not been matched to an EA for very long
 - the various lockdowns had disrupted education institutions' careers plans and ability to arrange employer encounters and workplace visits.

Findings, Conclusions and recommendations

11. After a slow start, the service appeared to be working well by the time of evaluation. The majority of schools across the LEP area were engaging in the programme; the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service had become well-staffed and well-led; and all parts of the service (including the Enterprise Advisers) appeared to be performing effectively. There was evidence to suggest that Enterprise Advisers had been thoughtfully matched to schools and colleges; in general, the bilateral relationships that have developed appeared to be working well. In addition, the service had gradually become 'more mainstream' within LEP structures.
12. Although the evaluation was a light touch review, it pointed to five broad recommendations in relation to the future of the service. These range from operational to strategic in nature:

³ EM3 LEP, 'Institutions – in network and matched' (April 2021)

⁴ Enterprise M3 LEP Report March 2021

⁵ Please see chapter 5 – Research Question B for more detail.

⁶ The Careers and Enterprise Service has targets to reach against these three benchmarks

- Careers Leaders appreciate receiving a helpful amount of information and resources but too much can be overwhelming. **We recommend that Enterprise Coordinators carefully manage the flow of information and resources to Careers Leaders, prioritising the most important messaging, and with an understanding of which Careers Leaders need what resources and when.**
- The process of matching education institutions with Enterprise Advisers is critically important. At times, this has proved difficult. The appointment of a Business Development Coordinator in September 2020 appeared to improve this process. **We recommend that the new function of the Business Development Coordinator is retained.**
- The model was premised on face-to-face delivery and it had to go on-line as the pandemic unfolded. This way of working has had various drawbacks and benefits for stakeholders involved and the delivery of the service. **We recommend that the process of returning to '(a new) normal' is managed carefully and in a manner that is sensitive to the concerns and priorities of all parties, informed by the lessons of the last year.**
- Education institutions could benefit from having access to a range of Enterprise Advisers. **We recommend that steps should be taken to build networks of relationships between Careers Leaders and a range of Enterprise Advisers. Potentially this could be achieved through the adoption of a Careers Hub model.**
- Looking ahead, effective careers advice will be critical, and it ought to link to opportunities for apprenticeships. Aligning young people with the range of opportunities that exist across Surrey and Hampshire will also be important in achieving the LEP's wider strategic objectives, particularly in the context of the (national) Plan for Growth. **We recommend that the LEP and the wider economic development/ skills network emphasises the need for strong links between businesses and schools, using the Careers and Enterprise Service as a catalyst and making further links to the possibilities for apprenticeships.**

1. Introduction

Background and context

- 1.1** The EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service is part of a national model known as the Enterprise Adviser Network. The Network was established by The Careers and Enterprise Company in collaboration with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in 2015 as part of a government drive to improve careers education within secondary education in England. In high level terms, the national Enterprise Adviser Network works by linking schools and colleges with senior-level business volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) and supporting Careers Leaders working in schools and colleges. Its aim is to develop and improve schools and colleges' careers programmes and, specifically, the level and quality of employer engagement with young people. By August 2020, 3,865 schools and colleges, and 3,645 Enterprise Advisers were part of the Enterprise Adviser Network across England⁷.
- 1.2** EM3 LEP brought the service in-house in September 2018 with a two-year contract to deliver the Careers and Enterprise Service⁸. It was awarded £688,000 to deliver over the two years, half funded by the Careers and Enterprise Company and half by the LEP. Previously the contract had been delivered by the Basingstoke Consortium.

The Evaluation

- 1.3** As part of our evaluation support contract, in summer 2020, EM3 LEP asked SQW to evaluate the delivery of the Careers and Enterprise Service across parts of Surrey and Hampshire, focusing especially on progress over the last year. **This research was to focus on how the Careers and Enterprise Service is working within the Enterprise M3 LEP area and how it fits with the local context and LEP priorities.**
- 1.4** The research has been guided by six research questions as set out in the brief.

Table 1-1: Research questions⁹

Research questions

- A) Performance of the contract – our RAG ratings for the region show some schools performing whilst others are not. Why is this?
- B) What is the overall performance of the team to include consistency of paperwork, school and business facilitation and research and preparation?

⁷ SQW. Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs Evaluation Report (Oct 2020) <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/enterprise-adviser-network-and-careers-hubs-evaluation-report>

⁸ EM3 LEP. Tender Document for the Evaluation of the Careers and Enterprise Service (May 2020)

⁹ Please note that one extra research question was in the original terms of reference: 'Currently Enterprise Coordinators are assigned to a District/Borough Council area. Is this a productive, efficient, and effective model to continue?'. However, the service has been reconfigured so this is no longer considered to be an issue.

Research questions

- C) What is the value add of this service to the school/college and the LEP?
- D) How effective are our internal and external relationships to include business and education?
- E) The project's business performance falls below our KPIs in terms of engaging with businesses and the recruitment of Enterprise Advisers. What can be done to improve this?
- F) Benchmarking activity to assess performance against other high performing areas.

1.5 To inform the evaluation, research was undertaken between November 2020 and February 2021 and included:

- a review of project documentation including monitoring data and action plans
- a focus group of three Enterprise Coordinators and one Business Development Coordinator
- consultations with five stakeholders from the Skills Advisory Panel
- consultations with three Enterprise Advisers
- a short e-survey of 26 Careers Leaders.

1.6 The evaluation was a small-scale study conducted over short timescales. It has collected primary evidence from a select number of stakeholders. Therefore, this report should be read as an initial, light-touch review of the Careers and Enterprise Service. While all research questions were covered in our evaluation activity, the nature of the data received has varied and therefore some research questions are more evidenced than others.

1.7 Previously, SQW conducted an evaluation of the National Enterprise Adviser Network. The findings from this wider exercise provided a useful backdrop to the interpretation of the data gathered locally in the course of this study.

2. Progress in Developing the Model

The service model

Governance

- 2.1** Since 2018, the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service has been delivered from within Enterprise M3 LEP. It has reported to the LEP's Skills Advisory Panel and the Careers and Enterprise Company¹⁰.

Delivery¹¹

- 2.2** Over most of the period since September 2018, the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service has been delivered through three main roles/functions: Enterprise Coordinators, Enterprise Advisers and Careers Leaders:
- **Enterprise Coordinators** are trained professionals who are employed by the LEP. Their main role is to broker and maintain relationships between Careers Leaders and Enterprise Advisers. They can also work directly with Careers Leaders and Senior Leadership Teams within schools and colleges to improve the careers education offer to students. Six Enterprise Coordinators are currently employed by Enterprise M3 LEP.
 - **Enterprise Advisers** are senior businesspeople who have volunteered to be matched with a school or college to support them with their careers programme (strategy and provision). They can also use their position and contacts to secure opportunities for the students to experience the workplace or meet with employers through a range of activities. Enterprise Advisers work directly with the Careers Leaders, and sometimes with the school or colleges' Senior Leadership Team.
 - **Careers Leaders** are staff who are responsible for the careers strategy, planning and provision within their school or college.
- 2.3** Enterprise Coordinators and Enterprise Advisers support Careers Leaders in schools and colleges with the development of their careers programme and with employer engagement.
- 2.4** In addition, a **Business Development Coordinator** was recruited by the LEP in September 2020, in order to increase the number of Enterprise Advisers recruited to the Network. The Business Development Coordinator is responsible for onboarding, training and managing

¹⁰ EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Careers and Enterprise Action Plan 2020'. (2020)

¹¹ Evidenced by focus group of Enterprise Coordinators (December 2020) and SQW's Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs Evaluation Report (Oct 2020)

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/enterprise-adviser-network-and-careers-hubs-evaluation-report>

Enterprise Advisers, and engaging businesses willing to offer careers activities to students (such as workplace visits).

