



Bright Crop Careers

End of Project Report and Recommendations

September 2017

Executive Summary

Land based industries face significant change due to automation, labour availability and Brexit among other issues. At the same time, the careers and education landscape is facing near unprecedented change in light of the Post 16 Skills Plan, the Industrial Strategy and the National Careers Strategy.

The Post 16 Skills Plan (2016) aims to radically simplify vocational and technical qualifications, and is a key area of development for careers activity. It offers massive potential for the land based industries, particularly when considering on average, we have five times more high-skilled technical roles than other sectors (UKCES '16 update) and a growing trend for automation and digital technology.

It is vital industry embraces these challenges to not only think of future labour demands, but also how we deliver careers promotion and recruitment of new entrants. To ensure we attract a high calibre of young people at all levels of employment, we need to deliver our message in a way that fits with the educational agenda, which can on occasion be different to employer's perception of need.

The Bright Crop Careers initiative was set up in 2012 in order to address the shortages of new talent being recruited across the agriculture and horticulture industries. Since then the UK careers education landscape has continued to become an extremely crowded and complex environment.

Under recent educational changes by the Department of Education (DfE), the land based sectors have been grouped together and identified as a collective 'career pathway' to be known as Agriculture, Animal Care and the Environment. This wider route offers challenges when considering the current infrastructure across the various careers initiatives involved. In the past six months alone, there have been 14 reports or review documents on the subject, all of which provide recommendations in careers outreach and engagement. One of the most notable recommendations, which was agreed under the Technical Education Bill, was that all schools must provide opportunities for young people to interact with Further Education (FE) providers as part of their careers provision. The impact of this is a new, direct route into mainstream secondary education for industries like agriculture and horticulture that have specialist education provision at FE and Higher Education.

The DfE are continuing to put employers in the lead position for skills and careers development. This provides great prospects, but also requires our employers to be given support and guidance on how to engage with careers work at a local and national level to realise the full potential of this opportunity.

Bright Crop has delivered an enormous insight into the careers landscape, but the sector specific approach, in a fragmented offering has limited ability to deliver real impact and realise the investment made. The time is right to develop a new holistic approach to careers, skills and talent. With high levels of interest in careers across all sectors, there is a need for facilitation and leadership across the land based sector and improved collaboration to prevent duplication acting as a barrier to success for all involved.

Collaboratively, land based initiatives have the opportunity to develop high-quality careers outreach provision, with better signposting to our land based colleges and HE providers. They should provide a service that our employers can easily engage with and support; by mobilizing their organization to deliver meaningful careers activity and creating a sustainable funding structure that delivers benefit to the whole of the land based industries.

This report breaks down the core objectives of the Bright Crop Careers initiative and highlights the associated outcomes achieved over the project lifespan. The key recommendations are based on these insights and outcomes and we are sharing in the hope they will provide a catalyst and direction for a more collaborative initiative. An initiative that is widely supported by all sectors and their employers and is capable of promoting the sector as a career of choice for the next generation.

Background

The Bright Crop Careers initiative was set up in 2012 to address the shortages of new talent being recruited across the agriculture and horticulture industries. Designed to improve the visibility of the industry through outreach activity delivered by industry ambassadors in schools, Bright Crop set about introducing the next generation to the wide breadth of career opportunities on offer. Ambassadors were recruited, trained and provided with quality assured resources to support their outreach activity. Young people were encouraged to use the Bright Crop website to find out more information and explore a wide variety of case studies highlighting the various sectors specific occupations.

In the same period, the UK careers landscape has continued to become an extremely crowded and complex environment: Bright Crop is one of 31 land based careers initiatives, all independently funded and governed by bodies across the sectors. Over 200 non-industry specific websites designed to provide careers inspiration for young people and in the last 6 months alone, 14 reports/reviews have been produced by interested organisations. Since its inception, Bright Crop worked alongside many of these land-based initiatives. While the direction of most initiatives is similar: attract high quality people into their sector, each initiative working independently has led to competition for investment, but more importantly a diverse and complicated range of offerings for careers professionals and new entrants to access, which is not conducive to improving engagement. All of which have resulted in Bright Crop struggling to create a clear and consistent voice around careers in this highly fragmented market.

Research (Careers Development Institute 2015) tells us that the poor perceptions of our industry among teaching and careers professionals, negatively impacts the quality and quantity of young people that are signposted to the land based industries during their 'moments of choice' in careers education. Employer interactions in schools are more successful if delivered with the qualification pathway context in place and the providers of Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) engaged in that partnership approach from the beginning. (Education and Employers Taskforce 2016).

