
Careers Collaboration

A Workshop Report



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This report prepared by Nick Skinner, Workshop Facilitator, Poppyfish People Development

Background

This workshop was created to allow an exploration of how careers outreach initiatives from across the land based sector might be brought together for overall benefit. The workshop enabled, for the first time, a community of organisations committed to the development of land based skills to have an open dialog and review the wider policy landscape for careers and skills. The political landscape for careers and skills is changing and this workshop provided an important opportunity to proactively kickstart a collaboration around careers for the Government's designated route in their Technical Education Plan of 'Agriculture, Environmental & Animal Care'.

Context

As the land based industries faces significant change due to automation, pressure on inputs and the environment and Brexit; businesses will require greater technical skills to drive competitiveness and profitability. This must be at the heart of the work we deliver for careers promotion and recruitment of new entrants, 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. The Post 16 Skills Plan (2016) aims to radically simplify vocational and technical qualifications, and it 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.

For the first time, our land based sectors have been grouped together by The Department for Education (DfE) and identified as a collective 'career pathway'. This work has been undertaken as part of the new Technical Education Bill; a move to identify 15 technical routes to employment developed in consultation with industry. This technical route will sit alongside the existing academic route through Secondary, Further and Higher education. For our sectors, we have been grouped and identified as; Agriculture, Animal Care and the Environment. This new career pathway essentially covers nearly all of the land based industries.

This wider route offers challenges when considering our current infrastructure across the various careers initiatives, however we believe we can overcome this with some bold steps towards reviewing our approach. The important factor here is that this is the first time we have been 'given' a collective identity within the secondary education framework. The opportunity to provide careers intervention and outreach under the 'land based' agenda from age 11 should not be underestimated.

In the past six months, we have seen 14 reports or review documents come out of DfE, Gatsby Education, Careers and Enterprise Company, Employer and Education Taskforce and many more. All of which provide recommendations on what works for careers outreach and engagement. One of the most notable recommendations from the Baker Review is that schools must now provide opportunities for young people to have interactions with Further Education providers as part of their careers provision. This recommendation was agreed as part of the passing of the Technical Education Bill and as such offers industries like ours, that have specialist education provision at FE and HE, a new route into mainstream secondary education.

In addition to this, the move to put employers firmly in the lead position for skills and careers development continues to build momentum from DfE. Our employer base need further support and guidance on how to engage with careers outreach on a local, regional and national level. 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, The National Land Based College offers an opportunity to help align the various initiatives, new and old. NLBC, with it's neutral, all-encompassing position, can provide facilitation and leadership in areas where there is currently limited provision and support better collaboration where duplication acts as a barrier to success.

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.

A more joined up offering for careers outreach for the land based sectors will allow us to target our audiences with an independent, go to place for information on the future jobs, current labour market information and the relevant qualification requirements. Working through/with the National Land Based College improves our opportunity to link our respective careers outreach with our specialised college network – LANDEX, this opportunity should not be missed. We are seeing recommendations to government from multiple sources across further education and the career professions that careers provision should reflect the 'learner journey'. Employer interactions in schools are more successful if delivered with the qualification pathway context in place and the providers of FE and HE engaged in that partnership approach from the beginning. (Education and Employers Taskforce 2016).

To encourage young people and their influencers to pursue technical education, apprenticeships and higher education routes across our sectors, we must respond to the opportunity these policy changes offer us all and face into the challenge of unpicking our duplicated offering. We have the opportunity to develop a high-quality careers outreach provision, with better signposting to our land based colleges and higher education providers. We will 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.

Aims

The aims of the workshop were

- To consider the future of careers collaboration for land skills.
- To initiate the first steps towards a more meaningful collaboration across land based organisations
- To instigate a process through which the organisations present might improve collective visibility to their audiences, drive efficiencies, and provide a clearer call to action for employer members to support, when championing the career opportunities available across our diverse and exciting land based sector.

Attendees

Attendees were drawn from across the community of organisations offering land based skills. A full list of attendees and their organisations is available as Appendix A.

Facilitation

A specialist external facilitator with experience of working in the UK agricultural, academic and research sectors was hired to help design the workshop and to ensure the aims of the workshop were met in the brief time available. The workshop was facilitated by Nick Skinner from Poppyfish (www.poppyfish.co.uk)

Agenda

The workshop ran from 1000 to 1300

1. Welcome, icebreaker and Introductions
2. Why are we here? (*Leigh Morris, NLBC*)
3. What works in land based careers, and why? (*Katie Garner, BrightCrop*)
4. Mapping the Field (*Nick Skinner, Poppyfish*)
5. Group Exercise: Journey through the TARDIS – a view from the future (*Nick Skinner, Poppyfish*)
6. Next steps (*Nick Skinner, Poppyfish*)

Why are we here?