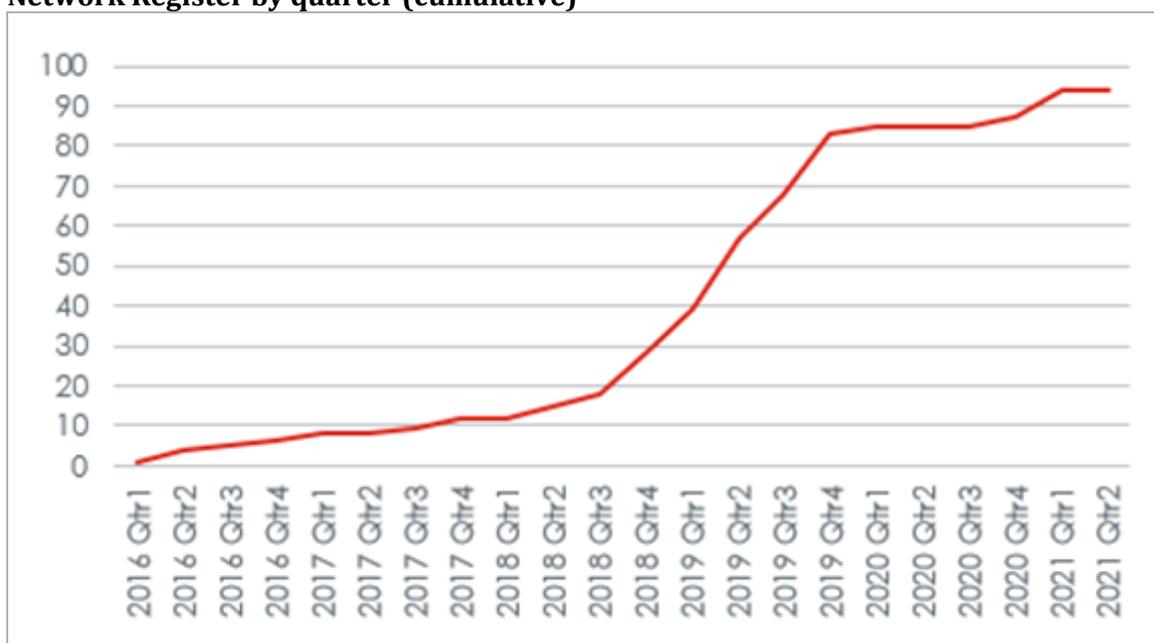
Enterprise Coordinator and Business Development Coordinator recruitment

- 2.5** In the first year of delivery, the Careers and Enterprise Service was under resourced in terms of Enterprise Coordinators. A recruitment drive in February 2019 secured four Enterprise Coordinators and by April 2021, the service had six Enterprise Coordinators¹² and a Business Development Coordinator (who had been appointed in September 2020¹³). This is against a target of six FTE Enterprise Coordinators¹⁴.

Education Institution recruitment

- 2.6** A total of 77 education institutions were matched to an Enterprise Adviser through the Careers and Enterprise Service by the end of April 2021¹⁵. Of the matched institutions, 58 were mainstream schools, nine were colleges and one was an alternative provision provider¹⁶. These were fairly evenly split across Hampshire (38/77) and Surrey (39/77)¹⁷.

Figure 2-1: Number of education institutions signing up to the Enterprise Adviser Network Register by quarter (cumulative)



Source: EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Institutions - in network and matched' (data up to March 2021), and EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Enterprise-Advisers' (April 2021)

¹² EM3 LEP. Tender Document for the Evaluation of the Careers and Enterprise Service (May 2020)

¹³ Evidenced by focus group of Enterprise Coordinators (December 2020).

¹⁴ EM3 LEP. Tender Document for the Evaluation of the Careers and Enterprise Service (May 2020)

¹⁵ EM3 LEP, 'Institutions - in network and matched' (April 2021)

¹⁶ Total does not add to 77 as data is from March 2021 (Enterprise M3 LEP report March 2021)

¹⁷ EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Institutions - in network and matched' (April 2021)

- 2.7** The number of education institutions signing up increased steadily from 18 in Q3 2018, when the service contract began, to 83 in Q4 2019. Subsequent growth was much slower. This may reflect the fact that there were 115 education institutions in the area, so the majority of willing education institutions may have already been reached.

Enterprise Adviser recruitment¹⁸

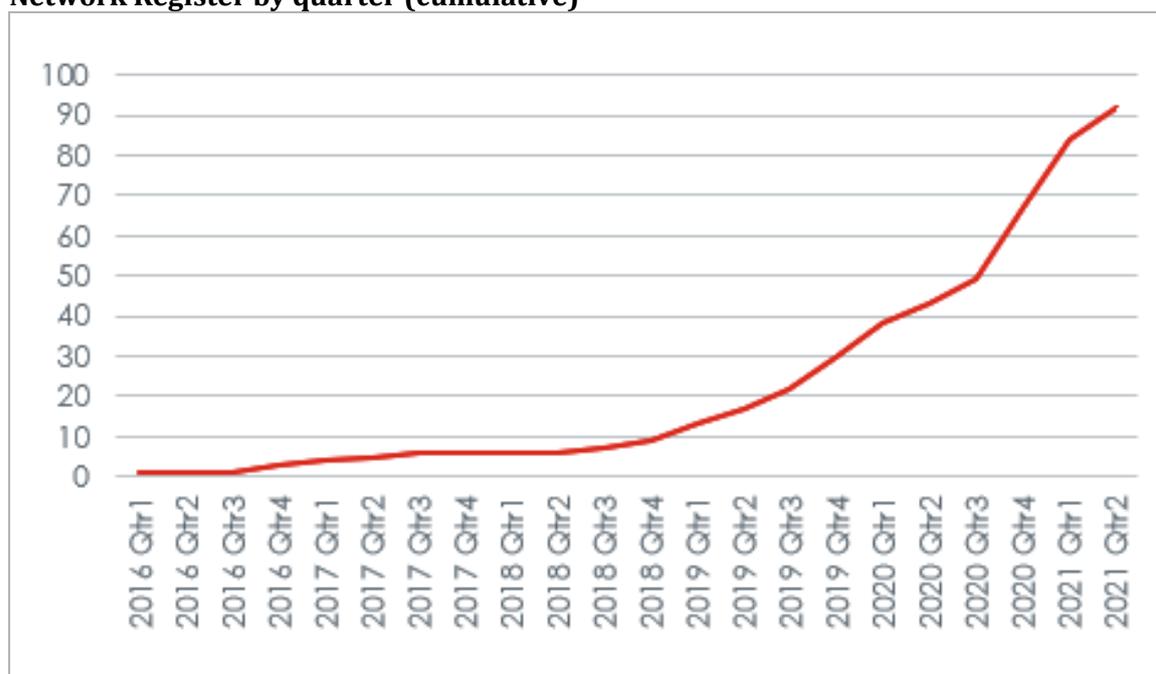
- 2.8** As of the 31st March 2021, 92 Enterprise Advisers had signed up to the Careers and Enterprise Service. The majority (77/92) were matched to a school or college. In terms of their characteristics:
- The majority (63/92) had degree level qualifications or higher
 - Most were full-time employed (57/92), and just under a third were self-employed (26/92)
 - Most came from either large¹⁹ or micro²⁰ businesses. Of the 84 Enterprise Advisers for whom we have employer size data, 31 worked at large businesses and 24 worked at micro businesses.
 - Enterprise Advisers' sectors were recorded for 85 of them. Many worked in Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (24/85). Others worked across a spread of 12 industries including Information and Communication, Finance and Insurance Activities, and Administration and Support Services.
- 2.9** At least 29 of the Enterprise Advisers were members of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), perhaps reflecting the working relationships between some of the Enterprise Coordinators and the CIPD, and the fact that the CIPD website hosts a page where members can volunteer to be an Enterprise Adviser.