The Post 16 Skills Plan, implemented via the Technical Education Bill, means land based sectors are now grouped together and identified as a collective 'career pathway' to be known as Agriculture, Animal Care and the Environment. In addition to this, the DfE continue to place employers in the lead position for skills and careers development, which means employers need more support and guidance to engage with careers outreach at all levels.

The work and research of Bright Crop has delivered significant insight into the careers landscape, but the sector specific approach, in a fragmented offering has limited its ability to deliver real impact and return on investment. This work is relevant to all of the land-based sectors and the time is right to develop a new holistic approach to careers, skills and talent, with high levels of interest in careers across all sectors. To deliver the results required across Land based sectors a central initiative should look to provide facilitation and leadership in areas where there is currently limited provision and support better collaboration where duplication acts as a barrier to success.

Aims and objectives

Bright Crop was established with the following aims:

- Improve quality of new entrants across all entry points into the industry
- Improve the perception and image of industry to increase referrals from influencers (careers advisors, teachers and parents)
- Improve position of industry to within the top 20 desirable careers destinations by young people.

The main objectives were:

Explain the benefits – develop a web portal to provide industry overview with extensive sign posting to sector specific information and career pathways. *This would be the first port of call when investigating agriculture as a career destination.*

Inform the influencers – National communication and engagement strategy for careers professionals and teachers with careers responsibility. *Every 'influencer' to have access and awareness of opportunities that exist in the sector, nationally and regionally and integrate agriculture into existing careers advisory platforms.*

Raise profile and attract talent – National delivering of industry ambassadors. Connecting to Local Enterprise Partnerships and regional skills partnerships. *Every secondary school in the UK contacted and offered an Ambassador visit.*

Impact Achieved

Since 2012, Bright Crop has sought to achieve its aims and objectives through a variety of work streams; the impact of these is highlighted below.

VISABILITY - Macro brand development; coherent and consistent messaging:	
Work streams	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an umbrella careers brand: to make agri-food businesses visible and part of a compelling careers narrative. • Be the vehicle that creates and delivers an attractive coherent and consistent macro industry story for key influencers and young people. • Be the agri-food industry specialist career support hub: facilitating direct business contact with young people seeking careers inspiration and information. 	<p>Bright Crop has been unable to position itself as the umbrella careers brand for the agriculture and horticulture sectors. There continues to be multiple careers websites representing and promoting sector specific occupations. This has been a significant barrier to the development of a more coherent communication campaign for the promotion of industry careers. During panel workshops delivered in 2016 to teaching and careers professionals, the key outcomes indicated that the level of duplication and fragmentation across the sectors digital offer made it difficult for audiences to unpick clear career pathways.</p>

INSPIRING - Direct engagement with young people:	
Work streams	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be present at large scale Careers Inspiration events, representing agri-food industry as exciting innovative career opportunity. • Develop age appropriate resources for classroom use to engage on agri-Food industry. • Provide consistent messaging and extensive signposting to sector specific information and career pathways on relevant third party student platforms. 	<p>Bright Crop undertook a full assessment of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) skills plans. This enabled a more targeted approach when considering where there were opportunities to engage the industries employers with an active careers outreach programme, being delivered through the LEPs. By matching activity with LEP areas that had identified economic growth in the agriculture and horticulture industries, Bright Crop was able to support employers in setting up the internal infrastructure required to deliver an ambassador programme and build a visible hub through the LEP to champion careers in the industry.</p>

