



# Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision

(Careers Learning Journeys)

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# Alignment to the Gatsby Benchmarks

Effective leadership of careers and embedding a careers provision that meets learners' needs requires a whole-school, special school or college approach. The Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years report<sup>1</sup> highlights the importance of aligning careers with the school or college's overall vision and strategic planning.

Leadership of careers and embedding a careers provision that meets the needs of learners and is aligned to institutional priorities requires a whole school or college approach. In the [Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years report](#), Gatsby emphasise the link between careers provision and the whole or college vision and approach to strategic planning and development.

This resource helps Careers Leaders develop **progressive and responsive careers provision**:

- tailored to the needs of learners
- sequenced appropriately underpinned by learning outcomes
- linked to whole institution development plan
- sets out how parents and carers will be engaged throughout

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<sup>1</sup> [Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years](#)

# Using this Resource

This resource is part of a comprehensive set of guidance designed to help you:

- Establish a sustainable and strategic approach to careers leadership
- Develop a progressive and responsive careers provision that meets the needs of all learners
- Evaluate your careers provision and plan for impact

## Careers Impact: Full set of Guidance

Our guidance includes the following key documents:

- [Careers Leader Roadmap](#)
- [Understanding How to Create a Strategic Careers Plan](#)
- Understanding How to Develop Progressive and Responsive Careers Provision (Careers Learning Journeys)
- [Understanding How to Effectively Evaluate Your Careers Provision](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Careers in the Curriculum](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Progressive Employer Encounters](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Progressive Work Experiences](#)
- [Understanding How to Embed Progressive Encounters with Further and Higher Education](#)

## Alignment with The Careers Impact System

All resources in this suite are aligned with Themes 1 and 2 from the Careers Impact Maturity Model, which underpins a [Careers Impact internal leadership review](#).

- Careers Impact Maturity Model ([schools and special schools](#))
- Careers Impact Maturity Model ([colleges](#))
- Careers Impact Maturity Model (ITPs – Coming Soon)

The Maturity Model provides a shared language for positioning careers as a driver for improvement in schools, special schools, colleges, and ITPs. It defines all elements of sustainable and strategic careers leadership.

A Careers Impact internal leadership review supports the quality assurance of your careers provision and encourages continuous improvement aligned to your whole institution's priorities.

The resources in this set of guidance provide practical support in developing an impact led approach to careers in your institution.

# Overview

This guidance provides Careers Leaders with steps to map and enhance their current careers provision that is underpinned by learning outcomes to support learners to make aspirational and informed decisions, make effective and sustained transitions and to develop career-readiness skills.

## What are Careers Learning Journeys?

All students are on a 'Careers Learning Journey' towards decisions at key transitions and lifelong career development, and all schools, special schools, and colleges put in place careers provision to support students on that journey within and beyond education.

The term '**journey**' is used deliberately here to represent progression or evolution, involving students' personal growth, deepening knowledge, challenges and self-discovery.

- It is more than a programme of career-learning activities.
- It is more than a programme of taught or online lessons.

### Students are on this journey with, or without, us as educators and leaders.

Intentionally planned Careers Learning Journeys that are **responsive to need** and that include **clear measurable milestones** provide context and relevance to career related learning, experiences and encounters.

To support you in planning for impact when developing progressive and responsive careers provision, this resource is underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- Start early
- Be intent and outcome led
- Develop a progressive approach that allows for learning and multiple encounters and experiences across all key stages
- Be responsive to learner need, evaluation data and regional/national labour market context

A documented careers learning journey should be underpinned by progressive learning outcomes and include careers learning, guidance, encounters and experiences that support learners to:

- make aspirational and informed decisions
- make effective and sustained transitions
- develop career-readiness

Careers Leaders can elevate this journey through aligned staff development and effective engagement of and support for parents and carers.

# Understanding your current careers provision

Key questions to consider:

- **What is included in your current careers provision?**

Reflect on the existing structure and content for each key stage/phase of learning.