¹⁸ EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Enterprise-Advisors' (April 2021)

¹⁹ Large businesses are those with 250+ employees

²⁰ Micro businesses are those with less than 10 employees

Figure 2-2: Number of Enterprise Advisers signing up to the Enterprise Adviser Network Register by quarter (cumulative)



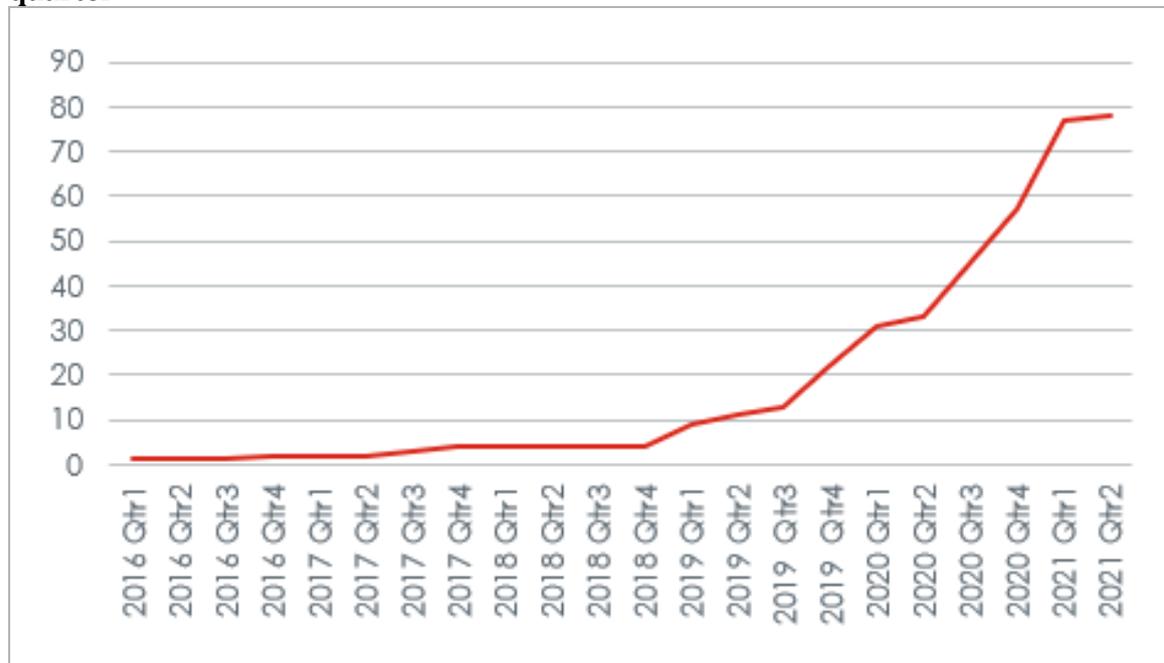
Source: EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Enterprise-Advisers' (April 2021)

- 2.10** The number of Enterprise Advisers signed up to the network increased steadily from seven in Q3 2018 (when the service contract began), to 49 in Q3 2020. From then, the numbers of Enterprise Advisers began increasing more quickly and rose to 92 in Q2 2021. This coincides with the appointment of the Business Development Coordinator in Q3 2020, whose role was to recruit and support Enterprise Advisers and business partners²¹.
- 2.11** Since the last point for which we have data (April 2021), the numbers of Enterprise Advisers recruited to the network has continued to grow at a fast pace, as reported by the Senior Enterprise Coordinator.

²¹ Evidenced by focus group of Enterprise Coordinators (December 2020).

Enterprise Adviser to Education Institution matches

Figure 2-3: Number of Enterprise Advisers matched to an education institution by quarter



Source: EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Enterprise-Advisers' (April 2021)

2.12 The number of Enterprise Advisers and education institutions matched to one another through the Careers and Enterprise Service grew slowly from the contract start of the service (Q3 2018) until Q3 2019 and more quickly thereafter, reflecting the pattern of growth of institution and Enterprise Adviser sign-ups to the network.

Conclusion

2.13 By the end of April 2021, the Careers and Enterprise Service had a team of seven (six Enterprise Coordinators and one Business Development Coordinator)²². Between them, they were managing relationships between 77 education institutions, and 77 Enterprise Advisers²³. For context, there were 115 education institutions in the EM3 area²⁴.

2.14 This level of activity reflects progress particularly during the latter stages of the programme. Activity grew slowly in the first year or so of the service, and rapidly thereafter. This is consistent with the e-survey and consultation feedback which suggests:

- the programme had a slow start and progress in the first year was disappointing
- subsequently there has been much improvement

²² EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Institutions - in network and matched' (April 2021), and EM3 LEP. '26-04-2021_Enterprise-Advisers' (April 2021)

²³ EM3 LEP, 'Institutions - in network and matched' (April 2021)

²⁴ Enterprise M3 LEP Report March 2021

- this has been driven by an increasingly effective team²⁵.

2.15 There is some indication that the reach of the Careers and Enterprise Service could grow further: at the end of March 2021, there were 98 education institutions in the network, 74 of which were matched to an Enterprise Adviser. This means that there were 24 education institutions in the network but not matched to an Enterprise Adviser. Similarly, at the end of March 2021, there were 84 Enterprise Advisers in the network, 76 of which were matched. This means there were 8 Enterprise Advisers in the network not matched to an education institution²⁶. However, this is to be viewed cautiously as the number of new matches likely to arise from these is unclear.

²⁵ Please see chapter 5 – Research Question B for more detail.

²⁶ EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Monthly Report' (March 2021)

3. Outcomes

- 3.1** This chapter outlines average scores each quarter across all compass submissions for Gatsby Benchmark 1, 5 and 6²⁷. This is viewed by matched and unmatched education institutions.
- 3.2** All education institutions across England are expected by Government to submit data to a central database (compass) on their performance against Gatsby Benchmarks. Gatsby Benchmarks are a set of eight benchmarks that form a framework for good careers guidance.

