

# BACKING SOFT SKILLS

A PLAN FOR RECOGNISING, DEVELOPING AND MEASURING  
SOFT SKILLS AT EVERY STAGE OF EDUCATION AND WORK

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A PUBLIC  
CONSULTATION LAUNCHED BY MCDONALD'S UK  
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## FOREWORD BY RICHARD FORTE

AT MCDONALD'S, WE UNDERSTAND THAT FOR THE THREE MILLION CUSTOMERS WE SERVE IN THE UK EACH DAY, GOOD SOFT SKILLS ARE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GREAT EXPERIENCE AND AN 'OKAY' ONE. THAT'S WHY WE MAKE THEM A CRITICAL PART OF HOW WE HIRE, DEVELOP AND MOTIVATE OUR PEOPLE.

But as one of the UK's largest private sector employers, we're concerned that these skills – which include communication, teamwork and time management – aren't getting the recognition or investment they deserve. That's why last year, we decided to partner with Development Economics Ltd to quantify the contribution that soft skills make to the UK economy, now and in the future.

In January 2015, we published our findings in a report, *The Value of Soft Skills to the UK Economy*. In it, we estimated that soft skills are currently worth £88bn to the UK economy. And we predicted that this would rise to £109bn by 2020 and more than £127bn by 2025.

From an individual's perspective, our latest research shows that having a developed set of soft skills can increase an individual's lifetime earnings by up to 15%, once again demonstrating the vital nature of acquiring, nurturing and recognising these skills.

With increasing economic competition from other countries, it is imperative we tackle this issue now – and tackle it head on. So we decided to spend 2015 championing the hard value of soft skills through our Backing Soft Skills campaign.

We joined forces with leading organisations from business and education, as well as entrepreneur James Caan, to change people's perceptions of soft skills and to come up with some ideas for how we can improve them in the UK.

To get the ball rolling, we invited businesses, trade associations, campaign groups, policy experts, academics and students from as many sectors as possible to share their thoughts with us. James Caan also hosted a roundtable with our campaign partners.

We asked these contributors how we can improve soft skills in the UK workforce and how employees can get better at showing them off when they go for jobs or promotions.

In total, people from more than 60 organisations from all sectors took part in the three-month consultation, offering an array of different perspectives on the issue. This report sums up their feedback and sets out our recommendations for addressing the skills gap.

RICHARD FORTE, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, MCDONALD'S UK & NORTHERN EUROPE



## FOREWORD BY JAMES CAAN CBE

I'M OFTEN ASKED ABOUT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS, AND THE ANSWER OFTEN SURPRISES PEOPLE. IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT QUALIFICATIONS. IT'S NOT EVEN ABOUT EDUCATION OR BACKGROUND. IT'S ABOUT SOFT SKILLS – SKILLS LIKE COMMUNICATION, TEAMWORK AND TIME MANAGEMENT, WHICH EVERYONE NEEDS TO SUCCEED AT WORK AND BEYOND.

When I look at the workplace today, it is these vital skills that are making and breaking businesses and careers. From chief executives of major companies to young people in their first job, everyone needs these skills to work to their full potential and help make their business productive and high-performing.

However, there are warning signs that employers, government and educators are not doing enough to support soft skills. Three-quarters of UK employers say there is already a soft skills gap in today's workforce and economists predict that by 2020 over half a million workers will be significantly held back by a lack of these skills.

Now is the time for change. This is why I am working with McDonald's, and a host of business, youth and community organisations including the CBI, the Federation of Small Businesses and the National Youth Agency, to call for a wholesale re-evaluation of the importance of soft skills.

The value I have always placed on soft skills has helped me to get where I am today. It's time for employers, government, educators – everyone – to take action to recognise, promote and improve them.

Economic conditions mean today's business environment is more competitive than ever, and we need people with the right skills to stay ahead of the widening productivity gap. If we succeed, the prize is worth more than £109 billion to the UK economy by 2020, and it will make a real difference to both the careers and lives of millions of people as well as to UK plc.