- **Where is career-related learning currently happening?**

Identify where career learning takes place. Is it integrated into subjects, distinct career-related encounters/experiences or via extracurricular activities?

- **How are all learners supported to engage with the opportunities available to them?**

Assess how well your provision meets the needs of all learners, including those who are vulnerable or have additional support needs.

- **How is learner progress planned and evaluated?**

What are the key reflection milestones for leaders and learners and how is progress measured and responded to?



# Activity 1

## Review your current careers provision mapping

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**Purpose: To reflect on the mapping of content and sequencing of your current provision, with an emphasis on the learning occurring.**

Schools, special schools and colleges map and share their careers provision in a variety of ways. For this activity you will need sight of how the careers provision is mapped in your institution.

This may be a calendar of activity, a documented careers curriculum or a roadmap.

Your provision may currently be mapped across several documents.

- **Review how your current careers provision is mapped:**

- Are all elements of your provision (e.g., employer encounters, work experience, personal guidance, careers lessons, etc.) mapped in one place?
- How is careers in the curriculum mapped?
- What is the sequence of events? Is the sequencing clear?
- Do you have an entitlement for each learner? How does this align with guidance within the Gatsby Benchmarks and current statutory guidance?

- **Reflect on the learning happening in each activity:**

For each element of your careers provision, reflect on the following:

- What skills or knowledge are learners gaining?
- Are any learning outcomes highlighted in the provision mapping?
- How can the aims and learning outcomes for your provision be added or made more explicit in how you map your provision?

- **Reflect on learner progress through the provision:**

- How are learners supported to understand the sequencing of their careers provision?
- How are the aims and learning outcomes of elements of the careers provision shared with learners?
- How are you measuring progress in what learners know and understand and are able to do?
- What are the milestones for learners to reflect on what they are learning and the skills they are developing to inform their decision making?

**Reflection: How can you elevate your current careers provision mapping to:**

- Ensure all learning guidance, encounters and experiences are mapped in one document.
- Make the aims and learning outcomes of the provision more explicit.

### Example careers provision mapping activity

		7	8	9	10	11
Introduce and Inspire	<p>Learning outcomes: e.g.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Students have a broad knowledge of a range of pathways, including technical and vocational, which enables informed decision making</li> <li>2</li> <li>3</li> <li>4</li> <li>5</li> </ol>	<p>Understanding Careers in the NHS</p> <p>Interactive Mini Careers Fair</p> <p>Personal Development Curriculum: Strengths and preferences</p> <p>How careers develop and challenging stereotypes</p> <p>Understand LMI and entrepreneurship</p> <p>Managing finance</p> <p>Careers Zone Workshops</p> <p>Assembly Programme: Spotlight on Jobs of the Future and STEM careers</p> <p>Meet your Adviser: Careers Advice Workshop</p>	<p>Careers Speed Networking Q&amp;A Event</p> <p>Personal Development Curriculum: Learning about all pathways, careers as a journey through life, considering prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination</p> <p>Interactive Careers Expo with employer briefs</p> <p>Assembly programme: Understanding pathways (inc Tech &amp; Voc) and learning about regional LMI</p>			

- Work Experience
- Employer encounters
- Assemblies
- Personal Guidance
- PAL
- Careers Education

**Example careers provision mapping activity continued**

		7	8	9	10	11
Investigate and Explore	<p>Learning outcomes: e.g.</p> <p>1 Students have a broad knowledge of a range of pathways, including technical and vocational, which enables informed decision making</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>		<p>Workplace Safari</p> <p>Personal Guidance: Triage/Group Work</p> <p>Exploring all Pathways Workshops and Encounters</p> <p>Assembly Programme: Spotlight on pathways and providers A</p>	<p>Employer Workshops (e.g. NHS/RAF, etc)</p> <p>Personal Development: Coping with change and transitions, Systematic consideration of choices, understanding how to be effective in a range of recruitment processes, mapping skills and qualities, effective decision making</p> <p>Work Insight Days</p> <p>Value &amp; Benefits all Pathways Workshops</p> <p>Meet the Provider Encounters</p> <p>Assembly Programme: Spotlight on pathways and providers B</p>	<p>Personal Guidance 1:1</p> <p>Assembly Programme: Spotlight on pathways and providers B</p>	<p>Personal Guidance 1:1</p> <p>Assembly programme: Alumni Success Stories</p>