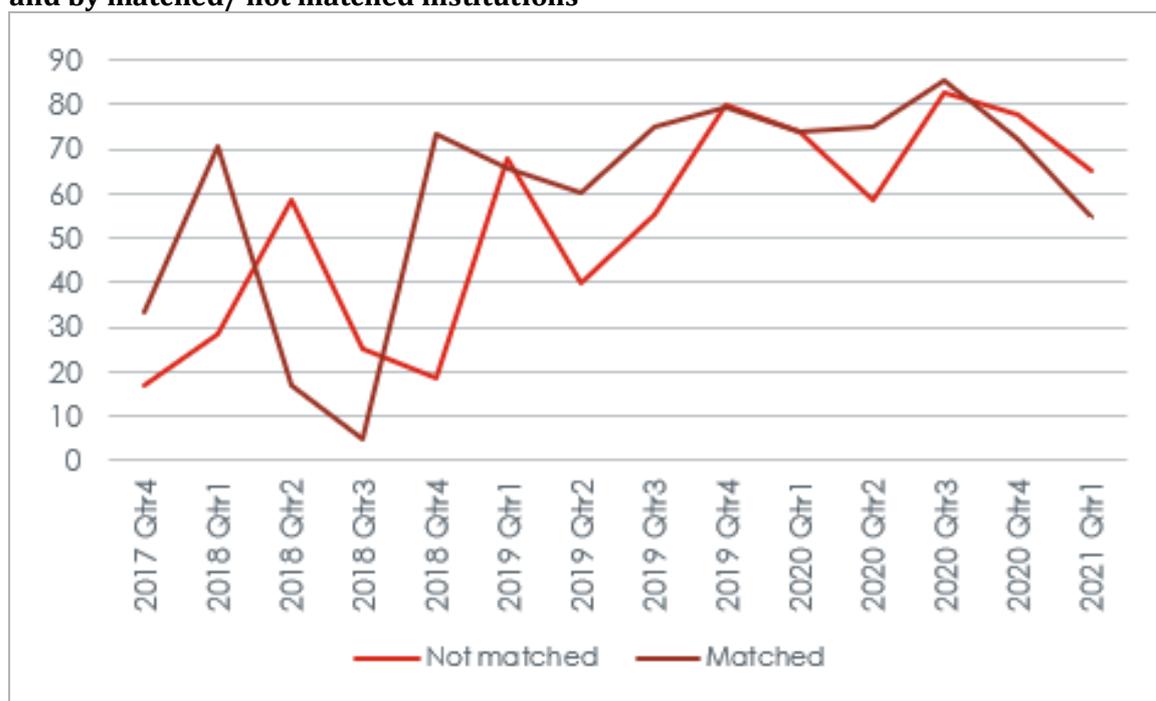
Figure 3-1: Average scores for Gatsby Benchmark 1 by year of compass completion and by matched/ not matched institutions



Source: EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - matched' (March 2021), and EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - unmatched' (March 2021)

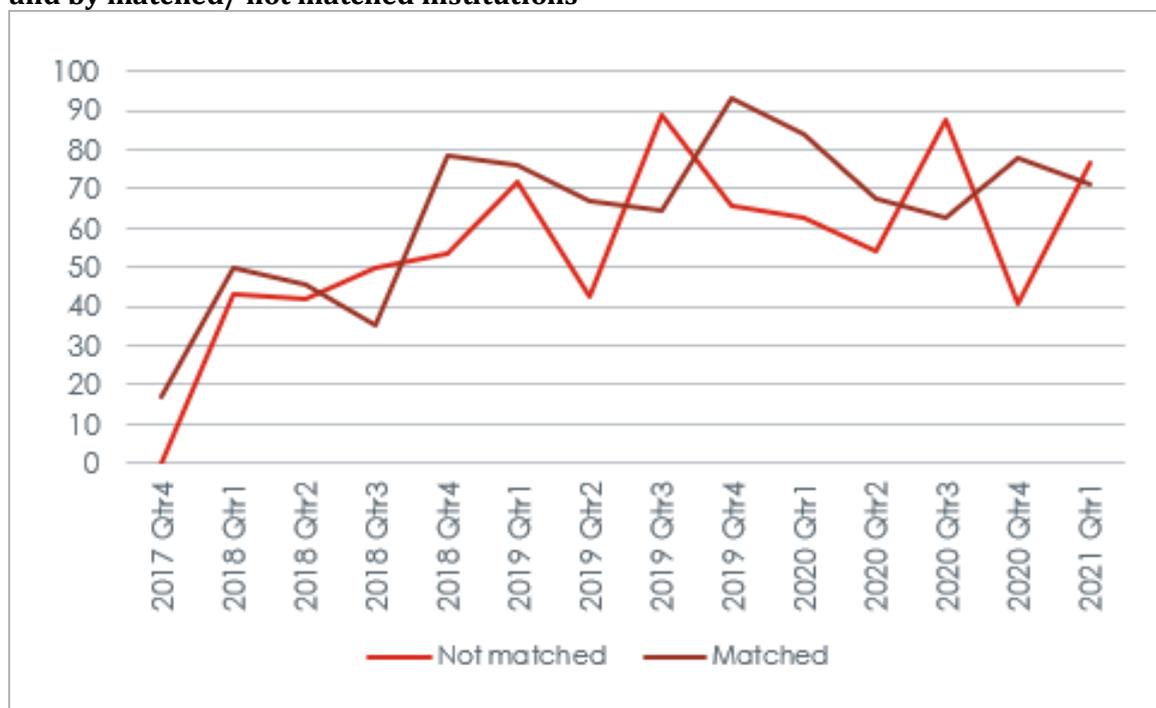
²⁷ EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - matched' (March 2021), and EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - unmatched' (March 2021)

Figure 3-2: Average scores for Gatsby Benchmark 5 by year of compass completion and by matched/ not matched institutions



Source: EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - matched' (March 2021), and EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - unmatched' (March 2021)

Figure 3-3: Average scores for Gatsby Benchmark 6 by year of compass completion and by matched/ not matched institutions



Source: EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - matched' (March 2021), and EM3 LEP. 'EANR-compass-progress-report 02-03-2021 (1) - unmatched' (March 2021)

- 3.3** Across all institutions and for Gatsby Benchmark 1, 5 and 6, numbers of compass submissions had increased substantially (from 97 in 2018 to 146 in 2020). Moreover, results against these benchmarks have been improving.
- 3.4** However, compass data don't point to clear results from the service. This is likely to be because:
- Many institutions haven't been matched to an EA for very long
 - The various lockdowns have disrupted education institutions' careers plans and ability to arrange employer encounters and workplace visits.
- 3.5** It is clear that the Careers and Enterprise Service had become increasingly effective at recruiting Enterprise Advisers to the network and matching Enterprise Advisers and education institution. However, compass data indicates that more time is needed for signups to the network, and Enterprise Adviser to institution matches, to follow through to performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

4. How the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service is Working Locally

- 4.1** This chapter explores each of the research questions set out in the original brief. It outlines the key findings from the research undertaken, as well as setting out any limitations of the research and areas for further exploration.