After a brief introductions session with fun icebreaker led by the facilitator, **Leigh Morris**, Chief Executive of the National Land Based College welcomed attendees and provided context for the workshop. He spoke of the changing framework of careers in land based organisations and how changes in government policy and structure regarding careers support meant that the time is right to show a new lead in this area.

Leigh discussed his own history in land based careers, illustrating how individuals can develop their careers across the many disciplines and areas of land based work, and discussing current trends and needs in careers engagement with schools, employers the government and other key organisations involved in the progression of land based careers



Figure 1: Leigh Morris opened the workshop, setting the context and explaining why the workshop was important. "If it's on BBC Countryfile then it's land based".



Figure 2: Just a few of the organisations who actively participate in the development of land based careers

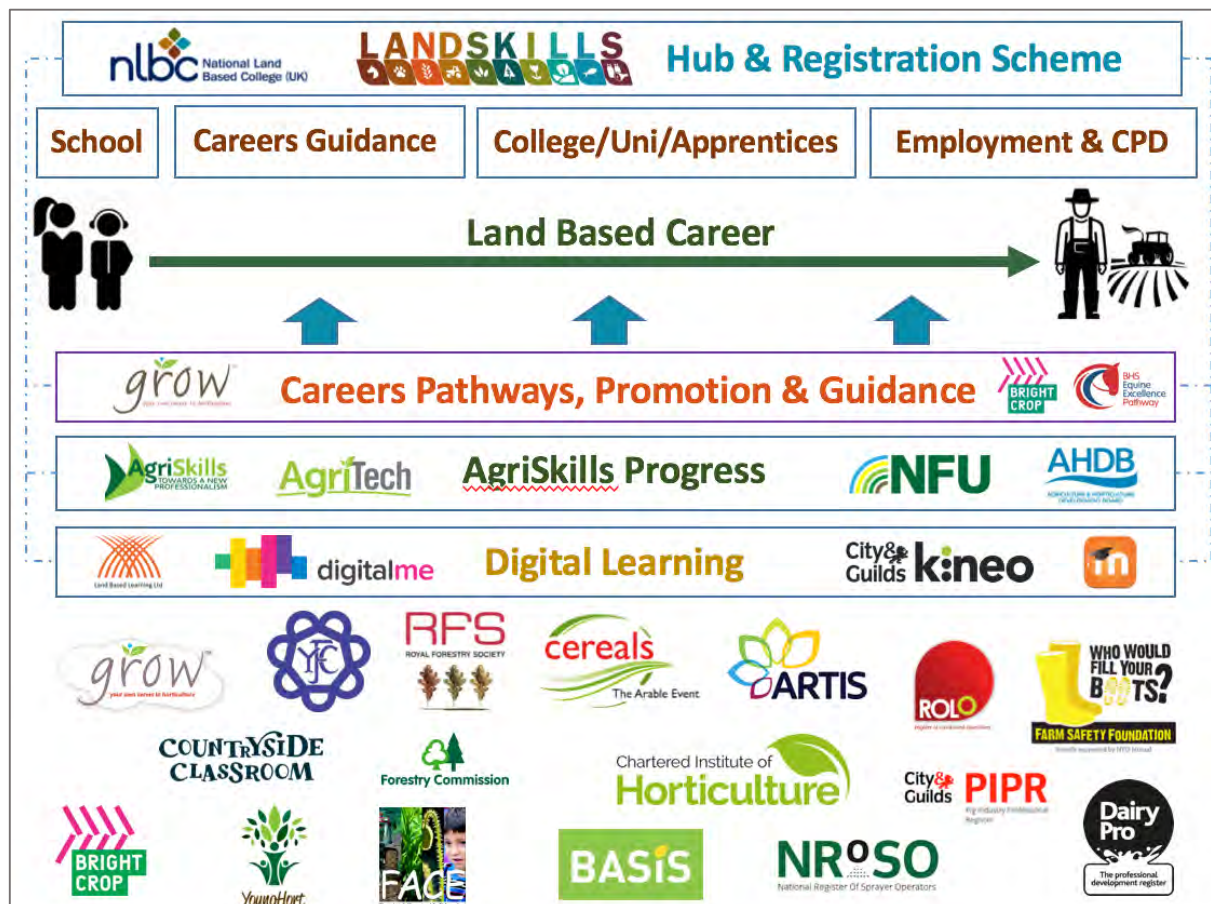


Figure 3: The complex landscape of landbased careers

Leigh discussed the importance of driving fresh engagement, using as a reference a website development 'Careers Hub' that had been completed by the NLBC team. Leigh outlined his view as this being the 'Tin' standard of careers engagement, and that it was the aim of this workshop to explore what more could be done to drive collaboration towards a 'Gold' standard.

