



Department  
for Education

# **Careers guidance and access for education and training providers**

**Statutory guidance for schools and  
guidance for further education colleges  
and sixth form colleges**

**January 2023**

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# Summary

## About this guidance

This is statutory guidance from the Department for Education (the department) issued under [Section 45A of the Education Act 1997](#). Maintained schools and academies in England must have regard to it when carrying out their duty to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of providers to access pupils to inform them about technical education and apprenticeships. Maintained schools, academies, further education colleges and sixth form colleges must also have regard to it when carrying out their duty or funding requirement to provide pupils with independent careers guidance.

“**Independent**” is defined as external to the school or college. External sources of careers support could include employer visits, mentoring, website, telephone and helpline access and personal guidance provided externally to the school or college. Taken together, the external sources must include information on the range of education and training options, including apprenticeships. Personal guidance does not have to be external – it can be delivered by school or college staff, if trained. Where this advice or any other element of the careers programme is internal, it must be supplemented by external sources of support to ensure compliance with the legal duty.

“**Careers guidance**” is understood in this document to be the full range of activity delivered under the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

Colleges also have a legal requirement to provide all college students with guidance materials and a wide range of up-to-date reference materials relating to careers education and career opportunities, as per [section 45 of the Education Act 1997](#).

Providers should check their grant funding agreements for requirements which relate to the provision of careers guidance. The department encourages academies without the requirement and other providers of post-16 education and training, including independent learning providers, to follow this guidance as a statement of good practice.

We use the terms “**must**” and “**should**” throughout the guidance. We use the term “must” when the person in question is legally required to do something and “should” when the advice set out should be followed unless there is good reason not to.

The use of the word ‘**school**’ in this guidance refers to maintained schools, academies and free schools. A ‘**maintained school**’ is a community, foundation or

voluntary school, community or foundation special school (other than one established in a hospital) that provides secondary education, or pupil referral unit.

The use of the word '**college**' in this guidance refers to both further education (FE) and sixth form colleges.

The use of the word '**student**' in this guidance refers to pupils, students, learners, and young people. Where another term is used, such as 'pupil', this is used to reflect the original wording of legislation or the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The use of the word '**parent**' in this guidance refers to parents, carers, and guardians of pupils, students, learners, and young people. For the purposes of this guidance, the word 'parent' includes all those with parental responsibility, including parents, guardians, and those who care for the young person.

## **Expiry or review date**

This guidance will be reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

## **What legislation does this guidance refer to?**

- Section 42A, 42B, 45 and 45A of the Education Act 1997
- Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- Schedule 4 (15) of the School Information (England) Regulations 2008

## **Who is this guidance for?**

This guidance is for:

- governing bodies, proprietors, school and college leaders, careers leaders and staff in maintained schools, academies, free schools (including alternative provision academies and free schools) and colleges (that provide secondary education and post-16 education);
- local authorities that maintain pupil referral units that provide secondary education and post-16 education.

The guidance applies to:

- All students in school from year 7 to year 13;
- All students in college up to and including the age of 18;

- Students aged up to 25 with a current [education, health and care plan](#) in place under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

## Main points

The provider access legislation (occasionally referred to as the 'Baker Clause') requires all schools and academies to provide opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all year 8 to 13 pupils to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Through the Skills and Post-16 Act 2022, the government has strengthened this legislation by introducing a minimum number of six provider encounters that every school must provide and, for the first time, introduces parameters around the duration and content of these encounters so that we can ensure they are of high quality. The department asks all maintained schools and academies to make sure they have put in place arrangements to comply fully with these changes once the new legislation comes into force on 1 January 2023. We have introduced a ladder of support and intervention to set out a range of support that we will make available to help all schools to comply with the provider access duty and the steps we will take in the event of concerns about persistent non-compliance.

With the government's reforms to technical education and skills there will be an increasing need for schools and colleges to work in partnership with employers, careers advisers, local authorities and other education and training providers to support students to prepare for the workplace and to make informed choices about their next step in education or training. To support this, the department is funding The Careers & Enterprise Company to support schools and colleges to develop careers programmes in line with their careers requirements and the Gatsby Benchmarks. The department also funds the National Careers Service to provide free, impartial careers information, advice and guidance to students, parents, and teachers through a website, web chat service and telephone helpline.

Changes made to this guidance include:

- The 'access to schools for education and training providers' section has been revised following changes made through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, these changes will come into effect on 1 January 2023. Changes to the provider access legislation includes the minimum requirement to provide six encounters during year 8-13.
- We have introduced a ladder of support and intervention in relation to the provider access legislation.

- Information to clarify the role of middle schools in meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks.

These changes are further to the minor updates that were made to this statutory guidance on 31 August 2022, following the commencement of the Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Act 2022, which means that all schools and academies must now secure independent careers guidance for pupils in school years 7 to 13. The associated duties and equivalent requirements in funding agreements continue to rest with schools and colleges.