Table 4-1: Research questions²⁸

Research question
A) Performance of the contract – our RAG ratings for the region show some schools performing whilst others are not. Why is this?
B) What is the overall performance of the team to include consistency of paperwork, school and business facilitation and research and preparation?
C) What is the value add of this service to the school/college and the LEP?
D) How effective are our internal and external relationships to include business and education?
E) The project’s business performance falls below our KPIs in terms of engaging with businesses and the recruitment of Enterprise Advisers. What can be done to improve this?
F) Benchmarking activity to assess performance against other high performing areas.

Research question A). Performance of the contract – our RAG ratings for the region show some schools performing whilst others are not. Why is this?

- 4.2** Our research found that an increasing number of education institutions in the EM3 area have engaged with the Careers and Enterprise Service (see Chapter 3). However, the service faced challenges engaging with some of these institutions, as identified in the focus group with Enterprise Coordinators.
- 4.3** These challenges included:
- **Disengaged Senior Leadership Teams** – Enterprise Coordinators commented that some education institutions’ Senior Leadership Teams were not engaged with the work of the Careers Leader around careers and education advice, information and guidance. Without senior buy-in, it can be more challenging to create change within the school or college.

²⁸ Please note that one extra research question was in the original terms of reference: ‘Currently Enterprise Coordinators are assigned to a District/Borough Council area. Is this a productive, efficient, and effective model to continue?’. However, the service has been reconfigured so this is no longer considered to be an issue.

- **Careers Leaders' seniority and time-allocated to role** – Enterprise Coordinators stated that often, the Careers Leader is a teacher or subject leader who has taken on the Careers Leader role as an 'add on'. There are two challenges that come from this:
 - The teacher or subject leader is not senior enough to create change within the school.
 - The teacher or subject leader is busy with their core role and doesn't have sufficient time to work on Careers Leader responsibilities.
- **Covid-19 and lockdown** - Enterprise Coordinators reported that Covid-19 and lockdown had increased work pressures on school staff, making it harder for Careers Leaders to engage with the Careers and Enterprise Service. It had also meant that much of their planned careers activity could not go ahead. However, they did report that Careers Leaders had shown resilience and by the end of 2020 were looking to reinstate their careers plans as far as possible.


Current Covid situation has made it more difficult to manage career related initiatives
 Careers Leader

Enterprise Coordinators also reported that it has been more challenging to engage schools in the network and build relationships with Careers Leaders during lockdown as they weren't able to meet face-to-face.

- 4.4** These challenges are not unique to the EM3 area. Similar issues have been identified by the wider national network in engaging with education institutions²⁹.

Research question B). What is the overall performance of the team to include consistency of paperwork, school and business facilitation and research and preparation?

- 4.5** As reported by most consultees, the performance of the Careers and Enterprise Service team developed over the years since its inception. During the early stages of the service, it was said to not be performing as well as hoped. Over time it was said to have grown into a strong service that performs well.
- 4.6** Evidence that may point to the improving performance of the team includes increasing numbers of education institutions and Enterprise Advisers matched to one another, improved Gatsby Benchmark scores from participating institutions over time, and increased numbers of Compass completions for matched institutions (see Chapter 3).

²⁹ SQW. Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs Evaluation Report (Oct 2020)
<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/enterprise-adviser-network-and-careers-hubs-evaluation-report>

4.7 The e-survey of Careers Leaders³⁰ conducted as part of the evaluation indicated that they were satisfied with the performance of the team, with many stating that they received regular contact, information and resources from their Enterprise Coordinator which they appreciated. Some indicated that their careers programmes had improved as a result of taking part in the EAN.

4.8 Key factors for success identified by a range of consultees and survey respondents included:

- **Leadership** – The Senior Enterprise Coordinator, appointed in 2018³¹ was said to have been a key factor for the success of the team.
- **Skills and experience** – It was said that the Enterprise Coordinators appointed were highly skilled and had strong experience in relevant fields. Their high levels of enthusiasm were also commented upon. As one example, one Enterprise Adviser commented that their Enterprise Coordinator provided content and connections relevant to schools, a lot of insights into what works and what does not, they have a strong grasp of the area and topic.
- **Targeted roles** – In September 2020, the team appointed a Business Development Coordinator to target the recruitment and retention of Enterprise Advisers, this having been identified as an area for improvement. It was reported that this has had a positive impact and more Enterprise Advisers have been recruited as a result.
- **Time** – At the time of this evaluation, the Careers and Enterprise Service in the EM3 area had been running for over two years. This had allowed time for the service to mature. Specifically, it had allowed for Enterprise Coordinators, Enterprise Advisers and Careers Leaders to build relationships with each other. It had allowed for the service to build relationships with the wider LEP and external stakeholders. In addition, Enterprise Coordinators who had been in their roles for longer timeframes had had more opportunity to gain experience of the local context and ‘what works’.



There has been a gear change in the calibre of people working in the Careers and Enterprise Service



Stakeholder from the Skills Advisory Panel

³⁰ 26 responses. Data collected from January to March 2021.

³¹ As reported by the Senior Enterprise Coordinator.

Research question C). What is the value add of this service to the school/college and the LEP?

Education Institutions

- 4.9** Findings from the e-survey of Careers Leaders provided evidence that the Careers and Enterprise Service did add value to education institutions. A summary of relevant findings from the e-survey is presented in Box 1 below.

Box 1: How the service is adding value – key findings from an e-survey of Careers Leaders

Support to engage with and report on Gatsby Benchmarks

Two schools reported that the Careers and Enterprise Service had introduced them to the Benchmarks, guided them through their use, and helped them to ensure their Compass reports were up-to-date and completed termly. In addition, an Enterprise Adviser said he had worked with his schools to help them to recognise the strengths of their careers programme, which has resulted in them improving their COMPASS scores.

Support with planning a careers programme

Most Careers Leaders (18/26) reported that they received information, advice and guidance as part of the Careers and Enterprise Service. The information, advice and guidance were said to come from a number of channels including from Enterprise Coordinators, Enterprise Advisers, and networking meetings. This was said to have helped them in their roles and to help them improve their careers programme (although a small number flagged that there could sometimes be 'too much' information). One Careers Leader wrote that taking part in the Careers and Enterprise Service *"has transformed our careers programme and the offer we are able to make to students"*.

Supporting Careers Leaders in their roles

Some Careers Leaders felt more supported in their roles. One wrote that one of the key benefits from the service was *"having someone in your corner"* [referring to the Enterprise Coordinator], as Careers Leaders often work alone and can feel isolated within the school or college. Another wrote that they appreciated having the Careers Leaders there as *"a 'go-to' person for queries"*.

Two Careers Leaders mentioned that the Enterprise Coordinator being "external" to their school had been an asset as it was a way of bringing new ideas into the school.

