THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY



Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit

Schools, Special Schools and Alternative Provisions

Introduction

Effective careers guidance is crucial for all young people, whatever their background, and schools, special schools, colleges and independent training providers (ITPs) play a key role in delivering it.

"The careers programme has helped me discover things and pathways I never knew were possible and had never thought about. It's widened my idea of what I can do and has stopped me thinking so narrowly." Year 12 student

Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

In 2014 the Gatsby Foundation published Good Career Guidance, a report by Sir John Holman, which used international evidence to define what world-class careers guidance for young people looked like. The critical elements of good careers guidance were developed into a framework of eight benchmarks. The benchmarks provide a shared understanding of, and common language for, careers guidance. They have been enthusiastically embraced by secondary schools, special schools and colleges, who use them to shape their provision.

Following two years of research and consultation, the benchmarks have been updated to future-proof them as the standard for world-class careers guidance for young people. The eight benchmarks remain in place, but with key refinements to the summary descriptions and measurable criteria.

The Gatsby Foundation's report Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years report provides further detail of the updates. For more information and to read the full report go to www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk.



Benchmark 1
A stable careers programme



Benchmark 2
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Updates to the Gatsby Benchmark framework

Schools, special schools, colleges, Independent Training Providers (ITPs) and wider stakeholders all agreed that stability was important. They were committed to building on the strong foundations of the benchmarks and the progress they have enabled.

While the title of each benchmark has remained the same, updates have been made to each summary and set of measurable criteria.

Five prominent themes emerged from the evidence used during the review of the benchmarks:

Careers at the heart of education and leadership

Gatsby have emphasised linking careers to the institution's vision and strategic plans, acknowledged the importance of staff development, and included distinct responsibilities for leadership, governors, Careers Leaders and advisers.

Inclusion and impact for each and every young person

Woven through multiple benchmarks are updates that emphasise the importance of tailoring programmes to the needs of each young person. Particular attention is given to inclusion and any additional or different support that may be needed by vulnerable or disadvantaged young people or those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Meaningful and varied encounters and experiences

Gatsby have emphasised the focus on flexible delivery and the impact of encounters and experiences of education and work. The definitions of 'meaningful' in Benchmarks 5 and 7 have been expanded and a definition has been added to Benchmark 6. These definitions specify the importance of offering a variety of encounters and experiences that are underpinned by careers-related learning outcomes and that give young people time to prepare and reflect. They also refer to using technology alongside, but not instead of, in-person engagement.

Focusing on the use of information and data

Gatsby have ensured that all young people can explore all future pathways equitably. Rather than just sharing information with young people, the focus is now on effective analysis and use of information to inform decision-making. Data collection has been refocused to include aspirations and intended destinations, to help tailor support. Longer-term and sustained destinations data remain important as part of the evaluation process.

Engagement of parents and carers

Parents and carers are one of the biggest influences on young people's career decision-making. Updates embed parent and carer engagement into planning and specify the need to share information with parents and carers and support them to use it with their children.

Since their introduction, the benchmarks have driven improvements in careers guidance. Evidence shows that those institutions successfully implementing all eight benchmarks achieve the most positive outcomes for young people.

Foreword



Over the last ten years, careers education in England has changed significantly – and for the better. The introduction of the Gatsby Benchmarks brought clarity, consistency, and a shared language to what good careers guidance looks like. Schools, colleges and training providers have embraced the benchmarks and the improvements and impact we've seen have been real, measurable, and widely recognised.

Now, we have an opportunity to build on these strong foundations.

The refreshed Gatsby Benchmarks retain what works – the eight benchmarks themselves remain unchanged – but introduce practical refinements based on new evidence, two years of consultation, and feedback from those working on the ground. The updates strengthen key areas such as inclusion, leadership, data use, and parental engagement, while placing even more emphasis on meaningful, high-quality experiences for every young person.

To support implementation, The Careers and Enterprise Company has developed a rich set of tools and resources aligned to the updates. Whether you're just starting out or looking to enhance a mature careers programme, there is support ready to guide your next steps. The document also reflects a recognition that great careers guidance isn't delivered in isolation – it's the result of collaboration across the whole institution, supported by a wider community of employers, expert advisers, and families.

This is a moment for ambition. We have the opportunity to ensure that every young person – no matter their background – has access to the high-quality career guidance they deserve.

We hope the updated benchmarks, and the support that accompanies them, will help you continue to turn aspiration into action.

Beth Jones, Head of Career Programmes, Gatsby Foundation

Using this guide

This guide is designed to support Careers Leaders in schools and specialist provision settings to effectively plan for impact in meeting all of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Each section includes the following:

Understanding the Benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

This section provides detailed information on each benchmark and sub-benchmark, including the criteria for achieving them. It also includes definitions of key terms to ensure clarity and understanding. Benchmarks 5, 6 and 7 also include a definition of 'meaningful'.

Planning for impact: How to meet each of the Gatsby Benchmarks

As the Careers Leader, you are the expert in the context of your own school, special school or alternative provision This section signposts to essential resources, support and continuing professional development (CPD) to help you develop a strategic and sustainable approach to meeting each benchmark.