INFORMING – National services for teachers and other careers advisors:	
Work streams	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate consistent messaging and training to independent careers businesses, and Government funded departments, NGOs • Ensure all partner agri-Food businesses have access to current careers and education information from Bright Crop as the credible careers policy communicator. 	<p>Bright Crop developed a CPD training session for teachers and careers professionals, 480 delegates attended a Bright Crop CPD session over the lifespan of the project. These sessions were developed with The Careers Development Institute in order to create a credible voice in a crowded careers communication landscape. Evaluations took place pre and post training, this showed a 62% increase in the likelihood of a delegate to refer or signpost a young person to the agriculture and horticulture industries as a</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission and update information regarding the Agri-Food industry and careers opportunities on top non industry specific mapping websites and careers consultancy portals 	potential career destination.
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CONNECTING - Connecting Business with Education	
Work streams	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tools for businesses to be active and create impact in careers opportunity landscape. • Connect individual businesses with local schools. • Link business into relevant local educational careers networks through Local Economic Partnerships. • Provide initial training of business ambassadors. • Build best practice network for ambassadors. 	<p>Bright Crop attended a wide range of careers inspiration events, these covered local, regional and national levels. National events that highlight a wide breadth of industries are well attended and regarded by schools. Secondary schools regularly utilise these events to supplement careers outreach obligations. Bright Crop attended the Big Bang Careers Event at Birmingham NEC for three consecutive years. These event offer significant visibility opportunities and help build a 'brand' presence for industries looking to encourage young people to consider a career in their fields. They are extremely expensive to attend and resource and it is not possible to measure impact in terms of conversions on to industry specific FE or HE courses or first employment. Evidence provided in 2017 by the Careers and Enterprise Company show that Careers Fairs at a local and regional level have limited impact in terms of meaningful engagement with employers.</p>

Summary

Bright Crop has made substantial gains since its inception, in particular with the creation of evidence-based information on how to deliver impactful careers outreach effectively. However, as a sector specific programme, it has been unable to reduce duplication and the resulting competition for resources. As a result, Bright Crop is one voice in a crowded market, which ultimately will have little demonstrable value to investors and industry alike.

The support of the steering group has been invaluable in ensuring Bright Crop achieved so much, but to develop this good work, and for any initiative to be successful in the future landscape, commitment and proactive support is needed from a much larger proportion of industry. To do this, future activity and objectives needs to be more widely promoted and employers should be part of the planning to ensure wide understanding and consequently engage their support.

The work commissioned and piloted by Bright Crop established that working directly with the information providers is more advantageous in changing opinion and is a route that should be more widely followed to ensure fact, not perception, influences the advice given to new entrants.

To encourage young people and their influencers to pursue technical education, apprenticeships and HE routes across our sectors, a high-quality careers outreach provision, better signposting to our land based colleges and HE providers is required. Such initiatives need to provide a service that our employers can easily engage with and support; by mobilizing their organization to deliver meaningful careers activity and creating a sustainable funding structure that delivers benefit to the whole of the land based industries.

The grouping of all land-based learning into one route of education moving forward provides an excellent opportunity to review current provision and remove duplication. The time for single sector initiative's working in isolation is running out; where possible these existing resources needs to be combined into a collaborative land based approach linking careers professional, industry and specialist providers together and developing a recruitment strategy, which is closely aligned and responsive to educational policy.

Recommendations

Based on the evidence gathered by Bright Crop and that produced by other interested parties, the next steps for industry careers outreach should be the development of a centrally based recruitment strategy that aligns industry initiatives with developing government policy.

A successful strategy will:

- Align existing careers initiatives into a single project
- Reflect the government education and careers policy and regional approach to skills
- Utilise existing infrastructures to connect with schools
- Use economic modelling and industry liaison to reflect current/future skills needs of the industry

To do this the following steps are required:



Annex 1

Policy updates that impact the careers landscape

As the agri-food, industries face significant change and businesses require greater technical skills to drive competitiveness and profitability. A drive for great technical skills must be at the heart of the work that is delivered for careers promotion and recruitment of new entrants; in order to continue to attract a high calibre of young people at all levels of employment, we must demonstrate that we are a modern, technical industry that offers attractive and diverse career opportunities.

The UK careers education landscape continues to be an extremely crowded and complex environment, one that in the light of the newly launched Industrial Strategy and the pending National Careers Strategy is facing a period of near unprecedented change.

Of course, this offers challenges when considering our current infrastructure across the various careers initiatives, however this could be overcome with some bold steps towards reviewing our approach. The important factor here is that some key policy changes around careers and skills have resulted in an opportunity for the agri-food industry to be more visible in the secondary education framework. The opportunity to provide careers intervention and outreach under the 'land based' agenda from year 7 should not be underestimated.

The table below sets out the key policy changes in careers education that directly impact or effect the careers outreach activity.