JAMES CAAN CBE, BUSINESSMAN AND ENTREPRENEUR

## SOFT SKILLS ARE FOR LIFE, NOT JUST FOR WORK

To get the most out of every stage of life, you need two kinds of skills: hard and soft. Hard skills are the technical and job-specific skills you bring to a role or activity, while soft skills are the 'how': how you interact with others, communicate and manage your time. For the purpose of this campaign, we've grouped soft skills into these five areas:

- communication and interpersonal skills
- teamwork
- decision-making and initiative-taking
- time- and self-management
- taking responsibility

At work, these skills make you perform better and earn more over your lifetime<sup>1</sup>, as well as make organisations more productive and profitable. Outside of work, they can help to build your confidence and improve your relationships. Soft skills bring hard benefits to people, organisations and, ultimately, the economy.

## THE BACKING SOFT SKILLS CONSULTATION: A FIVE-MINUTE GUIDE TO OUR FINDINGS

Imagine that recognising and developing soft skills is part of people's lives from nursery to retirement. That people of all ages have a shared understanding of what these skills are and why they matter, both for them and for the economy. The new working group led by our partners will be seeking to make this a reality. As our findings show however, there's a lot of work to do to get us there.

### A LACK OF SOFT SKILLS AFFECTS PEOPLE AT EVERY STAGE OF LIFE

Every time someone moves from one life stage to another – from nursery to primary school, primary to secondary, education to workplace, employee to manager or even employee to retirement – they need different soft skills. But the people who took part in our consultation said that there's currently no unifying framework for identifying, developing and measuring the skills we need at each life and career stage. As a result, people of all ages are struggling to move from one stage to the next.

Young people have a particularly hard time making the transition from school, college or voluntary organisation to the workplace. There's no a shared language for what soft skills are, so they only feel comfortable with terms that clearly relate to other areas of life, such as communication and teamwork. (Even then, they sometimes use those in the wrong way, such as giving "I talk a lot" as an example of good communication skills.) They also lack a shared way of expressing how the skills they get in one place, such as an athletics group or volunteering placement, transfer across to another, such as a job.

These factors mean that when they're applying or interviewing for jobs, young people struggle to express how their unique characteristics and ways of interacting with others make them the right person for the role. This is especially challenging for young people who are disadvantaged in some way, such as those with disabilities or behavioural difficulties.

As a result, the UK is in a lose-lose situation where people at all stages of life don't have the skills to get the most out of the stage they're at, and businesses aren't getting the most out of their employees. This is particularly worrying in an economy as reliant on the services sector as ours.

## GOOD SOFT SKILLS ARE GOOD FOR EMPLOYERS, INDIVIDUALS AND THE ECONOMY

At McDonald's, we employ 100,000 people in this sector in the UK – so we understand that good soft skills are good for business. That's why we give people the opportunity to gain and build upon their soft skills while they're with us.

But we also understand the value these skills bring to employees. Development Economics Ltd estimates that someone with strong soft skills will earn up to 15% more over a lifetime<sup>2</sup>. And in a survey we carried out last year, more than half of our employees said that the soft skills they'd learnt at McDonald's had given a big boost to their self-confidence.<sup>3</sup>

## AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING POSITIVE CHANGE

Developing soft skills presents an enormous opportunity for employers, individuals and the economy as a whole. We believe that by combining the insights we've gained through this consultation with the expertise of our campaign partners, we have the potential to seize this opportunity for all of us. We've set out how we'll do this in the recommendations on page 8.

This doesn't mean we're discounting the good work that's going on already. Across education and business, people are flying the flag for soft skills and doing their best to embed them in their area. This encompasses all the traditional and non-traditional routes to learning that people may take through life. But as we said before, they're held back by the lack of a unifying structure for defining, developing and measuring these skills.

## HOW SOFT SKILLS HAVE PROPELLED A YOUNG MCDONALD'S EMPLOYEE TO PROMOTION

Antonio Dado knows all about the value of soft skills. At just 22, he's already a crew trainer at McDonald's, responsible for helping crew members and apprentices to pick up the skills they need to work in every part of the restaurant. And he's about to start a training programme to become a manager.