Getting started: Essential steps for success

This section allows you to get started on meeting the eight Gatsby Benchmarks with simple steps you can take straight away as part of a whole-institution approach.





Benchmark 1:

A Stable Careers Programme

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

Every school should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, employers and other agencies.

- Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of governors, the headteacher and the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained Careers Leader responsible for it.
- The careers programme should be tailored to the needs of pupils, sequenced appropriately, underpinned by learning outcomes and linked to the whole-school development plan. It should also set out how parents and carers will be engaged throughout.
- The careers programme should be published on the school's website and communicated in ways that enable pupils, parents and carers, staff and employers to access and understand it.
- The programme should be regularly evaluated using feedback from pupils, parents and carers, teachers and other staff who support pupils, Careers Advisers and employers to increase its impact.

Definitions

What is a 'stable and structured careers programme'?

A stable and structured careers programme has the explicit backing of governors, the headteacher and the senior management team. It should have an identified and appropriately trained Careers Leader responsible for it and clearly defined staff roles and responsibilities. The programme must be designed and sequenced to meet the needs of all pupils and align with the institution's priorities and development plans.

"Taking part in a stable careers programme gives young people a sense of direction and enhances their career readiness, motivation and skills." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

What is an 'appropriately trained Careers Leader'?

An appropriately trained Careers Leader is someone who has received specific training to effectively plan, manage and deliver a school's careers programme. More than 4,000 Careers Leaders have received nationally developed and funded training.

"The training has helped Careers Leaders become more effective in their role and achieve more benchmarks in their institutions." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Funded Careers Leader training via The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) supports with accelerated and meaningful achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Find out more here: Careers Leader training

What are 'learning outcomes'?

Learning outcomes are clear, concise statements that describe what learners are expected to know, understand or be able to do by certain stages through participation in a careers programme. These outcomes are typically measurable and observable, providing a way to assess whether the intended goals of the careers programme have been achieved.

"Ongoing support and doing things to prepare me over time is really important ... Careers shouldn't be a one-off, it should be something you do all of the time." Year 12 student Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Access this resource, which suggests a universal set of career-related learning outcomes that can be applied to underpin a progressive and inclusive careers learning journey.



Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 1

A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME

How to build a stable and structured careers programme

1. Secure explicit backing from key stakeholders and strengthen careers leadership

- Develop a **Strategic Careers Plan** to:
  - » Ensure that the careers programme has clear backing from the school's or special school's leadership to give it the necessary authority and resources.
  - » Integrate the careers programme into the school's or special school's broader development plan, aligning it with key goals and priorities.

How to: Access the Understanding how to create a Strategic Careers Plan resource.

- Engage your headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) colleagues in a Careers Impact internal leadership review to:
  - » Improve understanding of best practice in careers leadership and of meaningful and sustained achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks.
  - » Align the priorities of continuous improvement of careers provision to the school's or special school's priorities and improvement planning.
  - » Explore careers as a driver for whole-institution improvement.

"Leaders have a crucial role to play. They set the direction and the values of their institution and they implement leadership structures that are effective for their setting." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

- Access relevant careers leadership CPD, including funded Careers Leader training, to understand how to embed sustainable and strategic careers. Find out more here: Careers Leader training

How to: Explore the free and funded training offer for education leaders, governors and school staff (including teaching staff and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs). Find out more here: Careers Leader training.

2. Structure the careers programme to meet learner needs

- Develop a careers programme that is **responsive** to pupil needs, with provision sequenced progressively and underpinned by learning outcomes

How to: Access the Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision (Careers Learning Journeys) resource.

- **Plan parent and carer engagement** that complements the well-sequenced and responsive careers programme for pupils

How to: Access the Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision (Careers Learning Journeys) resource.

How to: Access this resource, which suggests a universal set of career-related learning outcomes that can be applied to underpin a progressive and inclusive careers learning journey.

Research by Gatsby and the CEC shows that, for a careers programme to be most effective, an embedded whole-institution approach to parent and carer engagement is needed.

"Parents and carers should know about the programme, what it will cover, what resources are available to them and how they can access support." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

How to: Access the CEC resource for parents and carers, which includes FREE Parental Engagement in Careers CPD, supporting parents and carers to have constructive careers and education conversations.

3. Share and communicate the careers programme

- Make the careers programme accessible online: Publish the careers programme on the school or special school website for easy access by pupils, parents and carers, staff and employers. Communicate the programme clearly through multiple channels, ensuring everyone can understand the details and find relevant information.

How to: Access the Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision (Careers Learning Journeys) resource.

How to: Make sure everyone knows which way you're heading – ensure all stakeholders understand your careers programme by using these careers learner journey roadmap templates to present it in a visual way.

"The best examples of published careers programmes include the intended learning outcomes for the activities in each year group, Key Stage and for the programme overall. They also share the impact of the programme, which often includes leavers' sustained destinations."
Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

4. Evaluate your careers provision and plan for its impact

- Gather input from pupils, parents and carers, teachers, other staff, Careers Advisers and employers on how well the careers programme is working.

How to: Use the CEC guidance on survey creation and access the survey template resources to easily capture stakeholder feedback: Impact Evaluation Resource and Support: Survey Questions | CEC Resource Directory.

