

Academic evidence – the employer experience



Scores of studies have focused on business experience of government funded adult skills, employability, and similar programmes.



Professor Jo Ingold



Adam Whitworth



General findings from studies

There are a significant number of businesses who simply do not engage with labour activation programmes

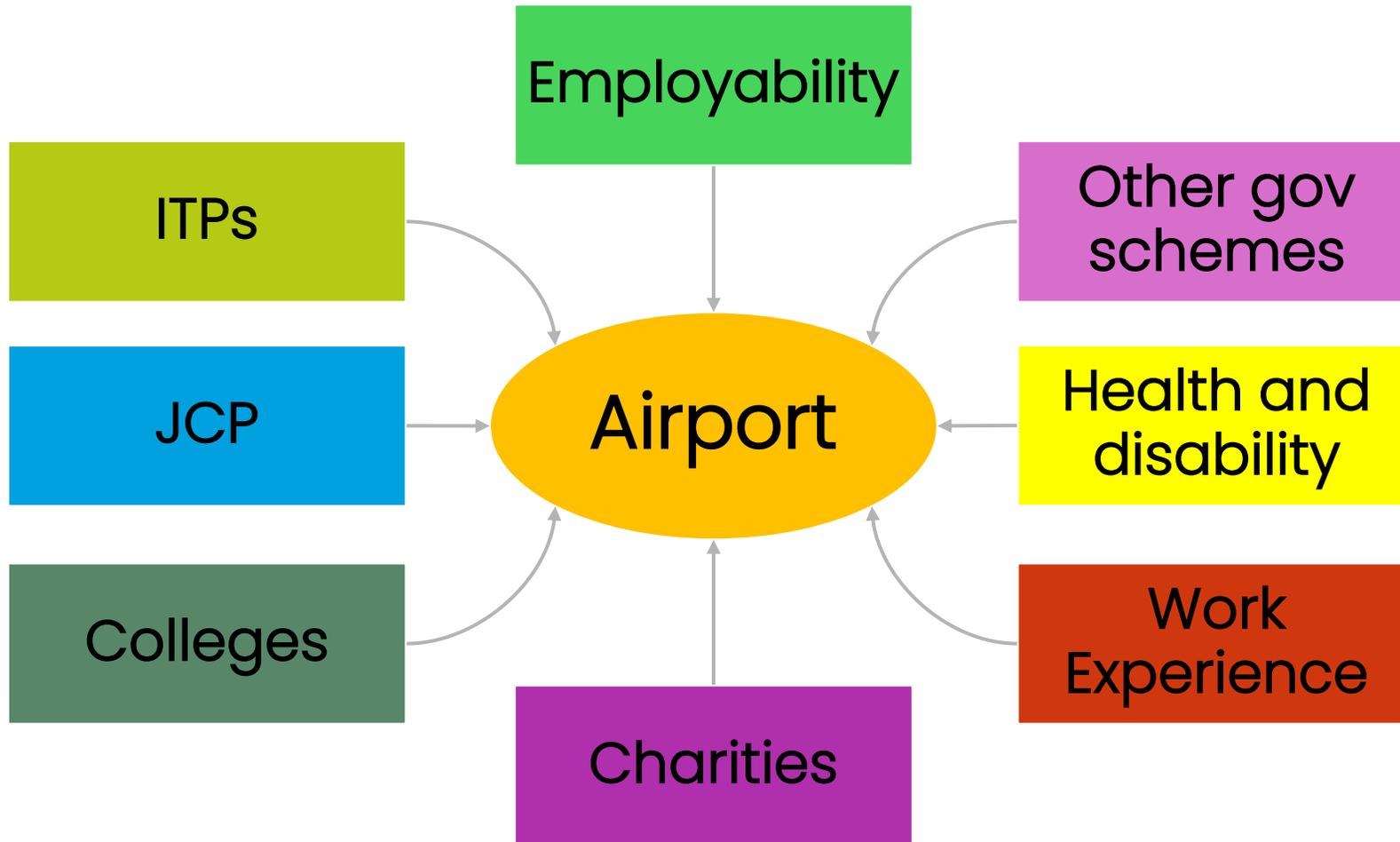
Those who do engage feel over-sold to, don't have their needs met, and are baffled by the market complexity and jargon

SMEs particularly struggle, lacking capacity to engage with products such as apprenticeships and internships, or allocate additional management time/capacity for programmes requiring extra work

Many programmes are designed without meaningful employer input, meaning they are often misaligned with business demand

Businesses find their workforce development needs cannot be met by one single provider, as commissioning means hundreds of suppliers all compete for employers

Case Study – Regional airport



The problem

1. Airport workforce development function, needed to engage with **over 50 local suppliers** to access talent, training support and other workforce development services.
2. Suppliers **unwilling or unable to collaborate**, even criticising one another to secure partnership with airport team.
3. Airport team's experience was negative – they didn't want to engage with suppliers but needed to for their needs to be met.

Workforce development ecosystem is a salad...

- 🍓 The organisations in this room represent a delicious feast for businesses!
- 🥬 Business might want a salad, but you might only have tomatoes to offer!
- 🥕 Reality of commissioning means every item in a salad may be held by a different company
- 🍎 That doesn't make sense for businesses



Examples of best practice

Example: **The ReAct Partnership**





Welcome!
**You have joined the
movement to improve
Employer Engagement in
your region.**

**THE FUTURE OF EMPLOYER
ENGAGEMENT: INNOVATION,
STRATEGY & CONNECTION.**

What's happening

From November 2025, we're launching;

The Future of Employer Engagement: Innovation, Strategy & Connections

These regional events are designed to improve how we all work with businesses and will:

- ✓ Share best-in-class employer engagement training and tools
- ✓ Strengthen collaboration across providers operating in the same area
- ✓ Feature keynotes from industry leaders, policymakers, and employers

What you'll gain from joining an event



Insights into the future of work



Practical strategies for Employer Engagement



Tech and AI tools to boost delivery



Peer-led networking and co-designed solutions

The events are an opportunity to sharpen your approach, build connections, and walk away with actionable strategies.

Birmingham Event Results

- Nearly 60 practitioners attended
- Contacts made and partnerships explored
- Guest speakers from West Midlands Combined Authority, the role of tech in employer engagement and a Social Value expert
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from delegates.

Who should attend

Anyone working with employers: Local Authorities, employment support providers, adult education, third sector, Jobcentre Plus – [any provider who needs business relationships to deliver their programme outcomes](#)

Register your interest here: [short expression of interest form](#)

There will be a small fee, with bursary places available for small third sector organisations.

[Don't miss out, we'd love to have you involved.](#)

Connecting the dots - Your invitation to the future of Employer Engagement