- Work Experience
- Employer encounters
- Assemblies
- Personal Guidance
- PAL
- Careers Education

### Example careers provision mapping activity continued

		7	8	9	10	11
Apply & Demonstrate	Learning outcomes: e.g. 1 Students have a broad knowledge of a range of pathways, including technical and vocational, which enables informed decision making 2 3 4 5			Employer Brief and Presentation: Team Activity	Mock Interview Event  Assessment Centre Experience  Personal Development: Key ideas about careers and careers development, researching relevant job and labour market information, demonstrating qualities and skills, managing your money, understanding recruitment process, inc. apprenticeships  FE Taster Days	Employer Application Feedback Workshops  Work Placements  Personal Development: Responding to feedback, researching options aligned to action planning and goal setting, reflecting on mental health and well being in the workplace, making effective use of personal guidance to inform decisions and transitions

- Work Experience
- Employer encounters
- Assemblies
- Personal Guidance
- PAL
- Careers Education

Consider how a mapping tool (like the one above) can help you to map a progressive provision underpinned by learning outcomes.

**Task:** Access the [Template to map careers provision \(Appendix 1\)](#) to consider how you can map your careers provision including learning outcomes.

**Inspiration:** Careers Leaders regularly receive multiple exciting opportunities for their learners. Many of these can add value to your provision but they may not be aligned to the needs of your learners. Use this handy [Opportunity Checklist \(Appendix 3\)](#) to evaluate opportunities as they land in your inbox!

## Additional Support

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If you use Compass+: Record all your careers activities in one place using the [Activities section](#). Here you can view, edit and download activities, allowing you to maintain an accurate record of the activities learners have been involved in across each academic year. You can also upload activities from a partner platform.

See at-a-glance how a learner is tracking against Gatsby Benchmarks 2-8, in line with the planned and completed activities they have been assigned to. If activities are recorded in Compass+, you can also monitor learners' attendance to these activities.

There are specific features in [Activities](#) that flag if activities are PAL compliant or if the parent of a learner has attended the activity. You can upload activities into Compass+ using our Activities Upload template, you can also upload activities from a partner platform too.

You can download a [Learner Report](#) from Compass+ that has a record of all the activities the learner has been assigned to. You can share this information with a learner by printing it out or emailing it to them directly from Compass+.

Find out how to use more Compass+ features and functionality effectively in your setting by completing our Compass+ self-paced training on [The Careers and Enterprise Academy](#). Go to the course Library and just search for Compass+ or FSQ. You can also visit the Compass+ Help Centre for further guidance and resources.

If you don't use Compass+: Utilise procedures and processes that you already have in place to manage activities within your institution. Remember, this information must be made available to learners if requested. We recommend reviewing current ways of working to ensure that they align with this guidance.

## Activity 2

### Planning for the development of Careers Learning Journeys underpinned by responsive and progressive learning outcomes

**Purpose:** To review, clarify and elevate your aims and learning outcomes for your careers provision.

This activity builds on Activity 1, where you identified and considered how to make aims and learning outcomes of your current provision careers provision more explicit.

This activity focuses on reviewing the aims and learning outcomes that are intentionally set for your careers provision and how you can have confidence that your provision will meet the needs of your learners.




#### When considering how to support learners to do the following, there is a lot to unpack:

- make aspirational and informed decisions
- make effective and sustained transitions
- develop career-readiness

When clarifying the aims and ambition for your careers provision, it is useful to consider your learners as leavers. What do you want your learners to know, understand and be able to do by the time they leave your institution and what are the key milestones towards these transitions?