# Introduction: what governors, school and college leaders and Careers Leaders need to know

## The importance of careers education and guidance

High quality careers education and guidance in school or college is critical to young people's futures. It helps to prepare them for the workplace by providing a clear understanding of the world of work including the routes to jobs and careers that they might find engaging and rewarding. It supports them to acquire the self-development and career management skills they need to achieve positive employment destinations. This helps students to choose their pathways, improve their life opportunities and contribute to a productive and successful economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the economy, education and the opportunities open to students. [Research](#) has shown that school and college leaders recognise that careers guidance has become more important than ever as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The department urges senior leaders to back their careers team, especially their Careers Leader, and to invest in personal guidance provided by a qualified careers adviser. This will allow the continued delivery of high-quality, progressive careers programmes that support all students to acquire the knowledge, skills and confidence to fulfil their potential. This statutory guidance explains the support we have put in place to help schools and colleges achieve this.

## The updated 'provider access legislation: supporting students to understand the full range of education and training options

Schools and colleges have a responsibility to set students on the path that will secure the best outcome which will enable them to progress in education and work and give employers the highly skilled people they need. That means schools and colleges must act impartially, in line with their statutory duty or contractual requirement, and not show bias towards any route, be that academic or technical. They should promote a full range of technical options.

Schools have an important role in correcting the imbalance in careers information which means that [in years 9 and 10 far fewer students have been spoken to about technical choices in comparison to academic routes](#), and only 4% of young people start an apprenticeship after their GCSEs. Schools must open their doors to other education and training providers, in line with their statutory responsibilities under the provider access legislation, putting in place a range of opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to talk to all year 8 to 13 pupils about their education or training offer. This is vital to ensure that all pupils are aware of the



benefits of apprenticeships, T Levels, HTQs and other approved technical education qualifications and can consider them, alongside academic options, when making decisions about their next steps. Further details about what schools must do to comply with the provider access legislation, which include details about the new requirements of the legislation that come into force on 1 January 2023, are on page 40- 53.

## **The Skills for Jobs white paper**

Schools and colleges should always focus on the student and what is best for them. Although our universities are world-class, it is not the only choice: in many cases, a college course or apprenticeship can offer better outcomes. A review of post-18 education and funding showed that only 66% of graduates were in high-skilled employment in 2019 and we have a smaller proportion of people with higher-level technical qualifications in this country compared to competitors like Germany and Canada, for example. Research shows that in the UK men with a higher technical (level 4) qualification earn on average £5,100 more at age 30 than those with a degree (level 6). For women achieving a higher technical (level 5) qualification, the difference is £2,700.

The department's white paper, '[Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#)' sets out how we will reform further education so it supports people to get the skills our economy needs. We are building on our successful apprenticeship reforms, where a focus on employer needs and standards transformed apprenticeships from a second-rate option to a prestigious choice. We will apply this principle across post-16 technical education and training. We will continue to roll out T Levels, to prepare students for entry into skilled employment or higher levels of technical study, including apprenticeships. We will reform higher technical education with a new approval system based on employer-led standards and expand our flagship Institutes of Technology programme to every part of the country.

The white paper recognises the importance of continuing to improve careers guidance in schools and colleges so that students can make an informed choice between technical and academic options and students following [16 to 19 study programmes](#) can focus on progression to education or training at the next level or to employment. The white paper confirms that the department will continue to roll out Careers Hubs, Careers Leader training, digital support and the Enterprise Adviser Network, to extend the support that is proven to accelerate progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks to more schools and colleges. This was recommended by the [Independent Review of Post-18 Funding](#).

In exchange for this continued investment, schools and colleges must comply with their statutory careers duties and equivalent funding agreement requirements. They

should continue to make every effort to improve their performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks. The [CEC Insights brief](#) shows that in 2021 to 2022, schools and colleges achieved on average 4.9 benchmarks out of 8, compared to 1.87 in 2016 to 2017. This means that with the right level of support, the benchmarks represent a demanding but achievable standard that the department expects all schools and colleges to meet.

## The careers system

Following the implementation of the department's 2017 careers strategy, England now has the foundations of a coherent and well-established careers education system. This section describes the framework that is in place to improve young people's careers guidance and the support available to help schools and colleges to develop their careers programmes.

## The Gatsby Benchmarks

The department expects all secondary schools and colleges to use the internationally recognised [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) to develop a careers programme that increases opportunities for students to access everything from experiences of the workplace and personal guidance with a careers adviser, to engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities. The benchmarks are non-statutory but support schools and colleges by providing a framework around which they can develop their careers programme in line with their legal requirements to provide independent careers to pupils throughout their secondary education (11 to 18 year olds) and students aged up to 25 with an education, health and care plan. The benchmarks also support schools to fulfil their statutory duty to enable access of training providers to showcase to students what technical education and apprenticeships can offer. The Gatsby Foundation has produced a [handbook](#) that details the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and provides information on how to work towards them (a printable table of the Gatsby Benchmarks can be found on [page 9](#)). Further benchmark toolkits for [schools](#), [colleges](#) and those working with [students with special educational needs or disabilities \(SEND\)](#) are available from The Careers & Enterprise Company and [Good Career Guidance](#) for the SEND sector from The Gatsby Foundation. They provide case studies of best practice and practical suggestions for implementing the eight benchmarks. These toolkits are part of a [Resource Directory](#), a curated one-stop shop of high quality, trusted careers tools, guidance and information.

