



Enterprise Adviser Survey

2024 Insight Briefing

August 2024

Introduction

Businesses play a pivotal role in the modern careers education landscape. Their partnerships with schools and colleges help bridge the gap between education and employment. This report offers insights from a national survey of 938 business volunteers - Enterprise Advisers (EAs), 23% of the overall EA population. It shows how their collaboration with schools and colleges draw on their expertise and experience to improve careers education, benefitting young people, themselves and their employers. From the development of talent pipelines to building stronger community connections, this collaborative effort ultimately drives positive outcomes for employers and society.

First introduced in 2015, EAs are now well established in the careers system. There are currently 3,920 EAs from over 2,000 employers across various sectors, types and sizes of business. Our latest estimate of the value of the time they spend working with the education sector was [£6.7m per year](#). Working alongside Careers Leaders and senior education staff, EAs tailor their support to meet the evolving needs of the education system. They develop careers plans, foster new connections with employers (brokering 11,260 employer relationships last year), and ensure better alignment with the fast-changing labour market.

Their efforts have been bolstered by the growing national network of Careers Hubs. Careers Hubs ensure alignment with local economic priorities and accelerate achievement of the [Gatsby Benchmarks](#).

The EA survey ran between February and March 2024. It focused on the impact of the EA role on schools, colleges, employers and young people, also exploring areas for further training and support. This year, 938 EAs completed the survey. This briefing explores the key findings from the survey.

This year's survey results show notable improvements, with clear benefits for all stakeholders involved. It also highlights opportunities to move to a more flexible, agile model to target EA support and drive greater impact.

In response to the ever-increasing need for engagement between businesses and education, the role of EA emerges as a key route for effective collaboration. With 83% of EAs recommending that others take on the role, the imperative is clear for expanding this group of committed business volunteers.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the Enterprise Advisers for completing the survey and providing the invaluable insights highlighted in this report. We extend our gratitude to all the Mayoral Combined Authorities, Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships and other partners that work with us in delivering the Careers Hub network and supporting collection and use of evidence.

We value your support.



At a glance



Insight 1

EAs improve the quality of careers education and their impact increases the longer they spend in role:

Business volunteers are helping to enhance the quality of careers education. Over two-thirds of EAs in post for more than three years say they are significantly impacting school and college careers provision.



Insight 2

EAs say their apprenticeship outreach work is leading to uptake: Long-serving Enterprise Advisers drive more awareness of apprenticeships and technical pathways:

This leads to increased recruitment from local schools and colleges, supporting student transitions from secondary education into work.



Insight 3

There are business, personal and wider economic benefits from EA engagement:

Business engagement with education is creating mutually beneficial relationships, personal development, workforce diversity, skills gap closure and economic growth.

Insight 1

EAs improve the quality of careers education and their impact increases the longer they spend in role

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Key data



- **89%** of the longest serving EAs think students are better prepared for the world of work as a result of their work with schools and colleges



- **88%** of the longest serving EAs say they have supported their institution to improve their performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks



- **65%** of the longest serving EAs say they have helped to improve careers provision in the school or college they support



“The support provided by our EA has been wide and varied, but all have provided links for the students with the wider world of work. We can teach the theory but linking businesses to what we do makes our curriculum real and relevant, helping us meet the Gatsby Benchmarks. It raises aspirations too and increases confidence”