Using NLBC as a case in point, Leigh discussed that many organisations are driving forward with their own careers development and engagement plans, but that he felt passionately that the time is now right to cross organisational boundaries and deliver improved outputs and strategic success through collaboration. He proposed some reasons for this:

- The UK Labour market has an ongoing need to attract & guide people in land based careers.
- The UK Government skills agenda: 'Agriculture, Environment & Animal Care' and the push towards employer led, land based solutions.
- The demand from land based colleges and universities for students and apprentices across land based.
- Formation of NLBC and drive towards stronger education and industry collaboration.
- Organisations recognise the benefits and want to work collaboratively



Figure 4: Leigh used this story from 'Horticulture Week' in 2001 to contextualise the history and the need for change

LANDSKILLS



Enhanced version of the NLBC careers landing page and individual organisation pages – with content provided by industry.



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Figure 5: Leigh Morris painted a picture of a 'Bronze' standard for landskills careers collaboration, the aim of this workshop was to identify what higher standards were aspired to and how might they be delivered?

What works in land based careers?

Katie Garner from BrightCrop delivered a presentation on what works in careers collaboration with some discussion on impact and efficacy of various aspects, with a particular emphasis on validity, credibility and participation.

Katie argued that multiple reports and research commissioned by Department for Education have shown that there are different effects for different kinds of activities, that how these activities are sequenced together matters and also that how well they are implemented makes a difference. She added It is not enough to just do something, but that doing the right thing, in the right order, with the right partners is critical to successful careers outreach.

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation has drawn together the evidence on schoolbased careers and enterprise activities to develop its eight benchmarks of 'good career guidance'.

These benchmarks provide both a guide as to what activities work and advice on how schools should organise and sequence these activities.

- 1 A stable Careers programme
- 2 Learning from career and labour market information
- 3 Addressing the needs of each pupil
- 4 Linking curriculum learning to careers
- 5 Encounters with employers and employees
- 6 Experiences of workplaces
- 7 Encounters with further and higher education
- 8 Personal guidance



Figure 6: Gatsby Foundations 8 step guide to career guidance. Stages 4-7 were seen as key for this workshop

To target the Gatsby areas 4-7 in turn;

Linking curriculum learning to careers

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.

Encounters with employers and employees

Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.

Experiences of workplaces

Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.

Encounters with further higher education

All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.

Young people need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information and Katie shared data suggesting that parents are the number one source of careers advice for 80% of young people, and discussed her learning that the quality of information available is the key to success. She argues that every student and their parents should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. The way that this was offered has differing levels of success.

Information services often do not integrate into the broader context of advice from trusted sources such as parents, teachers or career guidance professionals. Katie told the group that most young people are not engaged in thinking about different career options because the task appears too difficult. They are confronted with lots of information and little way to make sense of it, which leads to 'choice overload'.

High quality evaluations showing positive impact	Lower-quality evaluations showing positive impact	Insufficient evaluation evidence at present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• employer mentoring• enterprise competitions• work related learning provided in cooperation with employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-2 week work experiences• career learning co-delivered by teachers and employers• careers talks• careers websites• curriculum learning co-delivered by teachers and employers• employability skills workshops• enterprise activities• mock interviews• work place visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• careers fairs• e-mentoring• job shadowing• part time working

Figure 7: Deloitte research from 2016 examined the range of activities that schools could use to support these encounters with the world of work.