Antonio's job at McDonald's has particularly helped him to develop the soft skills, such as communication, teamwork and time management, that everyone needs to succeed at work.

He says, **"Soft skills are really important to my job day to day. As a crew trainer I need to lead by example, which means spending a lot of time on the restaurant floor with customers. I'm also in charge of everyone working in the kitchen so I'm the first person colleagues come to when there's a problem. That means I need good teamwork, communication and decision-making skills."**

With his manager training around the corner, Antonio recognises how important soft skills will be to making this transition. **"To be a good manager I'll need to be able to take responsibility, make decisions and take the initiative," he says. 'Teamwork will also be really important as without that a restaurant just won't work properly.'"**

As a result, the 'landscape' for developing soft skills is extremely complex, making it difficult for people who want to access programmes to identify appropriate providers.

Schools are unlikely to have links to more than a handful of the organisations that could support children who are struggling academically, for example. And it's hard to join the dots between the need – such as a young person who's not in education, employment or training (NEET) – and the organisation that can answer that need, such as a social enterprise that trains disadvantaged young people in film-making. We need to find a way to bring together all the great work different organisations are doing to support soft skills to achieve the greatest impact.

Policies in key government departments aren't always as joined-up as they could be either. And teachers are already busy meeting the academic requirements of each key stage. That's why the recommendations we're making here are designed to solve these problems at every level and stage, without putting an unnecessary burden on people in the system.

We've worked with our campaign partners to develop these recommendations. We'll now form a smaller working group of campaign partners to take them forward and realise them.

# FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLOSING THE SOFT SKILLS GAP IN THE UK

## 1. Create a framework for defining, developing and assessing (formally and informally) soft skills at every stage of education and work.

Why	Who	How
<p>To reinforce the importance of soft skills in education, employment and society.</p> <p>To provide a structure for developing and improving these skills throughout life.</p>	<p>The working group, with an academic institution.</p>	<p>A working group of campaign partners will invite a number of academic bodies to submit proposals for creating a soft skills framework.</p> <p>The chosen party will work to develop the framework with people from all the relevant life and career stages. Our campaign partners will support and inform this process.</p>

## 2. Embed soft skills into education and work.

Why	Who	How
<p>To signpost these skills from an early stage, so young people can better articulate them later in life.</p> <p>To keep this process of recognising, developing and measuring soft skills going throughout people's careers.</p>	<p>The working group, with educators and employers.</p>	<p>Once the framework is in place, the working group and other campaign partners will encourage educators and employers to adopt it.</p>

## 3. Improve links between business, education, JobCentre Plus and the youth and voluntary sectors.

Why	Who	How
<p>To make mentoring, volunteering and work programmes easier to access so pupils, employers and employees can all benefit.</p> <p>To improve careers education for young people and soft skills development for all.</p>	<p>The working group, with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and national government.</p>	<p>The working group will encourage local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to broker connections between the agencies offering services and the people and organisations who need them.</p> <p>They'll also push for creating an online service or 'one-stop shop' that matches people with services at a national level.</p>

## 4. Encourage government departments to join up more.

Why	Who	How
<p>To make sure that the Department for Education, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department of Work and Pensions all understand the importance of soft skills and make developing them part of their policy.</p> <p>To support the Careers and Enterprise Company in getting across the importance of soft skills.</p>	<p>The working group, with government departments.</p>	<p>The working group will share the framework with these departments.</p>

For more information about these recommendations, or anything else in this report, contact:

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# KEY THEMES FROM THE CONSULTATION

## 1. THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF SOFT SKILLS TO UK PLC

The make-up of the UK economy has changed dramatically since the end of the Second World War. The service sector now accounts for around three quarters of annual GDP, compared with an estimated 46% in 1948.<sup>4</sup>

This has transformed what employers are looking for from their people. They understand that in this brave new world, soft skills are what make money. And while financial and business services, retail and public services are the most obvious areas to benefit from these skills, most working environments now involve high levels of teamwork, collaboration and dealing with colleagues and customers.