Deb Holland,
Assistant Principal,
The Pingle Academy

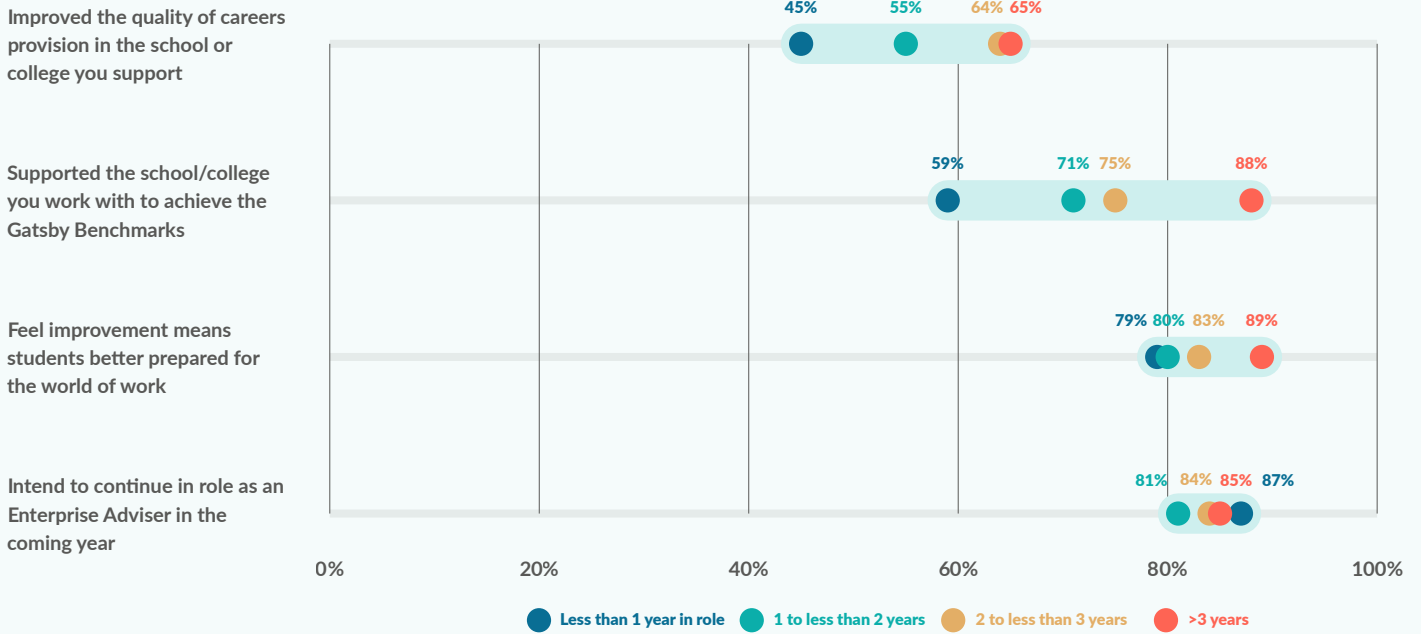
EAs improve the delivery of careers education in schools and colleges. They do this by supporting [Careers Leaders](#), senior leadership teams and teachers through supporting performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks and programmes like [Teacher Encounters](#).

The longer an EA has been in the role, the more impact they have on young people’s outcomes. Four-fifths (79%) of EAs who have been in post for less than a year say that the improvement they have driven in the quality of a school or college’s careers education has meant that students are now better prepared for the world of work. This rises to nearly nine in ten (89%) for those in post for three years or longer. Moreover, after volunteering for at least a year, the longer EAs spend in role, the more likely they are to continue in the following year (Fig. 1).

A similar pattern emerges when looking at the impact EAs have on the institutions they support. Almost half of EAs (45%) who have been in role for up to a year say they’ve helped improve careers provision in their school. This rises to 65% for those who have been an EA more than three years. In addition, 88% of those who have been in role the longest say they have supported the school and college they work with to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks, up from 59% (+29%pts) for those who joined most recently.

Fig. 1: More EAs feel that the improvements they have made means students are better prepared for the world of work

% EAs agreeing



Source: CEC EA Survey 2024. Intending to continue in role in the coming year (N=915); all others (N=844)

Insight 2

EAs say their apprenticeship outreach work is leading to uptake

Long-serving Enterprise Advisers drive more awareness of apprenticeships and technical pathways. This leads to increased recruitment from local schools and colleges, supporting student transitions from secondary education into work.

Key data



- **72%** of EAs say awareness of apprenticeships and technical pathways in schools and colleges has increased as a result of their work



- The number of EAs reporting students are more aware of apprenticeships and technical pathways is **up 28%pts** on last year



- **207** employers have recruited apprentices from local schools and colleges as a result of EA outreach



“I’ve been matched with a school which needs support improving its Apprenticeship offer, an area I can add real value. I’ve been able to work with the school to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding of what can be achieved when engaging local businesses.”

Rob Dodds,
Controller of Unipres
Training Academy,
Unipres (UK)

The economy is projected to create a further [2.6 million new jobs](#) by 2035; meeting the skills needs of employers will be key. Supporting young people into apprenticeships and technical pathways that match both their interests and evolving workforce demands will make an important contribution. We must also understand what skills employers require and how these needs may change over time. EAs play a vital role by amplifying the value of apprenticeships and bringing them to life, connecting education with the labour market and enabling partnerships with apprenticeship providers to broaden students’ opportunities.