**Reflection:** Consider developing a universal leaver profile for your students. Work with key colleagues across your school, special school or college to map your ambition and intent for what you want your learners as leavers to know, understand and be able to do.

#### End of Year 11 or Year 13 – Alex's Profile\*

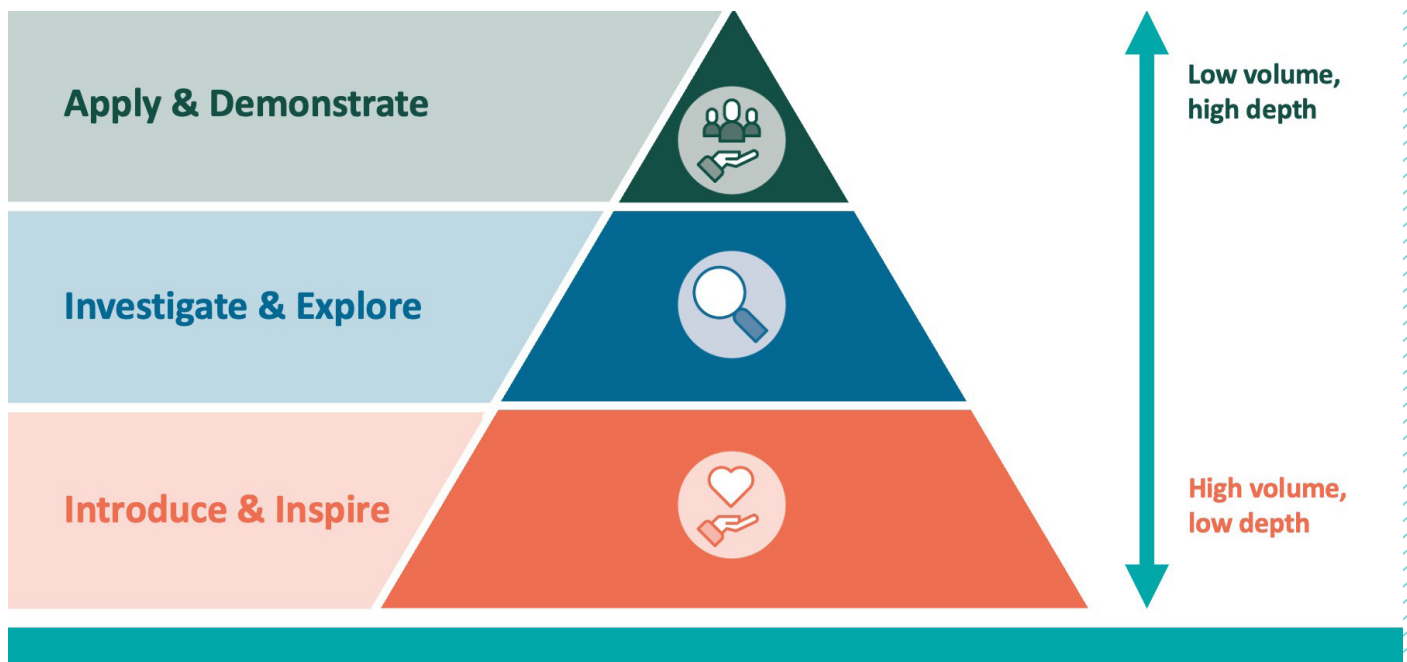
 <b>Knowledge</b>	 <b>Skills</b>	 <b>Behaviours</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alex can identify a broad range of career opportunities and pathways, including technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial options</li> <li>• Alex is aware of their personal strengths, skills, and preferences, and how they influence their career choices</li> <li>• Alex understands how to prepare effectively for various recruitment and selection processes</li> <li>• Alex can identify reliable sources of labour market information and understands local and national labour market changes</li> <li>• Alex understands different recruitment processes and has the skills to navigate them successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alex can make informed, aspirational career decisions by considering a range of opportunities, personal aspirations, and changing labour market trends</li> <li>• Alex can proactively explore a wide range of pathways with equity</li> <li>• Alex can reflect on past learning and experiences, and communicates them effectively to potential employers</li> <li>• Alex works collaboratively with peers and trusted adults to identify and secure opportunities</li> <li>• Alex confidently communicates skills and experiences to potential employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alex proactively explores diverse career opportunities</li> <li>• Alex reflects on strengths, experiences, and labour market information to make confident, stereotype-free decisions</li> <li>• Alex adapts and prepares effectively for a variety of recruitment and selection processes</li> <li>• Alex develops positive workplace behaviours</li> <li>• Alex is supportive, thoughtful and displays empathy when considering next steps</li> </ul>