- Review the feedback and other impact evaluation data (e.g. destinations data, careers readiness and stakeholder voice) to continuously improve the careers programme to ensure it is responsive to pupil and context need.

How to: Access the Understanding how to effectively evaluate your careers provision resource.

How should the careers programme be published on the school's or special school's website?

The Department for Education (DfE) requires maintained schools and expects academies and colleges to publish the following information about their careers programme on their website:

- The name and contact details of the Careers Leader.
- A summary of the careers programme, including details of how students, parents and carers, teachers and employers may access information about it.
- How the school measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on learners.
- The date of the next review of the information published.

Getting started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 1: A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME

1. Secure governance and leadership support

Support headteachers, senior leaders and governors to understand the strategic value of careers provision.

Action: Hear from education and Careers Leaders about the value and benefit of undertaking a Careers Impact internal leadership review:

- Why do you recommend education and Careers Leaders undertake a Careers Impact internal leadership review?
- What has been the value/impact of undertaking a Careers Impact internal leadership review?
- How did you approach the Careers Impact internal leadership review?

Get started today with your Careers impact internal leadership review here.

2. Establish and maintain effective parental engagement

Action: Use the handy Parental Engagement Checklist as a guide to establish and maintain effective parental engagement in your setting.

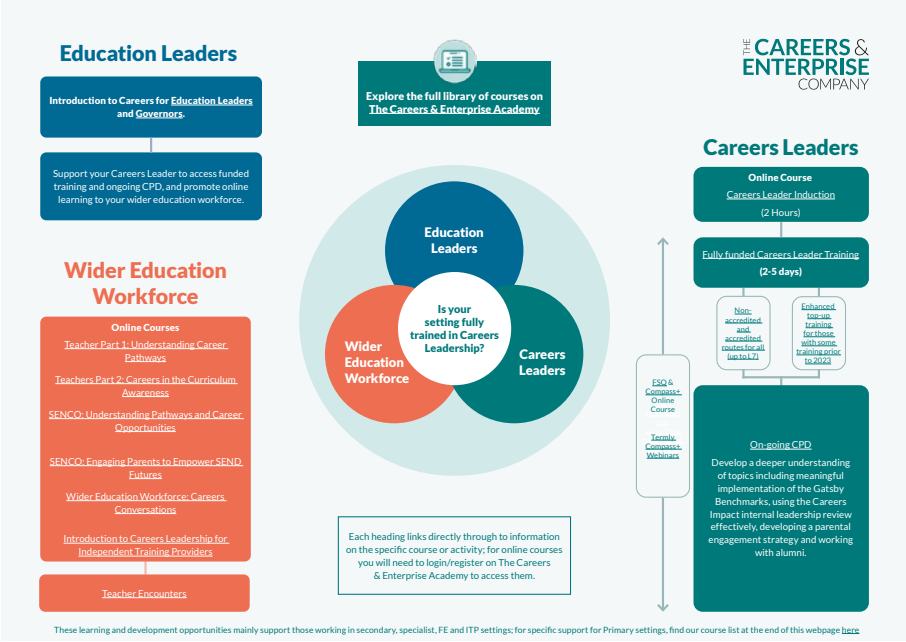
You can effectively record parental engagement in Compass+. Read this Help Centre article to find out how.

Action:The Your Child's Future questionnaire in Compass+ enables education settings to strengthen parental engagement and use this insight to develop more informed, responsive and effective careers programmes.

3. Support all relevant staff to access free careers CPD

Action: Ensure that the Careers Leader and all other relevant staff, including SEND teams, access the free training offer from the CEC.

"All staff who support young people, not just teachers or subject staff, should know about the careers programme and how to signpost to further information and support." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years





Benchmark 2:

Learning From Career And Labour Market Information

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

All pupils, parents and carers, teachers and staff who support pupils should have access to good quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. Young people with SEND and their parents and carers may require different or additional information. All pupils will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.

- During each Key Stage, all pupils should access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options or next steps.
- Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported to access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their support for pupils in their care.

What is careers and labour market information:

Careers information	Labour market information
Education and training options Appropriate transition pathways for young people with SEND Career pathways Skills needed for different occupations Job applications and interviews Financial planning	Employment sectors, employers, jobs, salaries and employment trends at local, regional and national level. Both now and forecasts for the future Job availability and skills demands Job demands and working life Structure of the job market and opportunities different careers can offer

What is meant by an **'informed adviser'**?

An **informed adviser,** as defined by Gatsby, is someone who supports pupils, parents and carers by providing high-quality, current information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. This role can be filled by a Careers Adviser or any professional capable of offering such information. Their support is essential for helping individuals make well-informed decisions about their educational and career choices.

"Employees can give talks in schools and colleges about different sectors in the labour market, skills advisers from Careers Hubs can deliver staff training on labour market trends and the needs of the local economy, and many colleges use industry advisers to support young people with labour market insights as part of their curriculum learning." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 2

LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

How to support understanding of career and labour market information

- Ensure easy access for all to up-to-date careers and labour market information:

Make sure all pupils, parents and carers, teachers and staff have access to current, reliable information about career pathways and study options, as well as labour market information. This information should be accessible through various channels, such as the school's or special school's website, newsletters and careers events. Tailor this information to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and provide additional resources where necessary.