That's why our report, *The Value of Soft Skills to the UK Economy*, estimated that soft skills are currently worth more than £88bn to the UK economy. And why it predicted that by 2025, that number will be more than £127bn.

The people who took part in our consultation agree with the report's findings that soft skills are currently in short supply, particularly among school leavers and the under 25s. But they noted that the problem exists across the whole workforce, not just among young people. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) estimates that there will be 500,000 new managers by 2020, for example. At this level, a lack of soft skills is potentially more damaging than lower down in an organisation. Yet as one commentator observed, managers are often appointed without having the right training and support.

Our contributors also agreed that a widening productivity gap is causing us to fall behind our competitors. In our report, we estimated that this loss of production would cost us £8.4bn a year by 2020.

As guardians of our development from when we leave school to when we retire, UK employers have a huge opportunity to help fix the problem. Some are already doing great work in this area and have embedded soft skills in their performance management, personal development and leadership recruitment processes. Others are thinking about offering apprenticeships as a way of closing the skills gap. But there's more to do to make sure our workforce develops the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly complex global economy.

Businesses need to provide opportunities for development so employees can be as effective as possible, and continue to raise awareness of the importance of soft skills for the future of the economy. And leaders need to role-model behaviours, as well as make the link clear between soft skills and performance.

By stepping up to the plate, UK employers will not only support and develop our current workforce; they'll also create the conditions that will allow future generations – and our future economy – to thrive.

**“THE PRIMARY CHALLENGE IS TO RECOGNISE THAT SOFT SKILLS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS IN UNDERPINNING BUSINESS ACTIVITY AND GROWTH.”**

- CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MCDONALD'S BACKING SOFT SKILLS CONSULTATION

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF SOFT SKILLS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

Soft skills make people more employable and more likely to have successful careers.

According to research by Development Economics Ltd, strong soft skills can boost lifetime earnings by up to 15%. And by making people better at how they do their jobs, soft skills also make them more confident and fulfilled at work.

But our current education and employment landscape doesn't put enough emphasis on these skills. And there's been a big drop in 'earning and learning' among young people – possibly because they're concerned they won't perform as well in school if they're working too.

As a result, young people don't understand what soft skills are or how developing them will benefit their careers. This lack of awareness comes across in interviews, when they struggle to articulate what soft skills they have, or to give examples of when they've put them into practice.

Young people aren't the only ones affected. In our report, *The Value of Soft Skills to the UK Economy*, we estimated that more than half a million UK workers will be held back by soft skills deficits by 2020. One in five UK employees say that they wouldn't feel confident describing their soft skills to an employer and half have never included them on their CV. That's despite the fact that 70% of the employers we polled said that they look for soft skills when they're recruiting.

The good news is that employees and employers alike are becoming aware of this gap and the need to close it. However just telling people that soft skills are important isn't enough. The key is to make the link between developing soft skills and a 'return' to the individual.

Part of this is about showing that soft skills benefit all areas of life, not just careers. One organisation told us it does this by encouraging its employees to take part in community work, for example. Another part is explaining to people how soft skills can lead to better career and pay prospects, whatever stage they're at in their career. And it's also important to encourage people to take control of their own soft skills development, rather than expecting their educators and employers to take care of it.

### HOW MENCAP HELPED A YOUNG MAN TO TAKE MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS

Not everyone goes straight from education into work. Some people need extra support from organisations like Mencap to get there.

Andy Savidis has experienced this first hand. Andy has a mild learning disability and was out of work for over two years. As a result, he struggled with confidence and had issues with low self-esteem.

But with a family to support, Andy knew he needed to find a job. So he took matters into his own hands and contacted Mencap for support.

The charity helped Andy to improve some of his key soft skills such as communication, which in turn helped him to overcome the other barriers. Thanks to its help, Andy was able to get a job with McDonald's in south London. And now he's feeling very different about himself.