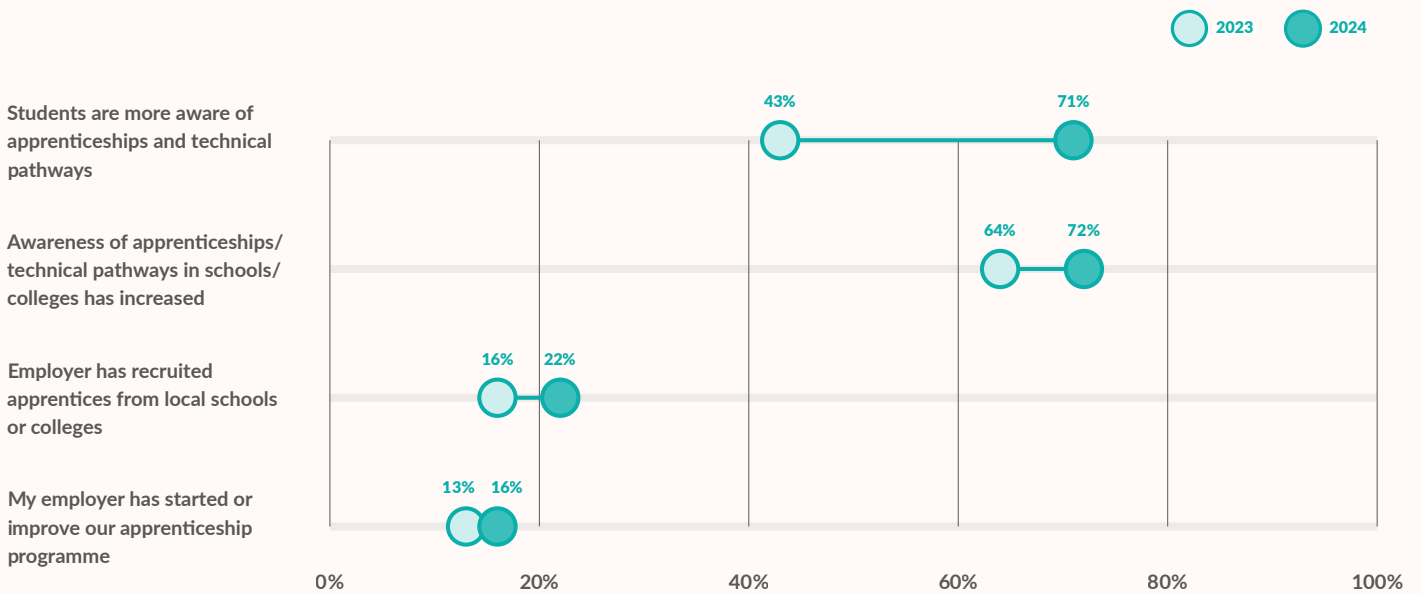
[Young people’s career readiness and awareness of technical pathways improve as they transition through secondary school](#), with 80% of Year 11 students reporting that they understand apprenticeships. 75% of employers who completed the Employer Standards said that their education outreach is bringing apprenticeships into the organisation (86% for the most engaged group, Cornerstone Employers).

69% of EAs reported that awareness of [apprenticeships and technical pathways](#) in schools and colleges had increased due to their engagement (6%pts increase from 2023). 71% of EAs say students have become more aware of apprenticeships and technical pathways – up 28%pts on last year (Fig. 2). This indicates a positive impact from increased business volunteer engagement with their school or college on vocational pathways.

Additionally, 22% (+6%pts since 2023) of EAs reported that their employers have recruited apprentices from local schools or colleges as a result of their engagement, while 16% of EAs reported their employer has started or improved their apprenticeship programme. This underscores the impact of EA engagement, particularly in aligning employer needs with the career aspirations of young people, and that student opting for technical, or apprenticeship routes are increasingly well-informed and supported as they transition from secondary education into the workforce.

Fig. 2 – EAs are having an impact on apprenticeship awareness and recruitment

% EAs reporting each impact measure



Source: EA Survey 2024. Student awareness: All EAs responding to the survey (N=938); Recruitment and awareness in S&Cs: EAs who supported a school or college in the last year (N=844)

Insight 3

EAs report increasing business, personal and wider economic benefits from their work

Business engagement with education is creating mutually beneficial relationships, enabling personal development, workforce diversity, skills gap closure and economic growth.

Key data



- **95%** say that business engagement is a good way to close skills gaps (+7%pts since 2023)



- **88%** say the EA programme is a cost-effective model of business engagement (+10%pts since 2023)



- **54%** say the role has given them the opportunity to develop their skills (+10%pts since 2023)



“Being an Enterprise Adviser has both personal and business benefits. From a business point of view, we get to connect with our college and get early sight of our future talent. On a personal level, you get to challenge yourself, connect with others and learn new skills which can enhance your role. If you are passionate about improving outcomes for young people, the EA role is perfect for you”