How to: Support stakeholders to access up-to-date career and labour market information using these key links and other regional insights/data:

Education and training options/ Progression routes	Your training options
Career pathways	National Careers Service, Skills for Careers
Skills	Skills England, Local skills dashboard, Skills for Life: it all starts with skills
Job demands and working life	Career ideas
Job applications and interviews	Find work and training
Employment sectors, employers, jobs, salaries and employment trends	ONS labour market overview, ONS local indicators
Financial planning	Financial education guidance for primary and secondary schools in England

- Build in reflection milestones within Careers Learning Journeys

Establish clear learning outcomes for what you want pupils and parents and carers to know, understand and be able to do with careers and labour market information. Consider how it can inform aspirational and informed decision-making at identified reflection milestones in Careers Learning Journeys.

"Good quality qualitative and quantitative [labour market information] can lead to a better understanding of the implications of different choices and to more informed decision-making." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

How to: Access the Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision (Careers Learning Journeys) resource.

Getting Started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 2: LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

Access free online CPD on careers and labour market information

Action:

- Access the free online Career Leader induction module, which includes a section for Careers Leaders on Labour Market Information and Pathways, via The Careers & Enterprise Academy
- Support your SENCO and wider SEND teams to access the free online module SENCO: Understanding Pathways and Career Opportunities via The Careers & Enterprise Academy
- Support all teaching staff to complete the free online module Understanding Career Pathways via The Careers & Enterprise Academy
- Support all staff in your school or special school to access the free Wider Education Workforce online module, which is designed to highlight how all staff play a key role in supporting young people to make informed choices about their best next step and potential career pathways, via The Careers & Enterprise Academy

Engage and support parents and carers:

Actively involve parents and carers in the career learning process by providing accessible, clear and supportive guidance on how they can use labour market information to support their child's career decisions. Consider their context and provide targeted support to increase their confidence and aspirations.

Action: Include one of these activities in your next parent and carer communication. These activities bring families together to stimulate family conversations about skills, strengths, careers decision-making and potential pathways: Activities for Families.

Action: Find out more by accessing the Parental Engagement Checklist



Benchmark 3:

Addressing The Needs Of Each Young Person

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

Pupils have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help pupils navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities should be tailored to the needs of each pupil, including any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, young people with SEND, and those who are absent.

- A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical thinking, showcase a diverse range of role models and raise aspirations.
- Schools should keep systematic records of the participation of pupils in all aspects of their careers programme, including the individual advice given to each pupil and any subsequent agreed decisions.
- For pupils who change schools during the secondary phase, information about participation and the advice given previously should be integrated into a pupil's records, where this information is made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition.
- All pupils should have access to these records and use them ahead of any key transition points to support their next steps and career development.
- Schools should collect, maintain and use accurate data for each pupil on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations to inform personalised support.
- Schools should use sustained and longer-term destinations data as part of their evaluation process and use alumni to support their careers programme.

Definitions

How does Gatsby define 'vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils?

Disadvantage and vulnerability will vary depending on the context of the school or special school, but practitioners will want to consider socio-economic background, SEND and other potential barriers, such as those based on protected characteristics such as sex or race, which may hinder pupil's ability to access and benefit from a fulfilling career.

The report Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years emphasises the importance of addressing these factors to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background or circumstances, receive high-quality careers guidance that supports their aspirations and potential.

What is meant by a 'sustained and longer-term destinations data'?

Schools should collect and analyse education, training and employment destinations data for all pupils.

The DfE defines a sustained destination as 'six months of continuous activity' in a further or higher education institution, in employment or in an apprenticeship.

For longer-term destinations data, schools should consider whether they need to collect this themselves or whether it can be accessed through other sources.

Local authorities have a range of statutory duties to track the destinations of young people, and to identify and support young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Maintaining contact with your local authority, including having a data sharing agreement in place, can facilitate this.

The DfE publishes Key Stage 4 and 16–18 (Key Stage 5) education destinations in performance tables on gov.uk.

Aggregated sustained and longer-term destinations data can be found at the following places: Longer term destinations and 16–18 destination measures.

Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 3

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH YOUNG PERSON

Identify and respond to learner needs

Acknowledge that pupils will have unique requirements of the careers provision depending on their educational stage and individual needs. Identify and underpin the careers provision with careers-related learning outcomes to support a progressive universal approach to careers.

Embed processes to identify vulnerability and those at risk of disengagement/NEET. Ensure additional support for vulnerable, disadvantaged and SEND young people through systems that support you to develop responsive and personalised careers provision.

Identify and establish a shared understanding of misconceptions and stereotypes held by pupils, parents and carers and staff. Embed opportunities to broaden aspirations with planned reflection milestones for all pupils and parents and carers to ensure aspirational and informed career decision-making in line with learning outcomes.

How to: Access the Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision (Careers Learning Journeys) resource.

Keeping and sharing accurate career records

Maintain detailed records of every pupil's involvement in the careers programme, including any one-to-one advice they have received, and decisions made. This should include insights into career options, decisions and aspirations. For pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCPs), annual review information can also be included.