4.10 Enterprise Advisers and LEP stakeholders also agreed that Careers and Enterprise Service added value to education institutions in the following ways:

A more uniform service

4.11 One stakeholder from the Skills Advisory Panel commented that the Careers and Enterprise Service may have been able to provide more uniform CEAIG provision across schools in the area. They commented that before the service, CEAIG provision has tended to vary by school in terms of quality and in terms of coverage. For example, grammar school pupils may have been less likely to have been informed about apprenticeship opportunities than pupils in mainstream schools and colleges. The Careers and Enterprise Service, being a uniform offer for all education institutions, may have helped to standardise the offer.

A business perspective

4.12 Two Enterprise Advisers stated that they believed many teachers have not had much experience of the job market and workplace outside of education. Enterprise Advisers were said to be able to bring this insight to schools to aid both teachers and pupils to better understand the world of work, particular job roles and skills needed.

Box 2: How the service is adding value – networking facilitation and wider activity

The EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service implemented activities additional to the core offer to be delivered by the team. These were put in place to compliment and enhance the service.³²

Enterprise Coordinators have delivered networking opportunities to Careers Leaders and Enterprise Advisers:

- **Cluster meetings** – Enterprise Coordinators held ‘cluster meetings’ which were networking sessions for Careers Leaders. They were one hour long. The first half included a discussion on a pre-prepared topic, usually one of the Gatsby Benchmarks. The second half offered an opportunity for Careers Leaders to network and share best practice.
- **Coffee Breaks** – Enterprise Coordinators held ‘coffee breaks’. These were half-hour calls between Careers Leaders which often involved guest speakers and time for informal discussion.

³² Evidenced by focus group of Enterprise Coordinators (December 2020) and consultations with Enterprise Advisers

- **Enterprise Adviser networking sessions** – Virtual networking meetings between Enterprise Advisers, organised by Enterprise Coordinators and led by theme.

The purpose was to share learning, resources and best practice amongst Careers Leaders and Enterprise Advisers.

Enterprise M3 LEP

- 4.13** EM3 LEP set a range of objectives for the service, as well as expecting it to align to their Skills Action priorities, strategic priorities, the contract targets set by the Careers and Enterprise Company, and the KPIs generated by the contract. These are outlined in Annex A. In consultation with LEP stakeholders, these objectives, KPIs and priorities were not directly mentioned. However, LEP stakeholders did have a clear vision for how the Careers and Enterprise Service should and could contribute to the aims of the LEP. They were clear that the service could support the growth of the EM3 area by helping to ensure young people acquire the skills and experience needed to pursue careers in local industries. Particular mention was made to the service’s potential to support the EM3 LEP’s key growth sectors: clean growth, gaming and immersive technology (particularly around Guildford), space and small satellite applications and to some extent, construction and animal health³³.
- 4.14** Enterprise Coordinators consulted were clear about their role in supporting the local growth objectives of EM3 LEP. For example, the Enterprise Coordinator working with schools and colleges in Guildford takes care to focus on the gaming and immersive technology sector. The Enterprise Advisers consulted were less aware of the specific LEP priority sectors to be supported by the Careers and Enterprise Service. However, they were aware of their role in supporting the skills needs of the economy, aiming to equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed by industry.
- 4.15** Some stakeholders consulted indicated that local populations around the EM3 LEP area are often drawn into London to find employment. Two stakeholders from the Skills Advisory Panel consulted would have preferred for skilled young people to choose careers that align with local industries and to work in the local area, and see careers advice in schools and the Careers and Enterprise Service as a route to achieving that aim.

³³ As identified by EM3 LEP stakeholders consulted.

Research question D). How effective are our internal and external relationships to include business and education?

Internal relationships

- 4.16** During consultations with stakeholders from the Skills Advisory Panel, it was reported that the Careers and Enterprise Service was originally viewed by EM3 LEP colleagues as a ‘bolt on’ service, and not as an integrated part of the LEP. However, consultees reported that it had become more integrated, and there were stronger relationships between the Careers and Enterprise Service colleagues and wider LEP colleagues³⁴. Over time, the Careers and Enterprise Service team begun joining wider EM3 calls; Enterprise Co-ordinators have researched particular sectors and fed back learning to the LEP; and the Senior Enterprise Coordinator joined the Skills Advisory Panel.
- 4.17** One SAP stakeholder stated that there was potential for the Careers and Enterprise Service to link further with LEP initiatives: the Growth Hub and the SAP. These were said to have similar and interrelated agendas. However, as the SAP and the Careers and Enterprise service had been in operation for relatively few years³⁵, they hadn’t cemented how they would interact with each other. It was said that this would become clearer over time as the initiatives develop.
- 4.18** One consultee proposed that there is an opportunity for the LEP to do more to link its business contacts to the Careers and Enterprise Service. As the consultee proposed, this could be a useful pool of business contacts from which the service could recruit Enterprise Advisers.

External relationships³⁶

- 4.19** The evaluation found that the Careers and Enterprise Service has also developed its relationships with some external organisations. Three organisations³⁷ with growing links to the service mentioned by consultees included Surrey County Council, EDT South and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).
- **Surrey County Council** – The Careers and Enterprise Service’s Senior Enterprise Coordinator, and the Economic Lead within the Economy and Growth Team at Surrey County Council, are known to each other and communicate. The Economic Lead saw the value of the service and its role (or potential role) with regards to local economic growth.

³⁴ Evidenced by focus group of Enterprise Coordinators (February 2021).

³⁵ At the time of this research, the SAP had been in operation for approx. one year and the Careers and Enterprise Service, approx. two years (as reported by a SAP stakeholder).

³⁶ Evidenced by consultations with senior stakeholders and the focus group of Enterprise Coordinators.

³⁷ This may not be an exhaustive list of all external relationships held by the Careers and Enterprise Service.

- **EDT South** – EDT South is an organisation that delivers careers support to young people and adults. The Enterprise Coordinator working in the same area as EDT South is in communication with them.
- **CIPD** – The CIPD is a professional association for human resource management professionals. Enterprise Coordinators work in partnership with the association to recruit Enterprise Advisers. As a result, they have been connected to businesspeople who may volunteer to be Enterprise Advisers.

4.20 It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list. The Careers and Enterprise Service may have developed relationships with other external organisations not mentioned by consultees.

4.21 Two stakeholders from the Skills Advisory Panel suggested ways in which the Careers and Enterprise Service could capitalise on new or existing relationships.

- It was suggested that the Careers and Enterprise Service could communicate with local training providers in order to coordinate their communications to schools. From SQW's wider evaluation activity of the National Enterprise Adviser Network, we are aware that schools are frequently contacted by training providers and external organisations offering services. It was suggested that schools may find it easier to understand the local offer and respond if it was more coordinated. One recommendation given was that the Careers and Enterprise Service could coordinate with the Surrey Association of Learning Providers on how they work with schools around the apprenticeship agenda. Although the Careers and Enterprise Service does work with the ALPS, the consultee who made this recommendation was not aware of this. One implication may be that the Careers and Enterprise service could make their work with the ALPS more known amongst stakeholders.
- It was suggested that, if welcome, colleagues from Surrey County Council may be interested in offering strategic support and insight to the EM3 LEP in order to help shape the service.

Research question E). The project's business performance falls below our KPIs in terms of engaging with businesses and the recruitment of Enterprise Advisers. What can be done to improve this?