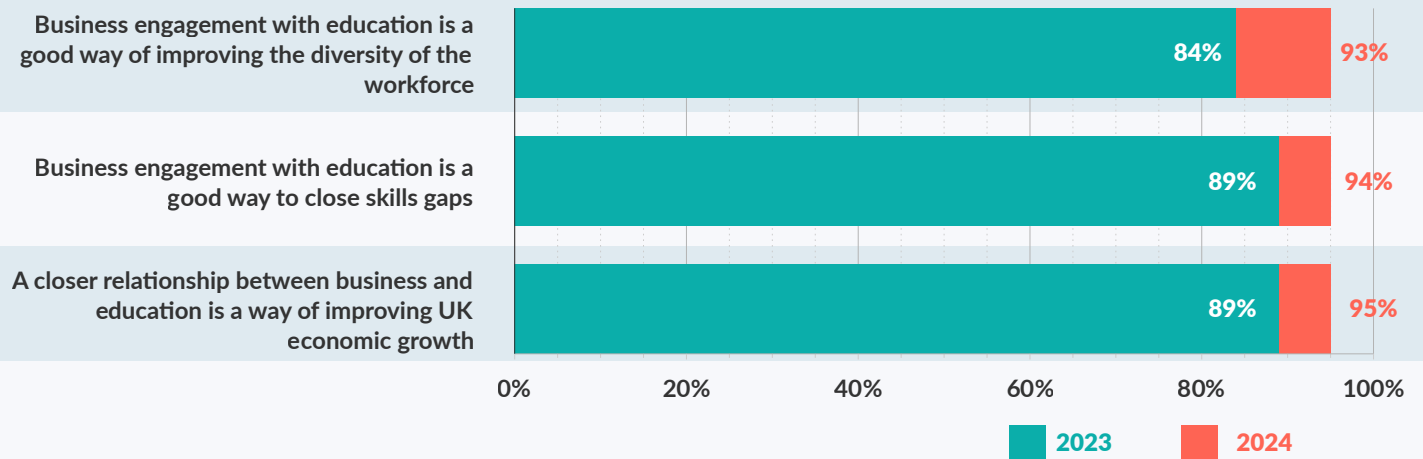
**Richard Hardesty,
Enterprise Adviser**

Engagement between businesses and educational institutions directly benefits the education sector by creating touchpoints for students to the professional world. EAs with experience supporting schools and young people say dedicating their time has a positive impact on schools and colleges, their organisations, and the economy.

The [British Chambers of Commerce](#) reported that 73% of businesses are struggling to recruit, and 66% say labour costs are a financial worry. EAs are helping with this, as 95% (+7%pts since 2023) agree that business engagement is a good way to close skills gaps. 94% (+5%pts) agree that a closer relationship between business and education is a good way of improving UK economic growth, and 93% agree that business engagement with education is a good way of improving the diversity of the workforce (+9%pts) (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 – EAs think that business engagement with education is enhancing workforce diversity, skills, and economic growth