For pupils who change provision setting during their education journey, integrate information about their past participation and career advice into their new records. This will ensure continuity and avoid gaps in career planning.

Begin tracking each pupil's career development from their first point of contact with or transition into the school or special school, ensuring there is a comprehensive history of their career-related progress.

Make sure that pupils can access and make effective use of their records of participation in the careers programme, especially ahead of key transition points (e.g. moving from one school phase to another). Consider when and how you want them to access and reflect on these records to support aspirational and informed decisions. All records of participation should be in a format that ensures accessibility for all pupils.

How to: Access the Compass+ Help Centre.

Access our comprehensive library of help articles to support you to use Compass+ effectively in your setting. Key sections of the Help Centre include Activities, Future Skills Questionnaire, Learner Data and many more.

Making effective use of information and data

Collect accurate, up-to-date data on each pupil's aspirations and intended destination to inform personalised careers provision, particularly for pupils at risk of disengagement/NEET. Ensure that systems include information and detail from any EHCP process or any other relevant multi-agency support.

Incorporate sustained, long-term destinations data, and how this compares with records of aspiration and intended destinations, into the evaluation of your careers programme. This data can help assess how effectively pupils are making transitions and guide future improvements to the careers provision.

"Using aspirations and intended destinations data alongside academic and pastoral information helps institutions understand who could aim higher and who is at risk of not getting to their intended destination and means they can tailor timely interventions and appropriate support. This also contributes to wider strategies, often involving the local authority, preventing students becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

How to: Access the Understanding how to effectively evaluate your careers provision resource.

Getting Started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 3: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH YOUNG PERSON

Make effective use of your pupils' careers readiness data to identify disadvantage or vulnerability

Action: Access this handy Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) Checklist for support with pupil engagement and sharing the FSQ.

Action: Access this Help Centre article on Recording interests and destinations information on Compass+.

Challenge stereotypes and showcase diverse role models

Organise activities that introduce pupils to a wide range of role models and career paths from diverse industries and backgrounds. Actively challenge misconceptions and raise pupils' aspirations by presenting various career options.

"Many institutions draw on their alumni when setting up talks, mentoring programmes, encounters, visits and experiences of workplaces. It motivates young people to see people like them, who have sat where they are and are a few steps ahead in their journey. This is especially true when alumni and young people share similar backgrounds." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Action: Use the Alumni section in Compass+, under the Interests and destinations tab in the Learner Profile, to record contact details and consent from pupils who wish to join your alumni and contribute to the delivery of careers in your school or special school.

Track, record and use data to support career development

"Record-keeping helps to ensure that each young person receives the encounters, experiences and support they need." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Action: Use Compass+ to keep systematic records of pupils' participation in career activities, and advice given. Collect and analyse data on aspirations, destinations and career readiness to provide personalised support.

Action: Hear from colleagues who make effective use of Compass+ at Compass+ Impact Stories – The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Action: Access this link to find out more about how practitioners are using the FSQ to inform their careers provision.



Benchmark 4:

Linking Curriculum Learning To Careers

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

As part of the school's programme of careers education, all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.

- Every year, in every subject, every pupil should have opportunities to learn how the knowledge and skills developed in that subject help people gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers
- Careers should form part of the school's ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support pupils

Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 4

LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS

Ensure teaching staff link the curriculum to career pathways

All staff highlighting the relevance of their subject to progression routes and career pathways

Foundation and universal practice should include supporting all curriculum staff to highlight the relevance of their **subject** to future careers and opportunities. This could take place during focus times such as during the options process within mainstream education, at other key transition/decision-making points, or during National Careers Week, etc.

All staff making links from their curriculum to progression routes and career pathways

In addition to supporting pupils to understand the relevance of all subjects or programmes of study, all staff should be supported to regularly contextualise elements of their curriculum to help pupils understand how the knowledge and skills developed in that subject help people gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers. For SEND settings, this should include all future careers, progression or transition pathways to support all young people in their next steps.

"Integrating careers into the curriculum can help young people see the relevance of their learning and become familiar with a wider range of career pathways." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Embedding curriculum learning in the context of the world of work

Embedding curriculum learning in the context of careers relies on strong curriculum staff engagement. In this approach, staff work with employers to engage pupils and support progress by embedding curriculum teaching points in the context of the world of work.

Encourage teachers to show pupils how their subject connects to career opportunities or progression pathways. This includes explaining potential job roles, industries, and career or progression pathways where the skills and knowledge from their subject are relevant.

Support teachers to reinforce the relevance of skills: In each subject or throughout programmes of study, teachers should make clear how the skills and knowledge gained can help pupils succeed in a wide range of careers.

How to: Access the Understanding how to embed careers in the curriculum resource

Integrate careers into staff development

Make careers a part of the school's or special school's ongoing staff development programme. Provide teachers with the tools and knowledge to effectively link their subject areas to career opportunities, helping them bring real-world relevance into their lessons.