**Task:** Work with key colleagues and use the Learners as leavers profile ([Appendix 2](#)) to articulate the ambition for your learners as leavers.

**Reflection:** Consider the milestones you will need to scaffold to fulfil your planned leaver profile:

It is useful to consider a progressive approach to your provision, which starts early and allows for learners to:

- develop a broad level of aspiration and understanding
- investigate and explore pathways and options
- apply and demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills



**Reflection:** Explore the [Career Development Institute's Career Development Framework](#) and the [Skills Builder Universal Framework](#) to start to consider relevant aims and progressive learning outcomes for your learners.

**Task:** Revisit your current careers provision mapping and review the learning outcomes you identified in Activity 1.

Can you rewrite or elevate learning outcomes to enhance the sequencing and support your vision for your learners as leavers?

### Coming Soon:

- **Suggested universal careers related learning outcomes from The Careers & Enterprise Company (June 2025)**

**Extension Task:** Use the careers provision mapping that you have already captured and reviewed to consider relevant aims, outcomes and activities for staff and parents and carers. Add these into your provision mapping.

### Inspiration:

Consider how you present and share the Careers Learning Journey for students. Access and use the relevant Careers Learning Journey template to show a visualisation of the journey: [Journey/roadmap \(Learner Journey\) | CEC Resource Directory](#)

Develop a version of the Careers Learning Journey for parents & carers: [Parental Engagement: Parental Journey/roadmap | CEC Resource Directory](#)

### Additional Support

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If you use Compass+: When you add an activity to Compass+, there is a feature that enables you to record parental engagement e.g. if the parent or carer of a learner attended an activity. You can view parental engagement activities in individual Learner Profiles and also via Activities reporting.

Find out how to use more Compass+ features and functionality effectively in your setting by completing our Compass+ self-paced training on The Careers and Enterprise Academy. Go to the course Library and just search for Compass+ or FSQ. You can also visit the Compass+ Help Centre for further guidance and resources.

If you don't use Compass+: Utilise procedures and processes you already have in place to record and review engagement activities for parents and carers. We recommend reviewing current ways of working to ensure that they align with this guidance.

## Activity 3

### Making effective use of data to ensure a responsive universal careers provision and personalised Careers Learning Journeys

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**Purpose:** To ensure that your provision is measurably responsive to learner needs and the context of your school, special school or college.

In this activity we will consider how you can make effective use of impact evaluation data to inform your responsive careers provision to ensure that the learning outcomes you set are responsive to evaluation and data insight. We will also consider how you can use data to ensure that emerging learner needs are met within personalised Careers Learning Journeys.

#### Developing responsive careers provision: Longer term impact evaluation

##### Reflection:

What does the following impact evaluation data tell you about the needs of your learners over time:

- Learner perception of their career-readiness (Future Skills Questionnaire)  
Are there any persistent misconceptions?  
Is there a trend of low confidence in knowledge/skills by a particular group that could be addressed more explicitly in the careers provision?
- Sustained and long-term destinations data  
How does sustained destinations data align to regional opportunities?  
Are there any pathways underrepresented in destinations data?  
Are there any student groups that struggle to make effective or sustained destinations data over time?
- Stakeholder voice (including learners, staff, employers and parents & carers)  
Are there persistent trends in stakeholder voice over time, which may benefit from additions to the careers provision?  
What does stakeholder voice tell you about staff development needs over time or how parental engagement provision can better support parents & carers?