% EAs reporting each impact measure

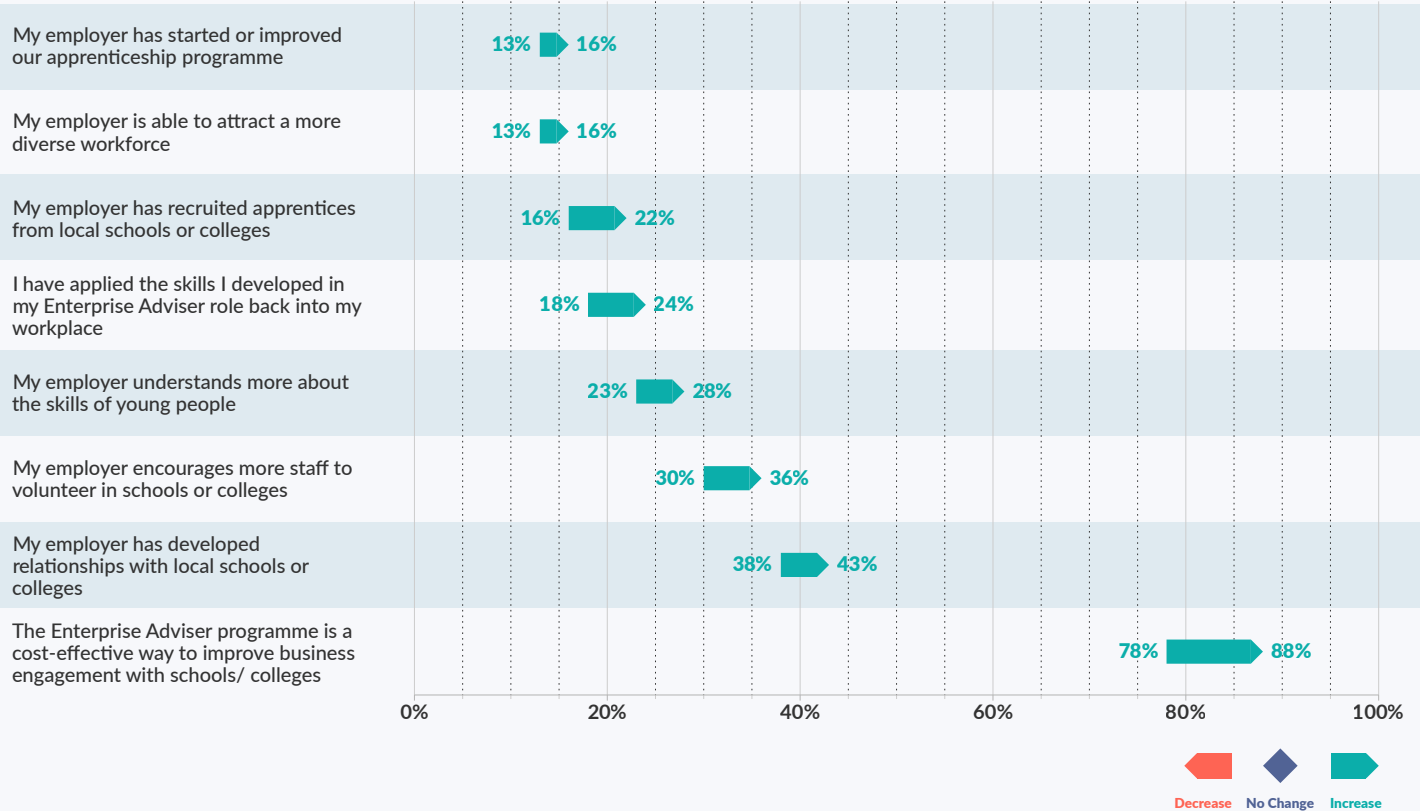


Source CEC EA Survey 2024. All EAs responding to the survey (N=938)

Business volunteers with experience on the front-line, supporting schools and young people, say their time investment brings positive returns for organisations and the economy. This year, 88% (+9%pts since 2023) said the EA programme is a cost-effective model of business engagement. There was also a broad range of non-monetary returns on investment reported, including 28% (+5%pts) of EAs reporting that their employer understood more about the skills of young people as a result of their engagement, 43% who reported their employer had developed relationships with local schools or colleges (+5%pts), and 36% (+6%pts) reporting their employer encouraged more staff to volunteer in schools or colleges (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 – EAs are having a range of impacts on businesses, institutions, and the wider economy

% EAs responding positively



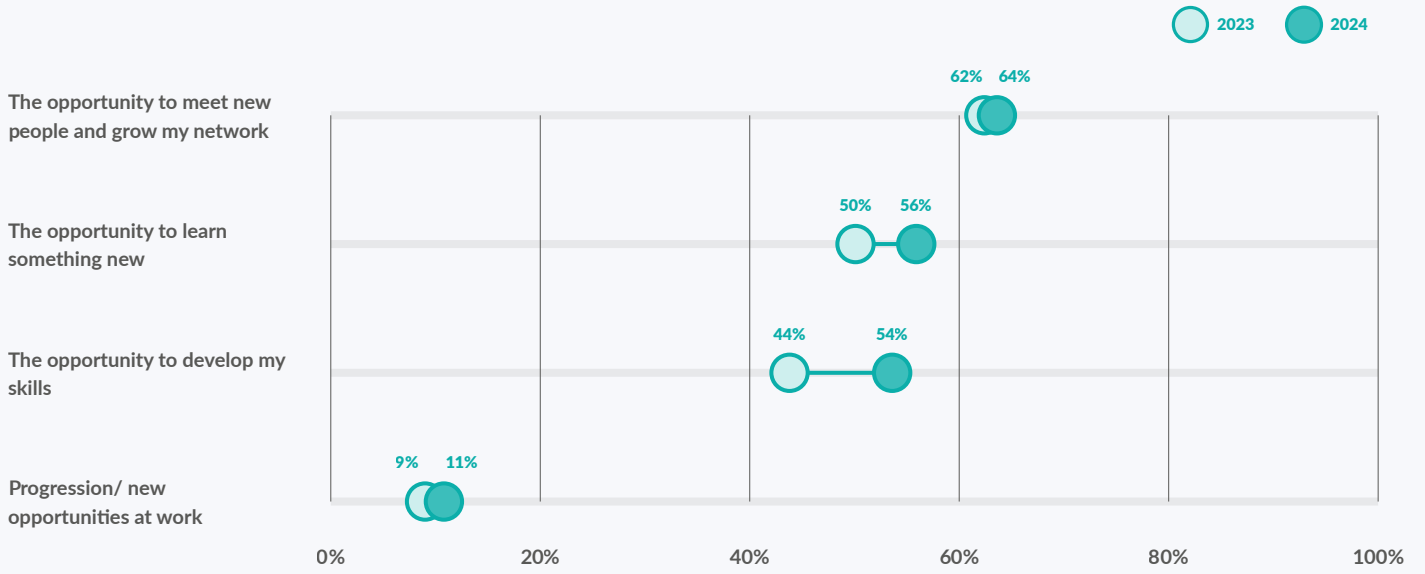
Source CEC EA Survey 2024. All EAs responding to the survey (N=938)

Schools and colleges are also experiencing the benefits of these business relationships. 56% (+4%pts since 2023) of EAs say that careers education is now more of a priority for Senior Leadership in the schools and colleges they work with, while 50% (+11%pts) agree that the quality of careers education for young people facing additional barriers, including economic disadvantage and SEND, has improved.

The longer business volunteers spent in role, the more personal benefits they experienced, with 64% of EAs reporting that they had an opportunity to meet new people and grow their network (+2%pts since 2023). 56% of EAs also said they had an opportunity to learn something new (+6%pts), and 54% had the opportunity to develop their skills (+10%pts) (Fig.5). Qualitative feedback from EAs found that they appreciated the experience of having the opportunity to give back to the community, the opportunity to understand the current system a little better, and to understand challenges faced by teachers.