**"I support my kids now, earning a lot of money and I quite enjoy myself there," he says. "I enjoy life, it's been hard for a long time so yeah, it's good!"**

This could mean individuals assessing their strengths and weaknesses in their current job, monitoring their own development or asking employers to provide training. Outside of school or work, it could mean building transferable skills through volunteering.

When it comes to applying for a new job, it could mean people identifying the skills they already have (including the less obvious ones, like decision-making and self-management) and finding stories to illustrate them.

**“JUST TELLING PEOPLE THAT SOFT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT USUALLY HAS LITTLE EFFECT. THERE NEEDS TO BE A CORRELATION BETWEEN THE ABILITY TO HAVE AND DISPLAY SOFT SKILLS AND A ‘RETURN’ TO THE INDIVIDUAL.”**

- CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MCDONALD'S BACKING SOFT SKILLS CONSULTATION

### 3. WHY CREATING A SOFT SKILLS FRAMEWORK IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

Soft skills can help people of all generations, from parents returning to work after a career break to people preparing for retirement. The key finding of our consultation was that people at all stages of life are struggling to understand, develop and express the soft skills they need for the next stage. Compounding this is the volume of organisations we come into contact with during our lifetimes that have a role to play in helping us to develop soft skills.

What's missing is a common framework for defining, developing and measuring soft skills right across the spectrum of education, work and beyond. As a result, there's frustration at each of these 'transfer points' from one stage to the next.

Among young people, a lack of a standard set of defined skills that they recognise (and know how to achieve) means they don't understand what they need to be work-ready. Among employees, the same lack of understanding means that they don't know how to apply these skills properly. Some contributors told us that employers and training providers aren't always good at testing and measuring for these skills – even on a vocational course for 14-16-year-olds, where soft skills are a major part of the course content. Overall, soft skills are seen as nebulous and too hard to measure.

Because this lack of a common language and framework affects everyone, at all stages of life, it becomes a problem for society – not just for education or employers. That's why there was a great deal of support among our consultation group for creating a soft skills framework.

This framework would need to be robust enough for people to use it as a basis for formal accreditation, but user-friendly enough for teenagers to be able to assess themselves against it, or for a small employer to structure an interview with a candidate (though some contributors warned against using it as yet another kind of exam).

Contributors felt that by defining these skills and giving clear criteria for measuring performance, people would be better able to demonstrate their experience, as well as set goals and assess their progress. And employers would be able to plot the skills needed for a particular job on the framework, and use that to both find and develop the right person.

**“SOFT SKILLS NEED TO BE IDENTIFIED AS PART OF HARD OUTCOMES. WITHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITION OF SOFT SKILLS THERE'S NO HARD OUTCOME.”**

- CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MCDONALD'S BACKING SOFT SKILLS CONSULTATION

## 4. HOW THE FRAMEWORK WILL HELP US EMBED SOFT SKILLS INTO EDUCATION AND WORK

Our contributors identified points across the whole spectrum of education and work where soft skills aren't being recognised, assessed or valued in their own right. Those points ranged from an excessive focus on academic skills, tests and exams in the education sector, through to an emphasis on technical skills training in the workplace and a lack of focus on soft skills in government policy.

Feedback clearly revealed that developing and assessing these skills needs to be an integral part of both the educational curriculum and employers' recruitment, development and performance management programmes.

Creating a common framework for doing this is the first step in what one contributor called 'turning the oil tanker around'. The next is making sure that schools, colleges and businesses use it.

Our working group will work with organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry and the Association of Colleges to make this happen. In doing so, they'll also explain – particularly to teachers – that the framework isn't an add-on that will create more work, but something that will help them identify where children are now and to make them aware of when they're using soft skills. For example, at the end of a lesson, a French teacher could say: "In that lesson we learnt about conjugating verbs in French. And when you did the group exercise you were using communication and teamwork skills." This will make the language of soft skills familiar to pupils and introduce the concept that they'll build on these skills throughout their lives.

However young people will still struggle with the transition from school to work if they don't know what goes on inside an organisation. Without that, they can't know if they've got the skills the job will require.