"There are many effective approaches to building careers into staff development programmes, including whole-staff meetings, departmental CPD or bespoke training for individuals. Each institution should decide on the approach that will have maximum impact on each member of their staff." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

How to: Explore the free and funded training offer for school staff (including teaching staff and SENCOs). Find out more here: Careers Leader training

Getting Started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 4: LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS

Increase staff confidence in understanding pathways

Action: Encourage all staff to complete the free online module Teachers Part 1: Understanding Career Pathways via The Careers & Enterprise Academy

Action: Support the SENCO and wider SEND team to complete the free online module SENCO: Understanding Pathways and Career Opportunities via The Careers & Enterprise Academy

Support all staff to highlight the relevance of their subjects and make links from their curriculum

Action: Share this link with all staff: "Access your subject guide and subject PowerPoint deck to engage pupils in learning and highlight where your subject can take them in the future My Learning My Future

Action: Share the My Journey, My Future and the My Skills My Future resources with staff supporting young people with SEND to make effective transitions.

Action: Encourage all staff to complete Teachers Part 2: Careers in the Curriculum Awareness via The Careers & Enterprise Academy



Benchmark 5:

Encounters With Employers And Employees

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

Every pupil 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 opportunities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and could include pupils' own part-time employment where it exists.

- Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer

A meaningful encounter will:

» Have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and the pupils.

» Be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the pupils.

» Have opportunities for two-way interactions between the pupils and the employer.

» Be followed by time for pupils to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through the encounter.

Gatsby have provided a definition of what constitutes a 'meaningful encounter' with employers and employees:

A meaningful encounter is one in which the pupil has an opportunity to learn about what work is like, the skills valued in the workplace, recruitment processes or what it takes to be successful.

Throughout a careers programme, pupils should encounter employers of different sizes and specialisms, including the self-employed, reflecting trends in the labour market regionally and nationally.

These encounters could be in-person or a combination of in-person and virtual where appropriate.

Both pupils and employers should be supported to prepare for the encounter.

Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, and young people with SEND.

"Employer encounters should be broad, inclusive and well-sequenced throughout the careers programme. Examples include:

» **employers giving talks or co-leading activities as part of curriculum lessons, assemblies or form time.**

» **careers fairs.**

» **employers leading careers events, such as careers speed networking and mock interviews.**

» **employer workshops covering topics such as CV writing, recruitment processes or work simulations.**

» **employer participation in enterprise competitions, events or projects.**

» **employees mentoring young people.**

Whatever approach is taken, the focus should be on the encounters being meaningful." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 5

ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Provide multiple opportunities for meaningful employer encounters

Organise at least one meaningful encounter with an employer every year within a progressive careers programme. This could include employer-led workshops, mentoring, mock interviews, enterprise schemes, etc.

"Having encounters with employers, employees and the self-employed gives young people real insights into the world of work, it broadens their knowledge and understanding of different career options and helps shape aspirations." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

How to: Access the Understanding how to embed progressive employer encounters and work experiences resource and checklist.

"Employer encounters should be broad, inclusive and well-sequenced throughout the careers programme." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Created by the CEC, the Employer Standards for Careers Education is a framework to help businesses self-assess and plan their work with education institutions. It supports businesses to ask the right questions upfront, cut through complexity, evaluate, improve performance and create the impact they are looking for.

Encourage employer partners you work with to complete the easy to use online tool to identify, compare and improve engagement and performance against the nine Employer Standards, which include 'Provide meaningful opportunities'.

How to: Signpost employers you work with to find out more about the Employer Standards tool.

How to: Signpost employers to this resource for support in working with young people with SEND.

Getting Started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 5: ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Making it meaningful

Encounters with employers, employees and the self-employed (...)result in better outcomes for young people, including being more ready for the workplace; having a reduced likelihood of not being in education, employment or training (NEET); and increased careers awareness, motivation and confidence.

"Encounters with employers can also boost academic attainment, especially for lower performing students, and have been linked to increased adult earnings" Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Action: Use the checklist in the Understanding how to embed progressive employer encounters and work experiences resource when planning all employer encounters.

Employer engagement

"Building a rich picture of the world of work, and hearing first-hand about the reality of different occupations, helps limit young people's misconceptions about the future of work." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Action: Find and contact delivery organisations to support employer encounters via the CEC's Provider Directory.

Action: Keep a centralised record of all the employers that deliver careers activities to your pupils by utilising the Careers Partners section in Compass+. Enter contact details for employers safely and securely, then use the intuitive filter functionality to support targeted and meaningful employer engagement

Action: To support employers to understand working with young people with SEND, use inclusion mag to support best practice: Inclusion mag for Employers.



Benchmark 6:

Experiences Of Workplaces

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful experiences of workplaces.
- By the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further meaningful experience.

Gatsby have provided a definition of what constitutes a meaningful experience:

A meaningful experience is one in which the pupil has an opportunity to explore what it is like to work in that environment, the skills valued in the workplace, recruitment processes or what it takes to be successful.

Throughout the careers programme, these experiences could be in-person or a combination of in-person and virtual where appropriate. Both pupils and employers should be supported to prepare for the experience.

Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, and young people with SEND. This should be matched to their individual need and identified programme of study.

A meaningful experience will:

» Have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and the pupil.

» Be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the pupil.

» Involve an extensive two-way interaction between pupils and employees.

» Include opportunities for pupils to meet a range of different people from the workplace.

» Include opportunities for pupils to perform a task set by the employer or produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace.