Fig. 5 - More EAs have had the opportunity to develop their skills and to learn something new

% EAs reporting each personal benefit



Source: CEC EA Survey 2024. All EAs responding to the survey (N=938)

Where next for our national business volunteering community?

EAs are an integral part of the Careers Hub offer to schools and colleges across England. With the labour market rapidly evolving, businesses volunteers increasingly give educators real-time insights, offering young people a direct viewpoint into modern workplaces. This report shows the extent of their impact.

The 2023 National Volunteers Council for Organisations (NCVO) [Time Well Spent](#) report foresees continued change in volunteering. Individuals and businesses are looking to use their skills more flexibly to have the strongest impact. The Careers & Enterprise Company has introduced its new 'Agile EA' model, giving volunteers more choice in accelerating their impact. EAs will still be able to continue to work with one specific education institution. However, if they prefer, they now have the flexibility to provide project-based support and partner with multiple institutions of their choosing.

Overwhelmingly positive feedback from those already adopting the agile approach indicates the efficacy of the new model: 86% experienced improved flexibility around how they engage with schools and colleges; 67% acknowledged the increased attractiveness of the EA role; 65% reported they have helped to accelerate impact.



"I have been an Enterprise Adviser for over 6 years now. I've supported my school to develop an award-winning business network, as recognised by the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce. I am now able to share my expertise with fellow EAs and schools to build similar initiatives and help support and grow the wider community"

Dan Lamoon,
Enterprise Adviser

Next steps for EAs



1. Reinvent work experience

While it's important to appreciate the progress we've made, there's always more to do. We're currently reimagining the approach we take to work experience, so that it is ongoing (rather than a one off), connected to key skills and has measurable impact for young people and employers.



2. Remove apprenticeship barriers

Awareness of apprenticeships has increased significantly, but we're still keen to convert young people's interests into uptake. This means tackling barriers to young people's progression onto apprenticeships and other technical pathways with an emphasis on growth sectors.



3. Upskill the education workforce

Evidence tells us that teachers are one of the biggest influencers on young people's decision-making. EAs are perfectly placed to support scaling Teacher Encounters, giving teachers deeper experience and insight into pathways and the world of work.



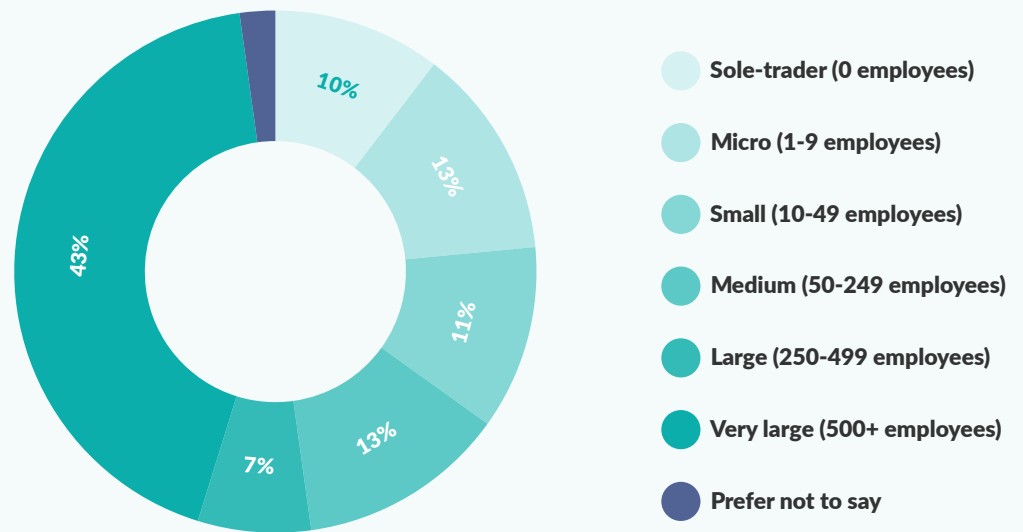
4. Embed enterprise

Young entrepreneurial talent can be seen everywhere across England, but opportunities are not always evenly spread. The next generation of budding entrepreneurs are ready and waiting – and EAs are a key way to truly embed enterprise within careers education.