Some contributors suggested that we need a well-funded, systematic careers education system, supported by business and the youth sector, to help young people prepare for the complex jobs market. However, schools don't currently receive funding for careers guidance and rely instead upon the National Careers Service to provide this service.

We hope that the new Careers and Enterprise Company (created by the Department of Education to support the National Careers Service) will help to plug this gap by forging stronger links between job-seekers or people in education and the world of work.

**“UNLESS IT'S CLEAR WHAT'S TO BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED, THEN IT'S UNFAIR TO BLAME EDUCATORS FOR NOT TEACHING A SOMEWHAT NEBULOUS CONCEPT. A LACK OF CLARITY OF DEFINITION MAY ALSO EXPLAIN WHY IT'S DIFFICULT TO EMBED SOFT SKILLS INTO OTHER AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM.”**

- CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MCDONALD'S BACKING SOFT SKILLS CONSULTATION

## 5. WHY WE NEED BETTER LINKS BETWEEN BUSINESS, EDUCATION, JOBCENTRE PLUS AND THE YOUTH AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS

People develop soft skills in different ways, depending on their route through life. Most take the standard route of education, work experience and employment. Others – including people who struggle academically, or have a disability or behavioural problems – take an alternative route. These people might turn to an organisation that will teach them soft and life skills through another medium, such as sport, then link them up with employers at the end of the process.

There are thousands of organisations like this in the UK, all working with young people who are disadvantaged in some way, including NEETS and young people just out of care. Then there are organisations like the National Citizen Service and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) that offer another channel for people who are actively looking to develop soft skills – like young people who choose not to work while studying. There are organisations people can turn to later in life if they've been unemployed for a long time, in prison or out of the workplace voluntarily like new parents. And there are organisations people can approach if they're looking to develop different soft skills during the course of their working lives.

This makes for a complex network of providers of whom many are unheard of, by school and JobCentre Plus. How could a head teacher, with 15 children who need broader support, find the right provider quickly and simply?

Our contributors consistently said that the answer was to forge closer links between educational institutions, businesses, JobCentre Plus and those providers of alternative 'ways in' to employment. And they were very keen for employers to proactively work with educational institutions to make young people aware of, and develop, soft skills.

Another clear consensus was that local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships were best placed to broker these connections at a local level. They should do this by identifying the separate pipelines of providers and funneling them into a single, larger pipeline that schools, colleges and JobCentre Plus could all access.

Making it simpler to connect to these alternative providers would also benefit businesses by offering employees opportunities to gain management and wider skills. Building a bigger pipeline would also help create more opportunities for businesses to bring careers education into schools in the form of workplace visits, career talks, mentoring and enterprise programmes.

Our contributors pointed out that local efforts alone won't be enough. They also called for a national 'one-stop shop' that would match people who have a need with organisations that can fulfil that need. The McDonald's working group will encourage Local Enterprise Partnerships and local and national government to make these connections happen.

**“WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE EMPLOYERS CONNECTING WITH SCHOOLS AND [NON-WORKPLACE] PROGRAMMES TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES AND VIABLE EXIT ROUTES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO PRACTISE THE SKILLS THEY LEARN THROUGH THE PROGRAMME. FOR INSTANCE, BY OFFERING MOCK INTERVIEWS, TASTER DAYS OR DRAGON'S DEN TYPE OPPORTUNITIES.”**

- CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MCDONALD'S BACKING SOFT SKILLS CONSULTATION

## 6. HOW WE CAN HELP GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO JOIN UP MORE

None of the recommendations in this report will be achievable without support, backing and funding from national and local government. We need to make sure that policy-makers take soft skills and career education seriously and take steps to fund and embed both.

In recent years, education policy (set by the Department for Education) has focused increasingly on improving academic performance. At the same time, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), which is also responsible for universities, has encouraged people to develop vocational skills. And the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which looks after JobCentre Plus, has backed soft skills.

To embed our framework and make sure it's effective, it's important that all of these departments understand the benefits of soft skills to both individuals and UK Plc. And that they all build soft skills development into their policy-making.