4.22 The Careers and Enterprise Company set contract targets for the Service³⁸. Two targets set for 2021/22 were around engaging with businesses: '65% of schools and colleges meeting Benchmark 5 - Encounters with employers and employees'; and, '60% of schools and colleges meeting Benchmark 6 - Experiences of the workplace (40% partially achieving)'. A second target set by the Careers and Enterprise Company for the service had implications for the

³⁸ See Annex A for full list of Careers and Enterprise Company contract targets.

number of Enterprise Advisers needed in the network: '85% mainstream schools and colleges in the EM3 network are matched to an Enterprise Adviser'³⁹.

Table 4-2: EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service performance against 2021/22 targets and national Enterprise Adviser Network in terms of engaging with businesses and recruiting Enterprise Advisers

	Target	EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service	National Enterprise Adviser Network
Benchmark 5 - Encounters with employers and employees	65%	40%	58%
Benchmark 6 - Experiences of the workplace	60% fully achieving 40% partially achieving	38% fully achieving	39% fully achieving
Mainstream schools and colleges in the EM3 network are matched to an Enterprise Adviser	85%	76%	80%

Source: EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Monthly Report' (March 2021), and Careers and Enterprise Service. EM3 Operational Plan 20-21 - Half term Four - End Report (September 2020)

4.23 During the early phase on delivery, the Careers and Enterprise Service fell behind on these three targets. The team were aware of the underlying challenges that had made it difficult to engage with businesses and recruit sufficient Enterprise Advisers. From consultations with Enterprise Coordinators and SAP stakeholders, challenges identified were:

- **Geography** – Enterprise Coordinators identified that some areas they covered are more rural than others, and that it is harder to source Enterprise Advisers and business volunteers in those areas. Specifically, they characterised Surrey as having more urban areas with denser populations of businesses, and Hampshire as having more rural areas with fewer businesses to draw on.
- **Business sizes** – Enterprise Coordinators agreed that there are many SMEs in the areas they covered. This has had the following implications:
 - Many of the Enterprise Advisers had come from SMEs. Enterprise Coordinators stated that those working in SMEs were more likely to have to drop out of the programme due to work commitments.

³⁹ Careers and Enterprise Service. EM3 Operational Plan 20-21 - Half term Four - End Report (September 2020)

- In addition, findings from the evaluation of the national Enterprise Adviser Network are that it can be more resource-intensive to engage EAs from a range of SMEs than from one large employer⁴⁰.
- **Availability of employer-run programmes for young people** - Enterprise Coordinators stated that there are few businesses in the EM3 area with programmes in place for young people. To explain, this kind of programme could be a workplace visit and employer talk for students as part of a school trip, or similar. This had made it more challenging to achieve employer and employee encounters for young people.
- **Covid-19 and lockdown** were said to have had an impact on Enterprise Advisers, some of whom had lost their jobs or were facing additional work or home pressures, and as a result have withdrawn from the service.

4.24 The service team had taken steps to overcome these challenges in order to increase their engagement with businesses and recruit additional Enterprise Advisers. The team appointed a Business Development Coordinator in September 2020. His role is specifically to onboard, train and manage Enterprise Advisers, as well as business volunteers to provide employer encounters to young people. He also organises networking sessions for the Enterprise Advisers. His appointment had helped to ensure dedicated resource is directed to this role. This was said to have increased recruitment:

“We were at a regional meeting yesterday and... the CEC commented on how our recruitment has increased compared to other local areas and local teams. And it was because of the way we have restructured. And that’s being acknowledged at national level.” – Enterprise Coordinator

Research question F) Benchmarking activity to assess performance against other high performing areas⁴¹.

4.25 This research project planned to evidence research question F through mapping data and documentation, and through discussions with strategy-setting partners and schools. However, neither research stream has allowed us to benchmark Careers and Enterprise Service activity against other high performing areas. Discussions with strategy-setting partners provided limited insight into this question, and schools were not able to take part in consultations due to other demands on their time.

4.26 That said, the data and documentation mapping exercise has provided some evidence as to how the Careers and Enterprise Service has performed compared to the national network.

⁴⁰SQW. Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs Evaluation Report (Oct 2020)
<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/enterprise-adviser-network-and-careers-hubs-evaluation-report>

⁴¹ This section is evidenced by the Enterprise M3 LEP Report (April 2021). Please note that the report may not be entirely accurate as three college campuses that fall under the Careers and Enterprise Service’s remit are not included in the report.

Enterprise Adviser to Education Institution matches⁴²

4.27 The EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service was performing similarly to the national picture when it came to converting sign-ups to the network into matches. By March 2021, the Careers and Enterprise Service had matched 90.5% of Enterprise Advisers to an institution, compared to the national average of 93.7% Enterprise Advisers matched. By the end of March 2021, the Careers and Enterprise Service had also matched 75.5% of education institutions in the network to an Enterprise Adviser, compared with 80% of institutions matched.

Gatsby Benchmarks⁴³

4.28 For the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service, a slightly higher proportion (98.7%) of matched institutions completed Compass, than compared to the national average (94.3%) by March 2021.

4.29 In terms of Gatsby Benchmark achievement, the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service (38.3%) was in line with the national network (38.9%) with regards to the percentage of matched institutions achieving Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces). However, the proportion of matched institutions achieving Benchmark 5 (encounters with employers and employees) was lower for the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service (39.7%) than nationally (58.5%).

⁴² EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Monthly Report' (March 2021)

⁴³ EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Monthly Report' (March 2021)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1** This evaluation was a small scale review which was completed during the pandemic. The EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service had to respond to this and find new routes to deliver against the backdrop of severe disruption to schools and repeated lock-downs more generally. The evidence gathered in the course of this evaluation suggested that it has navigated the pandemic well; indeed, in some respects, the last few months have been its most effective, particularly in terms of recruiting Enterprise Advisers and matching them with schools. Although the effects of this are yet to be seen in relation to the Gatsby Benchmarks, the inference is that there has been more activity and in due course, this ought to translate into better results for the service.
- 5.2** As it stands, the future of the Careers and Enterprise Service is unclear. It is funded until August 2021 but continuity thereafter depends on funding decisions which have yet to be made at this point (May 2021).
- 5.3** The findings from this evaluation have suggested that:
- after a slow start, the majority of schools across the LEP area are engaging in the programme
 - the EM3 Careers and Enterprise Service has become well-staffed and well-led; all parts of the service (including the Enterprise Advisers) appear to be performing effectively
 - the service has adapted to a difficult set of circumstances and it has taken decisive action when issues have been identified; the recruitment of a Business Development Co-ordinator was especially important in this regard
 - Enterprise Advisers have been thoughtfully matched to schools and in general, the bilateral relationships that have developed over time appear to be working well
 - it has gradually become ‘more mainstream’ within LEP structures.
- 5.4** It is within this context that we make five broad recommendations. Four of these are ‘operational’; the fifth is more strategic in nature.
- 5.5** The model was premised on face-to-face delivery and it had to go on-line as the pandemic unfolded, but post-pandemic there are obviously choices to be made. We understand that, in the main, Enterprise Advisers favour remote delivery – partly because it is much easier to ‘fit in’ around other commitments. For Careers Leaders, the picture is much more mixed: some are welcoming virtual delivery, but for others, there continues to be enthusiasm for a face-to-face service. It will be important that every relationship works for both parties, and this will require careful navigation over the months ahead. **Our first recommendation, therefore, is that the process of returning to ‘(a new) normal’ is managed carefully and in a**

manner that is sensitive to the concerns and priorities of all parties, informed by the lessons of the last year.