Technical note

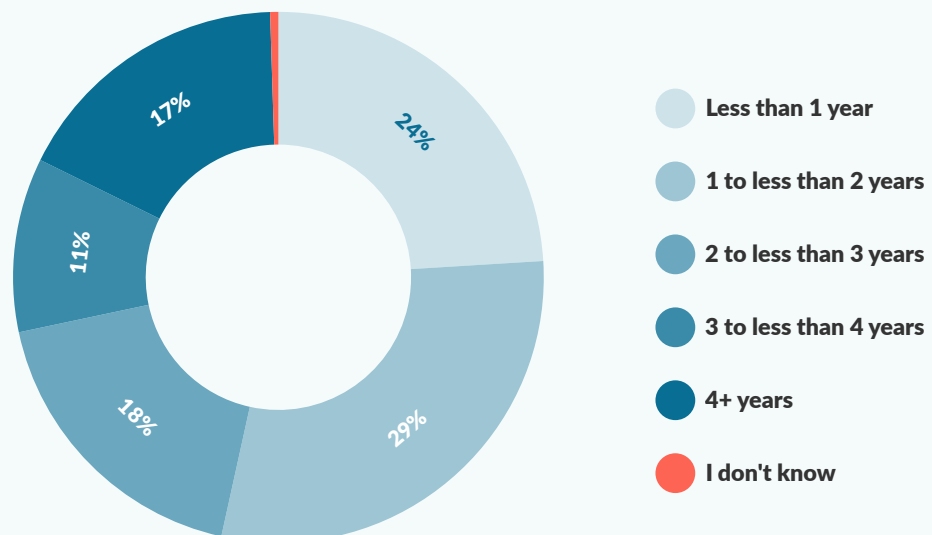
The Enterprise Adviser survey was open from February to March 2024. All Enterprise Advisers were invited to take part. 938 complete responses were received – 23% of the EA population. EAs responding to the survey gave an average of 4.2 hours of their time each month. A more detailed analysis of the sample shows:

Fig. 7 - What is the size organisation you work for?



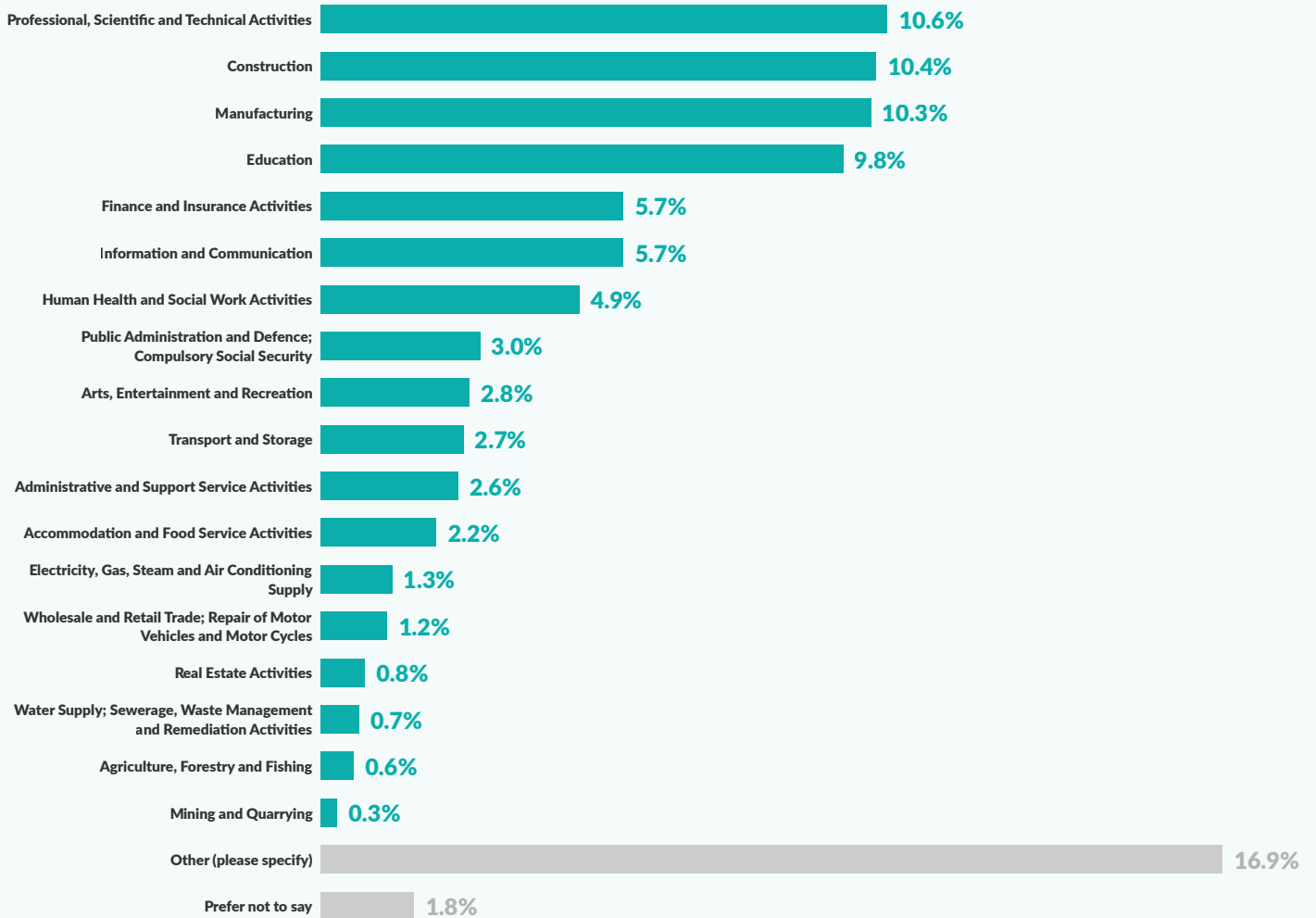
Source: CEC EA Survey 2024. All EAs responding to the survey (N=938)

Fig. 8 - How long have you been signed up as an Enterprise Adviser?