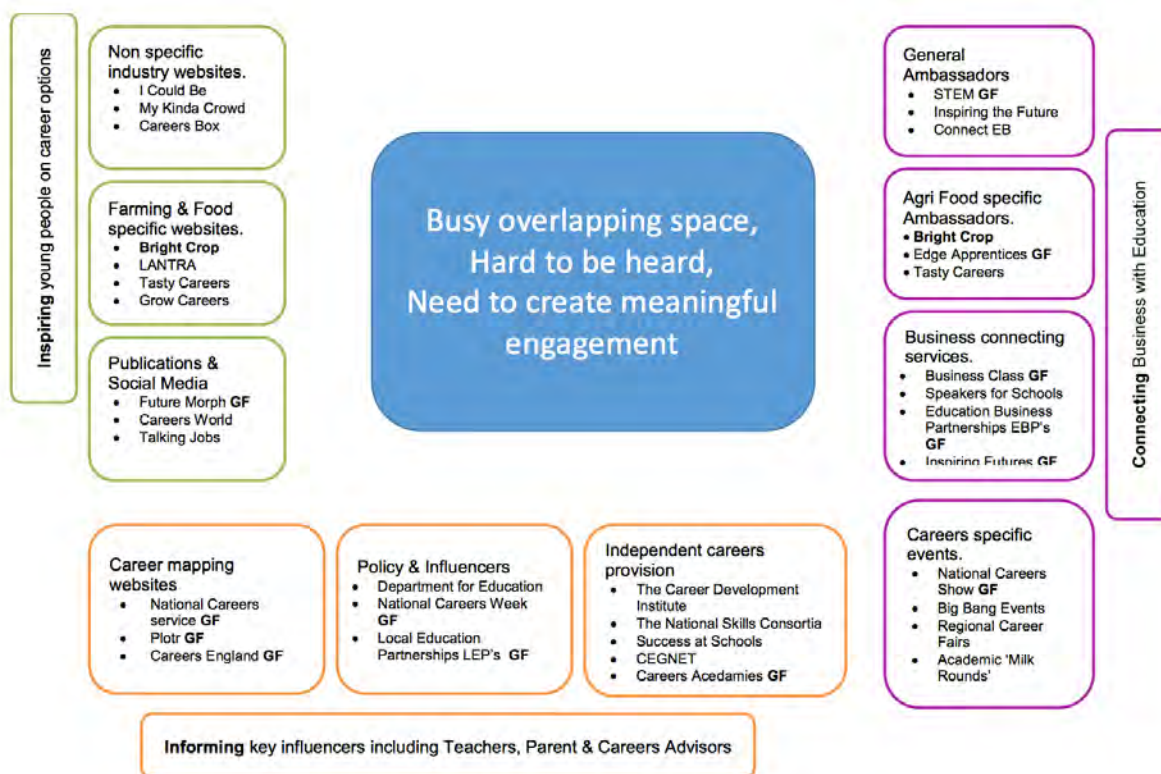


Figure 8: Various disparate initiatives create a crowded space where individual voices are not heard and where young people feel confused and easily tempted elsewhere

Some of the issues raised by Careers Professionals and Teachers were:

- Access to consistent directories of courses and institutions
- Better ontologies (What, Where, How) for jobs, skills, employers and industries
- Data standards for certain types of information about jobs and qualifications

Katie also showed that young people appreciate the potential benefit of making more informed career choices but struggle to find answers to their fundamental questions:

a. What are the possible careers open to me?

b. What will it be like to do a particular job?

c. What would I need to do to get there?



Over index on INSPIRATION content

In Landskills this space is crowded with many voices, with a variety of strategies and content approaches being used. There is no 'one stop shop' for land based careers. Katie pointed out that there are at least forty-nine different organisations in the UK providing different types of information services to help young people make careers choices, not including the further 98 sector or industry specific careers websites/organisations and a Google search on

'agricultural careers' would score many commercially sponsored links rather than one site to serve all.

Katie's key points on successful strategies are shown in Figures 19-13 below. In summary they are:

- Know the target audience and how to reach them
- Develop content that is creative and engaging – with one message not many
- Understand the UK Governments fifteen career 'routes' and how to effectively lobby and secure resource
- Adopt a structured and managed process

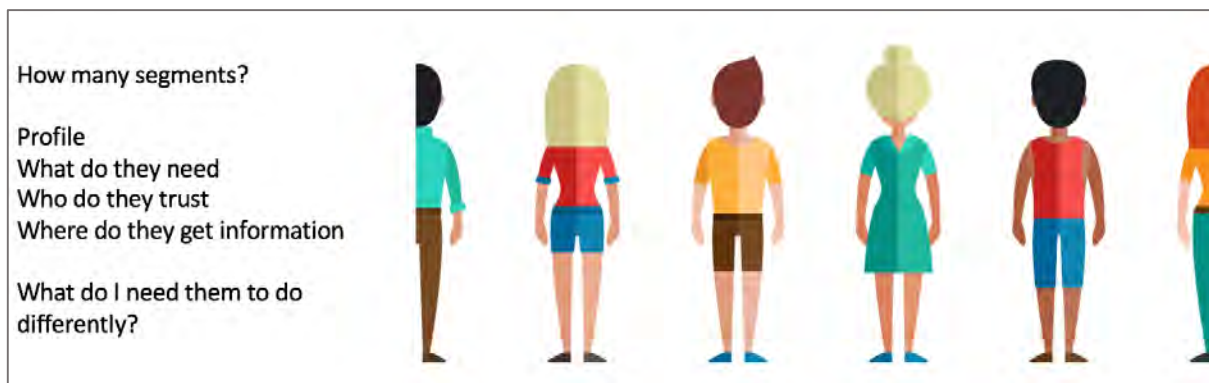


Figure 9: To be successful any land based careers service must know it's target audience and how to reach them