We think that the new, employer-led Careers and Enterprise Company offers an opportunity to create that consistency. Created by the Department for Education, its remit is to 'transform the provision of careers education and advice for young people and inspire them about the opportunities offered by the world of work'.

While it won't deliver any services itself, the new company will work with the National Careers Service (part of BIS) to make good-quality careers advice, guidance and inspiration for young people more widely available. The National Careers Service will continue to offer careers advice to adults, whether or not they're registered with JobCentre Plus.

As a result, the Careers and Enterprise Company will effectively straddle the departments our working group wants to influence most. So it makes sense for us to support it.

One contributor said that we need to create a unified message that will affect government policy in the both the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education.

### DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS BY HELPING OTHERS

Kate Stanforth, 21, suffers from ME; a chronic fatigue condition which means some days she can't even sit up. Yet despite her fatigue her hospital stays inspired her to develop Project Parent, an initiative designed to support mums and dads when their children are in hospital, with a goody bag of pampering treats. Kate received funding from O2 Think Big and, as part of the programme, also the support of Alex, a youth worker for the National Youth Agency.

In driving Project Parent forward, Kate not only developed and utilised her own soft skills but also helped develop them in others. Managing 15 volunteers remotely has helped Kate to develop a flexible approach to problem solving as well as time management, juggling her project with her exams and health needs. Knock backs affect her physically but thanks to the support she's received Kate's developed the confidence and resilience to handle the challenges that come her way.

She says, "I used to need reassurance but now I'm confident in making my own decisions. Alex nudges me to do more and his backing provides me with the confidence that I'm on the right track."

Kate's project was a huge success, and she was granted further funding to roll it out in hospitals in Leeds, London, Manchester, Newcastle and Bristol.

The framework we're creating will provide that unified message. By making sure it stays viable and valuable, the working group will help to make sure that the message lands and becomes part of government policy across all the key departments.

**“THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING THE GOVERNMENT CAN DO IS TO VALUE AND RECOGNISE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS THROUGH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND TO CREATE A MORE FLEXIBLE SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOSE SKILLS — PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO STRUGGLE TO DEMONSTRATE ACADEMIC SUCCESS.”**

- CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MCDONALD'S BACKING SOFT SKILLS CONSULTATION

- 
1. Development Economics Ltd
  2. Development Economics Ltd
  3. McDonald's staff survey 2014
  4. Office for National Statistics
  5. Development Economics Ltd

# OVER 60 ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS RESPONDED TO THE CONSULTATION SUBMITTING EITHER WRITTEN OR ORAL EVIDENCE

1. Akonia
2. Ambition
3. Aon Hewitt
4. ASDAN
5. Association of Colleges
6. Association of Employment and Learning Providers
7. Barclays LifeSkills
8. Bravo Delta Consulting (USA)
9. Bromford
10. Business in the Community
11. Capita
12. CBI
13. CG Kineo
14. Cheryl Smith
15. Christine Hood Consultancy
16. CIPD
17. City & Guilds
18. Coverdale Organisation
19. Crown Coaching
20. Dame Kelly Holmes Trust
21. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)
22. EdComs
23. EF Corporate Language School
24. English Speaking Board
25. Exponential Training
26. Federation of Small Businesses
27. Futureversity
28. Gelder
29. Ginsters
30. Hamilton Bradshaw
31. Helmsman Project
32. I CAN
33. Impetus-PEF
34. KiE Leadership Training and Development
35. Kineo
36. learndirect
37. Leeds University Business School
38. Leonard Cheshire Disability
39. London Youth
40. McDonald's
41. Mencap
42. National Citizen Service
43. National Grid
44. National Literacy Trust
45. National Youth Agency
46. NIACE
47. Norfolk County Council
48. Pearson
49. People 1st
50. Plotr
51. Policy Exchange
52. Prospect
53. Rank Group
54. Rickter Company
55. Rubyleaf
56. Signature
57. Sky
58. Sports Leaders UK
59. Stephen Clarke
60. Student Development Company
61. Tesco
62. This Education blog
63. Timpson
64. Video Arts
65. Work Foundation
66. YouthNet