Policy Change	Description	Impact	Opportunity
Post 16 Skills Plan	<p>The Post 16 Skills Plan is a government plan to radically simplify vocational and technical qualifications and is a key area of development for careers activity</p> <p>Setting out the future for UK technical training, it offers huge potential for the agri-food industries that have more high-skilled technical roles than average and a growing trend for automation and digital technology.</p> <p>Land based sectors have been grouped together (by DfE) as Agriculture, Animal Care and the Environment. This technical route will sit alongside the existing academic route through Secondary, FE and HE.</p> <p>Each vocational routes will have its own Panel of Professionals to develop standards that would apply to work-based and college-based specific occupations and provide a high-level steer on qualification content.</p>	<p>The Department for Education, the institute of Apprenticeships and Defra are looking to industry to organize themselves in line with the new career pathways. When the technical routes are launched in schools, there will be an industry mandate to 'recruit' young people for each route using careers outreach and employer engagement.</p>	<p>Careers initiatives must form partnerships with other land based careers initiatives to assist the development of a coherent communication and outreach programme for the newly formed 'land based' career pathway. (Agriculture, Animal Care and the Environment). We must demonstrate to government that we are organizing ourselves in line with current policy if we are likely to be able to attract funding and advocacy for our future delivery.</p>

Policy Change	Description	Impact	Opportunity
Access to young people through secondary education careers	The Barker Report was issued in March 2017 in response to the Technical Education Bill. The key report recommendations were that all schools must provide access to employers and further education providers as part of their careers education provision. Currently only 32% of schools that have 6 th form provision have allowed FE providers into their schools as part of their careers activity pre GCSE. The objective is to improve the information on qualification pathways as part of careers interventions in addition to ensuring all young people gain access to at least four interactions with employers.	This change in the policy landscape provides a clear mandate for careers initiatives to work more closely with further and higher education providers. There is a need for a local partnership approach with colleges, universities and local industry employers to deliver schools outreach that demonstrates clear pathways from year 7 can be mapped through local provision.	Bright Crop has previously worked with a number of specialized industry colleges and universities, specifically through the career advisor training sessions. A land based careers initiative should respond to this policy change by seeking to build closer relationships with the LANDEX members. In addition to the introduction of the 'Land Based Career Pathway set out by DfE, (see above) this developments provides a clearer mutual benefit for building or more meaningful partnership with LANDEX in order to aid recruitment into the agri-food industries.
The apprenticeship levy	The apprenticeship levy came into force in April 2017. The Government estimates that the levy will result in £2.5 billion being invested into apprenticeships by 2020 (double that spent in 2010). To support the development of the new Apprenticeship Standards the government has created the Institute of Apprenticeships launching soon, this body will ensure employer involvement in qualification standards and will be responsible for wider employer engagement activities.	The apprenticeship levy has aided the increased visibility of apprenticeship routes into employment across the education system. Significant emphasis on recruitment and supporting outreach activity. Employers are starting to build closer relationships with Further and Higher Education providers in order to develop local regional partnership to deliver industry apprenticeship targets. Use of Labour Market Information data being used by these partnership in order to attract young people to the potential opportunities	A land based careers initiative should seek to obtain a better understanding of the Labour Market Information across the agri-food sectors. This would aid the development of promotional content for careers advisors and young people. The initiative should look to develop a framework that works with employers effected by the levy, supporting their ability to recruit potential apprentices by working in partnership with LANDEX members.
Careers Outreach, catchment for Employer Engagement	Report published by Pearson Education and the Careers and Enterprise Company sets out best practice for careers outreach and employer engagement. Government are using the findings to develop the National Careers Strategy – Due to be published 2017	Industries advised to map careers outreach and employer engagement to new Career Pathways. Industries advised to broaden the catchment of their outreach and not to take a sector specific approach, specifically when delivering careers activity into secondary schools. Proven to be too narrow a focus for careers engagement pre GCSE. Industries advised to address duplication across the careers initiatives. Acknowledgement from central government that the careers market is overcrowded and the number of providers is detrimental to meaningful engagement.	A land based careers initiative should respond to the recommendations set out in the report. They should explore opportunities to collaborate with other careers initiative or organisation (NLBC) that have a mandate to deliver careers outreach. They should look to become part of the Land Based Career Pathway - 58% of all land-based jobs are within the agriculture (production and manufacturing of primary) and horticulture (production, ornamental) sectors. (Nearest sector within the Land Based Career Pathway is Landscape and Amenities at 8%)

Annex 2: Useful organisations

The following is a brief list of organisations that have carried out work in the area of careers and have produced useful documents, which have been used during the work of Bright Crop.

Careers and Enterprise Company: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk>

Careers Development Institute: <http://www.thecdi.net/>

Gatsby Foundation: <http://www.gatsby.org.uk>

Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees;
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmese/205/205.pdf>

Education and Employers: <https://www.educationandemployers.org>