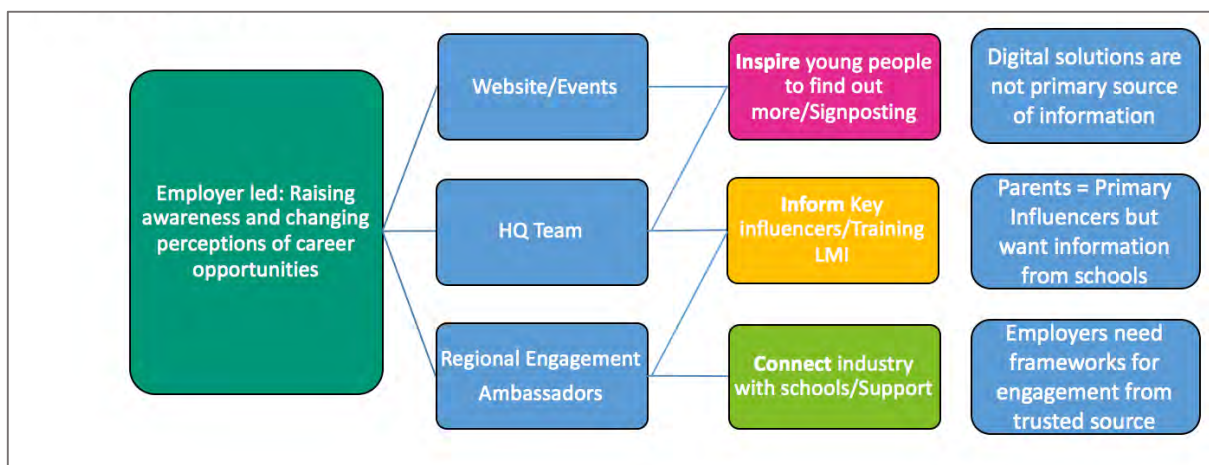


Figure 10: The sector must develop content that is creative and engaging

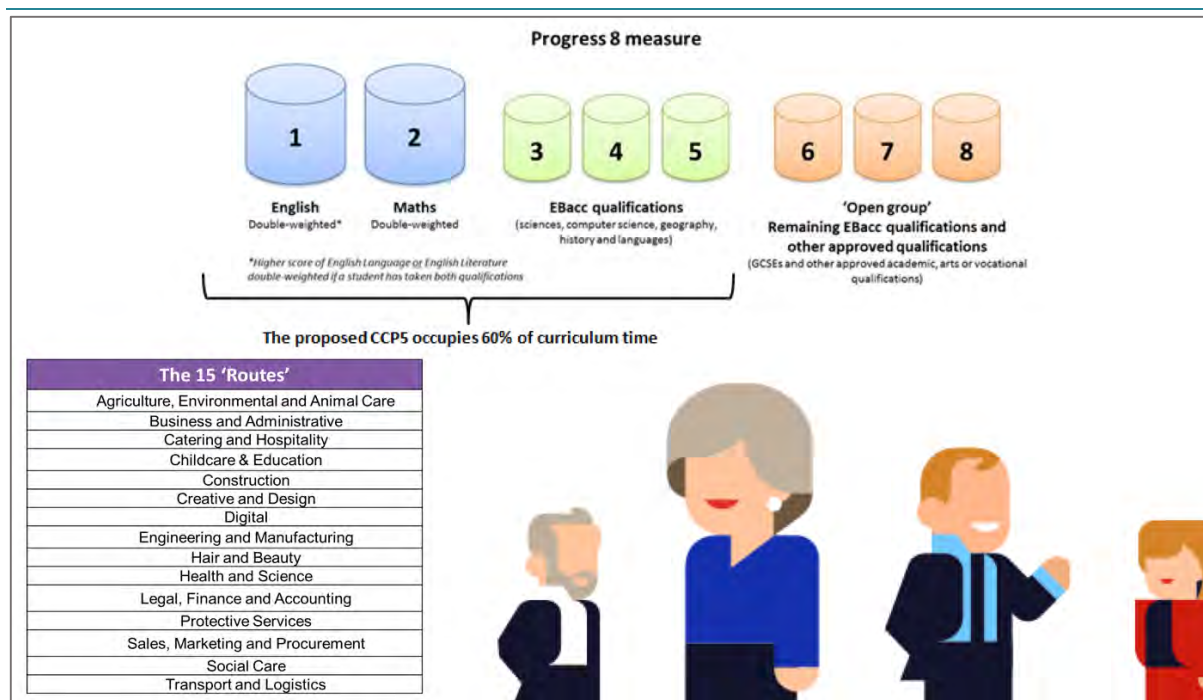


Figure 11: Strategy must understand where land skills sits in the governments 15 career 'routes' and must secure relevant funding and support. This needs a powerful voice.