Source: CEC EA Survey 2024. All EAs responding to the survey (N=938)

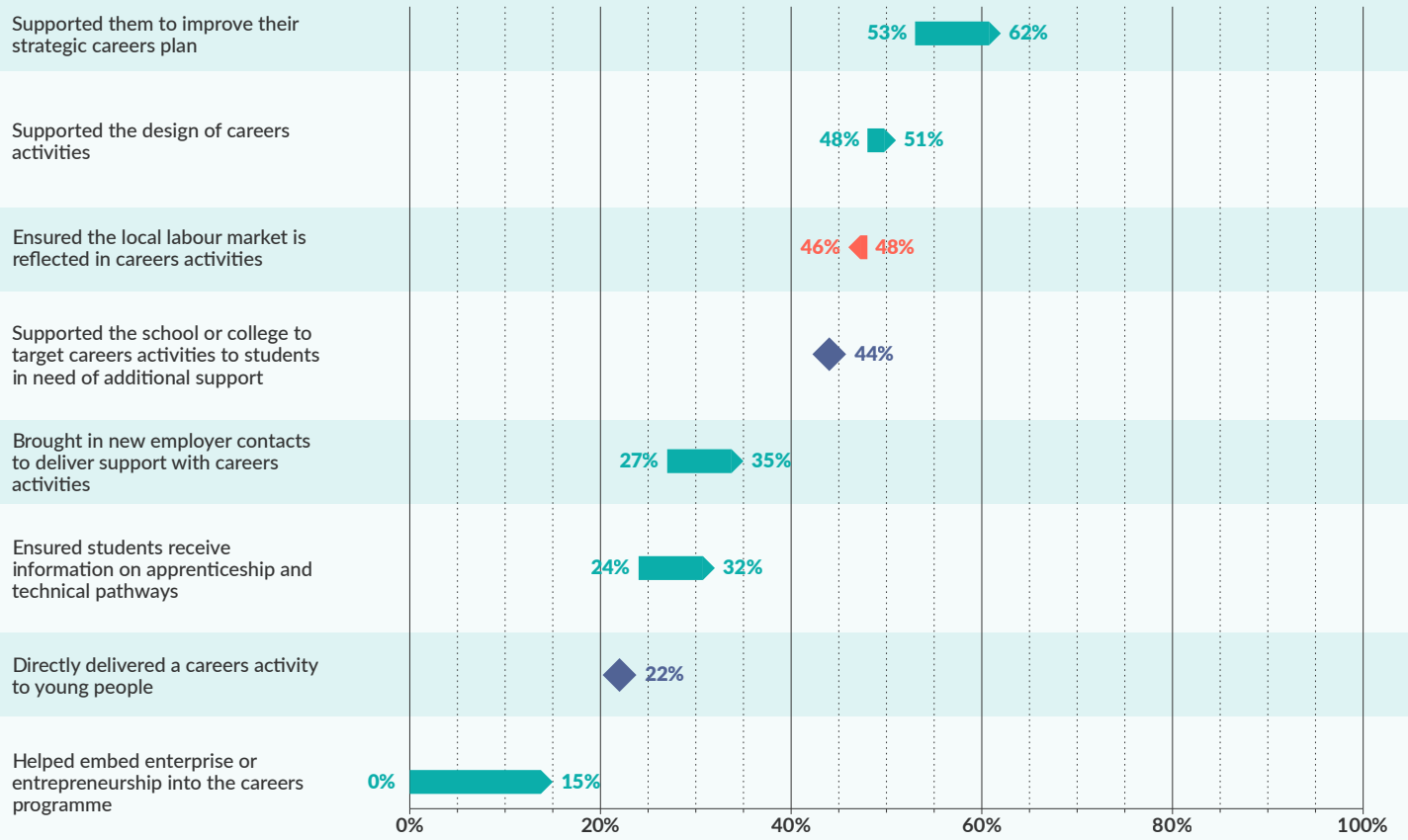
Fig. 9 - What industry do you work in?



Source: CEC EA Survey 2024. All EAs responding to the industry question in the survey (N=914)

Fig. 10 - What kind of support do you provide?

% EAs reporting each support measure



Source: CEC EA Survey 2024. All EAs responding to the survey (N=938)

Decrease No Change Increase

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