» Include feedback from the employer to pupils on their work.

» Be followed by opportunities for pupils to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through their experience.

Schools, colleges and ITPs can take into account any part-time work a young person may have, if it genuinely offers them a meaningful experience.

Definitions:

What are 'first-hand experiences of workplaces'?

There are several models for work experience that can be impact-led, underpinned by specific learning outcomes and aligned to the wider curriculum. A progressive series of experiences of work may be in-person or virtual and could include:

1. The school or special school as a workplace
2. Workplace visits
3. Work shadowing
4. Work experience placements
5. Volunteering/social action

"Schools, colleges, ITPs and employers are creating effective programmes of experiences of workplaces, with multiple elements delivered at carefully planned points. They include workplace visits, shorter episodic workplace projects, work shadowing and extended work experience." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 6

EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES

Embed experiences of workplaces within progressive careers provision

Define specific, measurable learning outcomes for pupils to achieve during their experiences of the workplace. Set clear expectations and reflection milestones for both pupils and employers to ensure the experience is mutually beneficial and impactful.

"Research shows that young people who have had multi-day experiences of workplaces tend to have higher wages when they are in full-time employment." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

How to: Access the Understanding how to embed progressive employer encounters and work experiences resource and checklist.

How to: Access the Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision (Careers Learning Journeys) resource for support in mapping your entire provision, inclding a progressive approach to work experience.

How to: Encourage employer partners you work with to complete the easy to use online tool to identify, compare and improve engagement and performance against the Employer Standards, which include 'Provide meaningful opportunities'.

Getting Started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 6: EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES

Reforming your work experience programmes

By providing multiple, varied work experiences – encompassing both conventional placements and innovative, non-traditional opportunities – you can create a progressive Careers Learning Journeys that equips pupils with what they need to make informed and aspirational decisions and to be careers ready. Start to consider your school's or special school's approach to modern work experience.

Action: See the Modern Work Experience section of the CEC website to find out more about modern work experience.

Access Careers guidance and access for education and training providers

Statutory guidance for schools and guidance for further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent training providers for detail on the DfE's ambition for work experience.

Making it meaningful

Action: Use the checklist in the Understanding how to embed impact driven modern work experience resource when planning all experiences of workplaces.





Benchmark 7:

Encounters With Further And Higher Education

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including academic, technical and vocational routes. This should incorporate learning in schools, colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), universities and in the workplace.

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful encounters with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and ITPs.
- By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying to higher education should have had at least two visits to higher education providers to meet staff and learners.

Gatsby have provided a definition of what constitutes a meaningful encounter with further and higher education:

A meaningful encounter gives the young person the opportunity to explore what it is like to learn, develop and succeed in that environment. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and learners/ trainees. Throughout a careers programme, encounters should be sequenced so that a young person can build up a clear picture of opportunities available to them.

Experiences or encounters could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual and could include providers delivering sessions in a school, college or ITP, as well as young people visiting the provider. Young people and providers should be supported to prepare for the encounter. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with SEND.

A meaningful encounter will:

» Have a clear purpose, which is shared with the provider and the pupil.

» Be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the pupil.

» Involve a two-way interaction between pupils and the provider.

» Include information about the provider, their recruitment and selection processes, the qualifications they offer and the careers these could lead to.

» Include a description of what learning or training with the provider is like.

» Be followed by opportunities for pupils to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through the encounter.

"A meaningful encounter can take many forms. Encounters could include talks with guest speakers from different providers, workshops and careers fairs where young people can interact with different students and staff from providers. Institutions should determine the most appropriate approaches for each of their learners." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 7

ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Supporting equity of understanding of all pathways

"All young people deserve to know and understand the full range of options open to them, and this knowledge can have a profound impact." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Ensure pupils are supported to consider the full range of pathways with equity, including academic, technical and vocational routes. In addition to progressive encounters for pupils with providers of all pathways, consider how to support staff and parents and carers to fully understand the value and benefit of all pathways and to challenge misconceptions. For those young people with an EHCP, next steps should be considered and discussed in the annual review process throughout the young person's time with you and in consultation with parents/carers and other multi-agency professionals involved in the EHCP process. This will allow you to establish all potential pathways relevant for the young person.

How to: Access the Understanding how to embed a progressive approach to encounters with further and higher education resource.

"Partnerships are crucial to the implementation of the benchmarks. As well as employers, each schools college and ITP should decide who they will work with." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Action: Find and contact delivery organisations to support encounters with further and higher education via the CEC Provider Directory.

Action: For SEND learners, the local offer (specific to geographical region) can support with relevant options alongside multi-agency links through the EHCP process.

Getting Started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 7: ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Supporting equity of understanding of all pathways

"The opportunity that the school gave me to visit a university was incredible. I had never been to one before so it was difficult to imagine myself there. It was absolutely amazing to meet tutors, current students, sit in a lecture and see where I would live. I've applied to university now and I'll be the first in my family to get a degree." Year 13 Student

Access resources and support to ensure that pupils, staff and parents and carers are supported to understand all pathways with equity.

Action: Encourage all staff to complete the free online module Teachers Part 1: Understanding Career Pathways via The Careers & Enterprise Academy.