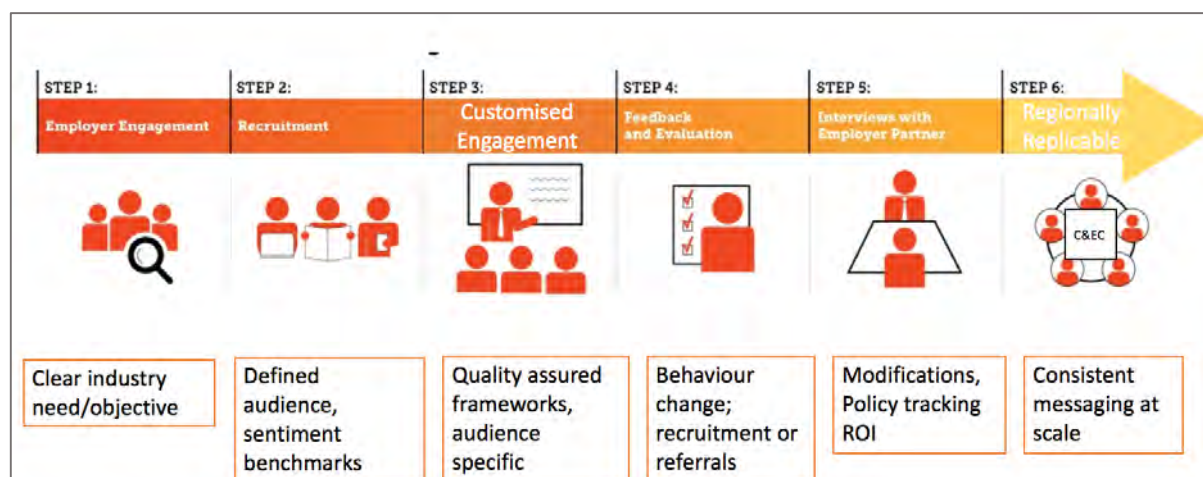


Figure 12: The land skills sector must adopt a structured process to challenges

In discussion, the group drew comparisons between the success (and resourcing) of the UK Armed Forces recruitment and the situation in land based careers. There was a feeling that big budget spend had helped the military target people who might also be tempted into land based jobs.

Mapping the Field

Nick Skinner led the group in creating a visual display of what offerings the attending organisations used in their careers support activities. Delegates were asked to place thee onto a graph according their own self assessment of INFLUENCE that they felt the initiative had (vertical axis) and the ENGAGEMENT that they felt they generated (horizontal axis).

The aim of this exercise was to give delegates an opportunity of sharing their own stories and successes in the field and also to produce an overview of the activities undertaken by the organisations represented. The exercise produced a wealth of data on activity, and a chance to discuss the relative influence and engagement generated by each activity. As a whole, it was felt that face to face activities generated lots of engagement and opportunities to really get to understand individual needs, but that these were resource intensive.

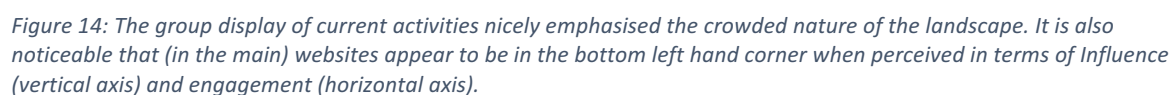
It was also noted that websites, although a crucial gateway were much harder to quantify in terms of engagement.



Figure 13: Delegates at work creating a map of the field of careers


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graph LR
    A[Websites] --> B[Hard Copy Resources]
    B --> C[Face to Face]
    C --> D[Other]
  
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Group Exercise: A journey through the TARDIS to give a view from the future

Having considered the current landscape, delegates were placed into four groups for an exercise to outline how the ideal careers solution might work in the future.

Groups were asked to use the TARDIS time travel device to travel forward to a time in the future when all goals relating to careers development in the land based sector have been achieved. Groups were asked to:

- Describe the future.
- What will the landscape for careers support look like?
- How will it work? Be as detailed as you can
- How will it be funded?
- What features, advantages and benefits will it have?

In addition, groups were asked to identify one major obstacle or barrier that threatened the successful delivery of the future and then describe how it was that it had been overcome.



Figure 15: Nick Skinner briefs the workshop on the TARDIS exercise. How far ahead would a time traveller need to go to see the ideal situation for landskills?

The groups worked together for 40 minutes before feeding back in plenary:

Group One: Tess Howe (AHDB), Robin Jackson (City & Guilds), Sophia Clarke (City & Guilds), Annabel Shackleton (LEAF), Marcus Potter (LANTRA)

Group Two: Leigh Morris (NLBC), Anna Williams (MDS), Sarah McLeod (IAGRE), Lynsey, Michelle, Linda

Group Three: Raoul Curtis-Machin (GROW), Stephen Ensell (BALI/Go Landscape), Sarah Palmer (NFYFC), Terry, Gemma Portman (British Horse Society), Katie Garner (BrightCrop)

Group Four: Will Graves (Institute of Groundsmanship), Alex Jenkins (HTA), Wayne Roberts (RHS), Zoe Elliott (British Horseracing Authority), Dan Prest (Institute of Groundsmanship), Anne Clark (Myerscough College [Farriery])

Group One:

Time Travelled: 5 to 10 years

What do you see: We see a range of desirable jobs that are valued by society and industry. This creates desirable careers that attract the best people. The careers landscape is more collaborative with strong links back to industry and where we generate excellent data on our sector and manage that data professionally and with commercial know-how. Strong links with industry have allowed us to become excellent at aligning training provision with industrial need, and land based learning is an attractive prospect for an increasing number of youngsters who see traditional university as a debt trap. Industrial input shapes (and funds) course content and industrial placement courses are of high quality and desirable to many.