- 5.6** Relationships are at the heart of the local delivery of the Careers and Enterprise Service. These take time to build and they need to be actively animated – particularly when many of the Enterprise Advisers are from small businesses. The process of matching education institutions with Enterprise Advisers is critically important. At times, this has proved difficult. Current arrangements were put in place in September 2020 and these now seem to be working well. In the light of this, **our second recommendation is that the new function of the Business Development Coordinator is retained.** As reported by a Careers and Enterprise Company stakeholder, the role of the Business Development Coordinator has been implemented in other LEP services, however, EM3 LEP has managed to get the right person for the role, in terms of his expertise and practice, which makes it extremely effective.
- 5.7** Enterprise Advisers consulted stated that education institutions could benefit from having access to a range of Enterprise Advisers as each could offer something different in terms of skills or knowledge. In the future, a Careers Hub model could facilitate networks of this nature. Senior stakeholders consulted agreed that more connections between people involved in the careers/education landscape would be helpful, at both an operational level and strategic level. **Our third recommendation is therefore that steps should be taken to build networks of relationships between Careers Leaders and a range of Enterprise Advisers. Potentially this could be achieved through the adoption of a Careers Hub model.**
- 5.8** Careers Leaders receive information and resources from a range of sources including from Enterprise Coordinators. As reported in the e-survey of Careers Leaders, this has been useful and it has supported them in their role. However, there is a point at which a ‘helpful flow of resources’ can become ‘overwhelming’. Enterprise Coordinators have key roles in managing and sifting information and resources sent out from the Careers and Enterprise Company and other sources to Careers Leaders. **Our fourth recommendation is for Enterprise Coordinators to carefully manage the flow of information and resources to Careers Leaders, prioritising the most important messaging, and with an understanding of which Careers Leaders may need what resources and when.**
- 5.9** Our study found that schools have adopted different approaches to engaging with the Careers and Enterprise Service. Generally speaking, the service works better when Careers Leaders have a reasonable level of both seniority and resource. Looking ahead – particularly given the challenges that are likely to be faced by young people in an uncertain labour market as the economy recovers from the pandemic – effective careers advice will be critical. It ought also to link to opportunities for apprenticeships. Aligning young people with the range of opportunities that exist across Surrey and Hampshire will also be important in achieving the LEP’s wider strategic objectives, particularly in the context of the (national) Plan for Growth. **Our fifth recommendation – which is strategic in nature – is that the LEP and the wider economic development/ skills network emphasises the need for strong links between**

businesses and schools, using the Careers and Enterprise Service as a catalyst and making further links to the possibilities for apprenticeships. The Skills Advisory Panel (and/or any successor linked to Local Skills Improvement Plans) is an obvious route through which this should be taken forward.

Annex A: Strategic Objectives for the Service

Contract targets⁴⁴

A.1 The Careers and Enterprise Company set contract targets for the Careers and Enterprise Service. The targets for 2020/2021 were as follows:

- 85% mainstream schools and colleges in the EM3 network are matched to an Enterprise Adviser
- 100% schools/colleges within the Network completing a Compass evaluation on a termly basis
- 70% of schools and colleges meeting Benchmark 5 - Encounters with employers & employees
- 60% of schools and colleges meeting Benchmark 6 - Experiences of the workplace (40% partially achieving).

Additional KPIs⁴⁵

A.2 The contract generated KPIs⁴⁶ for up to August 2021 and these were as follows:

- 6 FTE Enterprise Co-ordinators to be recruited
- 115 education institutions within the region to be signed up into the EAN⁴⁷
- 98 education institutions to be matched with an EA and signed up to the network⁴⁸

Objectives set by the EM3 LEP⁴⁹

A.3 Objectives from the EM3 LEP which were additional to the Careers and Enterprise Company's contract targets were:

- All mainstream schools and colleges to be offered access to the Network and Enterprise Adviser register

⁴⁴ EM3 LEP. 'EM3 Tactical Plan 20-21' (September 2020).

⁴⁵ EM3 LEP. Tender Document for the Evaluation of the Careers and Enterprise Service (May 2020)

⁴⁶ Note that some KIP targets were revised for the academic year 2020/21. Updated figures are shown here.

⁴⁷ EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Monthly Report' (March 2021)

⁴⁸ EM3 LEP. 'EM3 Tactical Plan 20-21' (September 2020) states that Updated CEC target for August 2021 is 85% of schools/ colleges in the network to be matched.

EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Monthly Report' (March 2021) states that target for institutions in the network is 115. 85% of 115 is 98.

⁴⁹ EM3 LEP. 'EM3 Tactical Plan 20-21' (September 2020).

- Gatsby Benchmark 1 (a stable careers programme) with schools and colleges to be targeted⁵⁰.

Skills Action priorities⁵¹

A.4 Alongside these contract targets, objectives and KPIs, the Careers and Enterprise Service was expected to align with the priorities set out in the Skills Action plan 2020/21:

- Priority 1: Use economic data to build business resilience, address skills gaps and match skills supply to employer demand.
- Priority 2: Enable EM3 residents to identify their skills strengths and needs.
- Priority 3: Work with employer and education partners to identify skills needs in key high growth EM3 industries and emerging sectors.
- Priority 4: To stimulate education and training providers to meet skills needs now and as they evolve.

Strategic priorities⁵²

A.5 The Service was also expected to align with the four strategic priorities set out in the EM3 LEP's Skills Strategy, particularly Priority 2.

A.6 Four strategic priorities of the EM3 LEP's Skills Strategy:

- Priority 1: Understanding the economic impact of COVID-19 and other economic shocks.
- Priority 2: Empower EM3 residents to identify and connect to skills and employment opportunities appropriate for them.
- Priority 3: To help inform and stimulate education and training responsiveness to area skills needs – now and in the future.
- Priority 4: Support business and education articulation of skills for a green economy, demonstrating the importance of clean growth to the LEP across all sectors.

A.7 According to the Enterprise Coordinators and SAP stakeholders consulted, objectives and priorities from both the EM3 LEP and the Careers and Enterprise Company complemented each other and there were no conflicting aims.

⁵⁰ EM3 LEP. 'EM3 Tactical Plan 20-21' (September 2020). The specific aims set out by the EM3 LEP to achieve this goal were: 1. 'all schools and colleges to have a careers programme in place', and 2. for the service to, 'focus on Gatsby Benchmark 1 to provide an 80/20 consultative support approach to institutions'.

⁵¹ <https://enterprisem3.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/EM3%20Skills%20Action%20Plan%20and%20Local%20Skills%20Report%20Final.pdf>

⁵² EM3 LEP. 'Enterprise M3 Careers and Enterprise Action Plan 2020' (2020)



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