Action: Signpost parents and carers to CEC resources and activities to enable effective careers conversations at home.

Action: Use the checklist in the Understanding how to embed a progressive approach to encounters with further and higher education resource.



Benchmark 8:

Personal Guidance

Understanding the benchmarks: Benchmark and sub-benchmark detail

Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance meetings with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These meetings should be available for all pupils whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be scheduled to meet their individual needs. The Careers Leader should work closely with the Careers Adviser, SEND coordinator (SENDCO and other key staff to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded in the careers programme.

- Every pupil should have at least one personal guidance meeting with a Careers Adviser by the age of 16, and a further meeting by the age of 18. Meetings should be scheduled in the careers programme to meet the needs of pupils.

- Information about personal guidance support and how to access it should be communicated to pupils and parents and carers, including through the school website.

Definitions:

What is a 'personal guidance meeting'?

Personal guidance delivered by appropriately qualified Careers Advisers is an essential part of a careers guidance programme.

Personal guidance meetings should be young person-centred and tailored to their individual needs. Personal guidance meetings should be conducted by qualified careers guidance professionals in appropriate spaces*. Additionally, personal guidance meetings should be embedded within a progressive careers programme and sequenced to allow young people to prepare for, reflect on, and implement the plans they formulate. * N.B CDI guidance recommends that at least 45 minutes are allowed for every personal guidance meeting.

"My careers meeting helped to reduce my confusion and helped me make sense of everything. My Careers Adviser helped me think about practicalities for me and I really think they helped me to make an educated decision not only about my next step but my next, next step and even the step after that." Year 12 student, Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

What does it mean for a Careers Adviser to be trained to an appropriate level?

As the relevant professional body, it is for the Careers Development Institute (CDI) to determine the appropriate level of qualification. The CDI makes a distinction in this regard between offering 'information and advice' and offering 'guidance'.

It notes:

"… as a minimum the CDI states a level 4 qualification to offer careers information and advice and a level 6 or level 7 career development qualification to offer career guidance."

Further, the CDI advises that:

"Considered to be 'fully qualified', only those holding a careers development qualification of level 6 or level 7 are recognised as being qualified to offer career guidance and coaching."

Planning for impact: How to meet Gatsby Benchmark 8

PERSONAL GUIDANCE

Tailor personal guidance to individual learner needs

"Young people particularly want to be able to access personal guidance before making key decisions and before transition points." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Work with key colleagues to identify and consider the timing and regularity of personal guidance based on pupil need. Robust systems should be in place to ensure that personal guidance meetings are responsive to pupil need and scheduled appropriately, including whenever significant study or career choices are being made. For learners with SEND, this should involve all multi-agency professionals and an appropriately trained Careers Adviser. Consider how to effectively engage parents and carers in personal guidance.

"Careers Advisers told us they are most effective when they are known by staff, are visible to young people, parents and carers, and have access to data to inform their personal guidance meetings with young people. In some of the most impactful approaches, Careers Advisers are highly regarded, their work is integrated with different departments in the school, college or ITP, such as pastoral teams, and they contribute to the overall development and evaluation of the careers programme." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

How to: Access the Understanding how to develop progressive and responsive careers provision (Careers Learning Journeys) resource.

Access to trained Careers Advisers

"Personal guidance delivered by professional Careers Advisers is an essential part of a careers guidance programme." Gatsby Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years

Make sure every pupil has the opportunity to meet with an adviser who is trained to an appropriate level. For SEND learners, this should be a Careers Adviser who can advise on appropriate pathways for the young person relevant to need and has experience of working with SEND learners.

How to: Use the CDI guide for best practice in commissioning independent careers guidance services, and use the 'Find a Registered Career Development Professional' tool on the CDI website.

Parent and carer engagement

Time spent with a Careers Adviser is valuable, so ensuring all involved, including parents and carers, understand its value and purpose is crucial to maximise impact.

Good practice would be to ensure:

- Parents/carers and young people know in advance when the sessions are happening and why
- Parents and carers are equipped with the tools to have meaningful and informed conversations before and after these sessions, remembering that some families may require additional support to effectively access and utilise this information
- Parents and carers can ask questions

How to: Access the CEC resources and support for parents and carers, including the FREE Parental Engagement in Careers CPD, to ensure parents and carers add value to your approach to personal guidance.

Getting Started: Essential steps for success

Gatsby Benchmark 8: PERSONAL GUIDANCE

Supporting effective careers conversations

Support all staff to have effective careers conversations with learners

Action: Signpost staff to the free online module Wider Education Workforce: Careers Conversations via The Careers & Enterprise Academy.

Action: : Support your SENCO to access the free online module SENCO: Understanding Pathways and Career Opportunities via The Careers & Enterprise Academy

Action: Access the Parental Engagement: Prompts to support parents and carers to add value to personal guidance meetings by carrying on the conversation at home.

Commissioning Personal Guidance provision

The CDI provides resources and support for effective commissioning of personal guidance. See Careers Guidance in Schools and Colleges: A Guide to Best Practice and Commissioning Independent Career Guidance Services.

Action: Use the CDI guide for best practice in commissioning independent careers guidance services, referencing the useful templates provided in the guide (starting on page 18).



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