What was the barrier: Conflicts of interest between various groups whose remits are closely aligned, plus some conflicts on industrial overlap.

How was this barrier overcome? Industrial overlap was reduced by selling the common goal of upskilled labour that is fit to work across the sector. Specialist courses aligning training with need helped to generate industrial input and build bonds between industry and educational bodies.

Group Two:

Time Travelled: 5 years

What do you see: We see a world of collaboration where the digital experience has only one point of entry. We conceptualise a clear career pathway, where people embarking on an entry point at one place in the sector can see a clear map of how their career journey might develop, step by step, like a family tree of occupations, with opportunities and attractions

for all ages and outlooks. This career journey is visible to school leavers and their parents and is used to support careers guidance.

This tree also offers gateways to learning associated with each level, allowing people to see not just what skills they need but also offering links to the best places to get the qualification with courses supporting a number of different learning styles and paces. This tree will also offer links to employment opportunities in your region. A real one stop shop and one in careers advisors play and active part and are trained to use.

Organisations gain entry to this collaboration through a professional registration scheme

What was the barrier: Competition with other sectors and between sub-sectors

How was this barrier overcome? Through the application of something called “Co-opertition”, a term embracing the best parts of competition through collaboration.

Group Three:

Time Travelled: 5 years

What do you see: What we see is a careers based co-operative operating through NLBC that captures all sectors. This co-operative is focussed on national matters and creating the top level “sell” for land based careers. It deals with profiling and lobbying, tracks policies and gets the ears of government Ministers. Most importantly it gives ONE voice. Member organisations of the co-operative engage with employers for content, with more organisational engagement leading to more organisational return (ie, the more you put in, the more you get out). This model is funded through industry on a matched funding model agreed for Government support. It gives the chance to compete on a bigger platform and allows landskills to compete against other leading recruitment initiatives such as HM armed forces.

What was the barrier: Ourselves, we had to overcome competition between ourselves. We had to let go of some local initiatives and build a greater communal goal.

How was this barrier overcome? We overcame this by incentivising members, recognising that by building a larger and more effective engagement toll (especially online) we would be able to build valuable profiling data. This data would only be available to members.

Group Four:

Time Travelled: 5 years

What do you see: We see a future where we sell the roles not the industry. We successfully allowed people to recognise that land based includes the use of ‘real’ business skills such as marketing, communication, HR etc to make landskills an attractive career choice. We sell this on the back of a concept that our core ethos is about the natural environment and how we look after it.

What was the barrier: We had to overcome the current perception of the industry and concerns around funding,

How was this barrier overcome? The clarity of the career path of business skills gave something that helped us break down misconceptions and proved we had something great to offer. The future of funding is less certain but we think it was obtained through improved collaboration to make effective use of money and through smarter lobbying.