**Review:** Revisit your careers provision mapping. Does the provision reflect or address insights from longer term impact evaluation?

**Inspiration:** Access the Understanding how to effectively evaluate your careers provision resource for more support with responsiveness to longer term impact evaluation.

**The Future Skills Questionnaire is a tool to measure learners' career-readiness.**

**FSQ covers key aspects of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are important for successful transitions.**

**Simple data insight can support you to make targeted interventions, evaluate your careers programme and identify the impact of your careers provision.**

## Developing responsive careers provision: Personalised Careers Learning Journeys

There are a range of data insights that you can use to help you identify learners at risk of NEET or those who are not making progress against the aims and ambition you have set for your universal careers provision:

- Accurate data for each learner on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, training or employment destinations
- Learner perception of their career-readiness
- Feedback on specific elements of careers provision
- Education engagement

### Reflection:

- What are the milestones you have set to capture and respond to emerging learner need?
- How are reflection milestones captured in school/college calendar?
- What is the process for sharing tracking responses to SLT/governors?
- Which data do you capture to consider risk of disengagement or NEET?
- Who is engaged in considering risk of disengagement or NEET?
- Cross institution teams may include SENCO, Careers Leaders, Careers Adviser, Progress Team, Pastoral teams, etc.
- What does stakeholder voice tell you about staff development needs or how parental engagement can better support parents & carers?

**Task:** Access the relevant [Careers Learner Journey template](#) to add in reflection milestones into the Careers Learning Journeys

# Appendix 1

## Template to map careers provision

### Introduce and Inspire

Learning outcomes:

e.g.

1 Students have a broad knowledge of a range of pathways, including technical and vocational, which enables informed decision making

2

3

4

5

7	8	9	10	11

### Investigate and Explore

Learning outcomes:

e.g.

1 Students understand how recruitment and selection processes work and what they need to do to succeed in them

2

3

4

5

7	8	9	10	11

# Apply and Demonstrate

Learning outcomes:

e.g.

1 Students have developed the knowledge, skills and behaviours that will support effective and sustained transitions

2

3




4

5

7	8	9	10	11

# Appendix 2

## Learners as Leavers profile

End of Year 11 or Year 13 Name:		
 <b>Knowledge</b>	 <b>Skills</b>	 <b>Behaviours</b>

## Appendix 3

### Opportunity Checklist

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The number of opportunities Careers Leaders receive can be overwhelming.

It is impossible to include everything, as tempting as it might be to say yes to everything that lands in your inbox!

Deciding whether to engage with each one requires a careful balance of strategic alignment, impact assessment, and resource consideration.

This checklist has been designed to guide thoughtful decision-making, helping you evaluate whether a new opportunity aligns with your overarching career development strategy and provides meaningful value to your learners. Tick off each point as you've given it some thought.

#### Alignment to strategic priorities:

How does this align with your overall strategic priorities?

How does it support meaningful achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks and statutory guidance, including PAL?

#### Distributing leadership of careers:

Who will lead, deliver, track engagement and measure the impact of this opportunity?

Is responsibility clearly assigned for planning, delivery, and evaluation?

What resources (time, space, budget) are needed?

Are there existing systems that can support the implementation?

Could this be a valuable CPD opportunity for staff?

#### Minimising disruption to curriculum

Does this impact curriculum learning?

Would it require missing essential curriculum content?

Where within the curriculum could this opportunity be integrated? (Consider all key stages, cohorts, and individual learner needs.)

Could this opportunity enhance or complement the curriculum, providing added value to existing learning?

#### Effort vs. Impact

Which career learning outcomes are supported?

What are the expected outcomes, and how will you communicate success?

Does the potential impact justify the effort needed?

Who will benefit most from this opportunity?

Is this a one-off or something that can be repeated annually?

Does this slot into fit into your current provision, or are adjustments required to meet the needs of your learners/setting?

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