Key components of the future and next steps

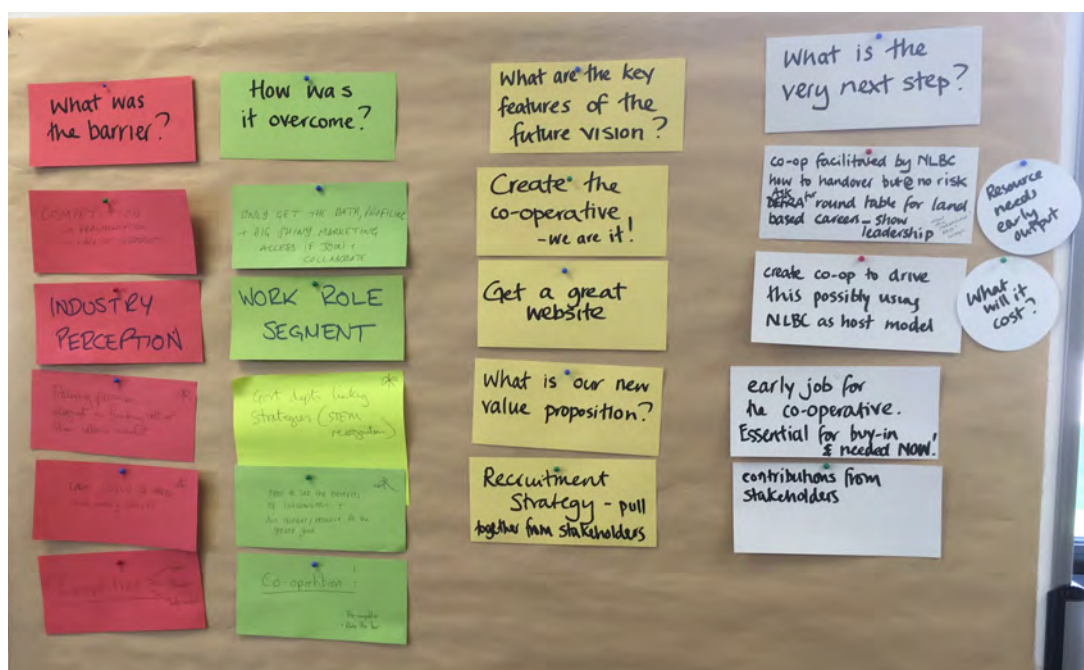


Figure 16: Delegates worked firstly in small group to create a view of the future which they presented back, identifying the barriers to a great future (red), how these might be overcome (green). Then in plenary the workshop addressed the key features of the future vision (yellow) and immediate next steps (white).

The delegates exchanged reflections on the various views of the future, focussing on the opportunities that improve collaboration can bring. The key attributes that were reported from the ideas of the future were:

- Create the co-operative (we are it)
- Get a great website
- Determine what exactly is our value proposition
- Create a recruitment strategy that is pulled together from the various stakeholders.

The workshop identified four important next steps in moving the process of change forward. These were:

1. Create a 'co-operative' (loose working label) under the leadership of NLBC, ensuring relevant input from key partners, including those who were not present at the workshop (eg RASE). NB There was a general feeling from the delegates that NLBC might be best placed to take the lead in pulling the co-operative together, although Leigh Morris of NLBC made it clear that resource to support any additional work at this time was not available).
2. The key and immediate task of this 'co-op' would be to define the value proposition of the future and to detail a change plan of how it might be achieved. This will be needed to obtain buy in from key stakeholders.
3. Lobby DEFRA for a round table for land based careers. The role of government funding and support is crucial but now is great time for pro-active lobbying to shape the agenda.
4. Develop a great website as a portal for land based careers using NLBC as the model of good practice

The workshop closed at 1300 with a film from the Institute of Groundsmanship which was shared as an example of good practice. The film can be viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXW8Wu3RJ3A>

Thank you to everyone who took part in this workshop



Facilitator reflections

Delegates worked hard in a fast paced session. Engagement was high, and it was clear that there is a general consensus that a collaborative way of working would help to strengthen the overall position of the industry/sector in terms of careers. Comparisons were frequently drawn to the apparent success of recruitment initiative in other industries (most notably HM armed forces) and there was a feeling that land based sector needs to work hard to get it's message through.

The 'Mapping the Field' exercise demonstrated admirably the breadth of content being offered by the organisations in the room, which themselves represent only a proportion of organisations active in this sector. In fact, it is rather hard to know where 'this sector' actually starts and ends, and this in itself is one of the reasons why a joined up and collaborative approach is so difficult.

The shared visions of the future all went ahead just five years. I notice that the newspaper cutting that Leigh Morris shared sixteen years ago in 2001 could almost fit into today's situation. If change is to be delivered within a five year timeline then the action plan will need to commence quickly, and with suitable stakeholder consultation and engagement. This will be no easy task. On top of this, with each organisation having a vested interest in maintaining it's own careers support activities, the 'carrot' of collaboration will need to be strong to incentive any re-allocation of resource that will surely be required if the future plans for a 'gold' standard are to be achieved.

There was a sense in the room that we could be witnessing the start of something new, and the excitement that this created was noticeable. Leadership, and a robust plan, are now required in equal measure to move this project through to it's next stage.

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END

Appendix A: List of delegates

Delegates

Annabel Shackleton	LEAF
Dan Prest	Institute of Groundsmanship
Stephen Ensell	BALI/Go Landscape
Sarah Palmer	NFYFC
Will Graves	Institute of Groundsmanship
Gemma Portman	British Horse Society
Raoul Curtis-Machin	GROW
Sophia Clarke	City & Guilds
Tess Howe	AHDB
Marcus Potter	LANTRA
Robin Jackson	City & Guilds
Leigh Morris	NLBC
Luke Harmer	NLBC
Katie Garner	BrightCrop
Wayne Roberts	RHS
Alex Jenkins	HTA
Zoe Elliott	British Horseracing Authority
Anne Clark	(careersinracing) HTA
Linda Quinn	Myerscough College (Farriery)
Sarah McLeod	IAgre
Anna Williams	MDS

Facilitation:

Nick Skinner	Poppyfish People Development
Katie Garner	BrightCrop