[A successful pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks](#) with sixteen education providers in the North East Local Enterprise Partnership area took place between 2015 and 2017. The evaluation of the pilot shows the transformation in careers provision that took

place, highlighting the importance of regional coordination and facilitators, institution leadership and self-evaluation and data. The Careers & Enterprise Company, funded by the department, is expanding this careers infrastructure to help schools and colleges across England to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks.

## The Careers & Enterprise Company

The Careers & Enterprise Company has established networks between employers and schools and colleges to increase students' exposure to the world of work. The Enterprise Adviser Network recruits volunteers from a range of business sectors to work with schools and colleges to strengthen employer links and deliver high-quality careers education plans. Around 3,750 Enterprise Advisers are working with schools and colleges across the country. Over 400 major employers – Cornerstones – are driving the delivery of encounters for young people in Opportunity Areas and Careers Hubs across England.

Careers leadership is becoming established in schools and colleges and is crucial to improving careers provision. Schools and colleges are expected to appoint a Careers Leader who has the skills, commitment and backing from their senior leadership team, including protected time that enables the Careers Leader to carry out the role effectively. Schools and colleges must name the Careers Leader and publish their contact details on their website. The Careers & Enterprise Company has introduced [free training programmes](#), supported by funding for bursaries, to allow Careers Leaders to participate in training. [An evaluation of the Careers Leaders](#) training found more than nine in ten Careers Leaders say that careers provision has improved since [the department's 2017 Careers Strategy](#) with the Gatsby Benchmarks being identified as a game changer.

In September 2018, Careers Hubs were launched across the country, each with a dedicated Hub Lead bringing together a group of secondary schools and colleges with partners in the business, public, education and voluntary sectors to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks. By October 2022, 4,500 (90%) of schools and colleges in England were part of a Careers Hub. This means more students are benefiting from the Careers Hub network which is accelerating the quality of careers provision.

This raised profile of careers and shared understanding of what works is reflected in the increasing numbers of schools and colleges using [Compass](#), the online evaluation tool, to self-assess their careers programme and track their improvements. Compass data is confidential to the school or college concerned, but they may choose to share the data with governors, parents, colleagues, and Ofsted. All [eligible](#) schools can now upgrade to [Compass+](#) which offers the facility to collect student level data. Compass+ helps schools benchmark, manage, track and report on their school's careers provision. Compass+ integrates with a school's Management Information System and pulls in pupil level data. Schools can then

personalise careers interventions to the individual student, with the aim of supporting more targeted careers programme planning and delivery.

The Compass data charts the sustained progress that schools and colleges are making with improvements across every dimension of careers support. The Careers & Enterprise Company produces an annual publication showing how careers guidance is developing in England's schools and colleges.

The <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/trends-in-careers-education-2021/> [CEC Insight briefing](#) shows that in 2022, as in previous years, schools and colleges in Careers Hubs reported stronger performance on the Gatsby Benchmarks. Schools and colleges in Hubs for four years fully achieved an average of 5.6 benchmarks, compared to 4.0 for those outside of Hubs and 2.9 for those outside of the CEC network.

## **The National Careers Service**

The National Careers Service provides free impartial information, advice and guidance on education, training and work to adults and young people aged 13 years and over. Individuals can access support through a website, telephone helpline and web chat service. Advisers can support young people to make informed choices by providing insights into all the different routes including apprenticeships, traineeships, other technical qualifications and academic options. This can supplement support available to students through the school or college, particularly outside of term time. Transition support after exam results is often critical in securing a successful destination for school and college leavers.

The Careers & Enterprise Company and National Careers Service are aligning their activities, including developing shared terminology, a common approach to labour market information and supporting a seamless transition for young people from school and college into further education, training or work.

## **Accountability and quality**

Schools and colleges should understand and plan for how careers guidance features in Ofsted's [Education Inspection Framework](#) and in the individual handbooks for maintained schools and academies and further education and skills. The education inspection framework includes careers guidance as part of a personal development judgement. [Ofsted is legally required](#) to comment, in an inspection report, on the careers guidance provided at colleges to 16- to- 18-year-olds and students aged up to 25 with an education, health and care plan. Ofsted inspectors will also inspect and comment on careers advice on short and full inspections of all further education and skills providers as appropriate. The Ofsted [school inspection handbook](#) includes a focus on careers guidance, including by clarifying that inspectors will always report

where a school falls short of the requirements of the provider access legislation, as well as considering how it affects a school's inspection grade. In assessing a secondary school's personal development offer, inspectors will assess the quality of careers information, education, advice and guidance and how well it benefits pupils in choosing and deciding on their next steps. This will include looking at the school's implementation of the provider access arrangements to enable a range of education and training providers to speak to students in years 8 to 13. Ofsted expects that a good school or college will prepare all students for future success in education, employment or training, provide unbiased information about potential next steps and provide good quality, meaningful opportunities for encounters with the world of work.

A successful careers guidance programme will also be reflected in higher numbers of students progressing to positive and sustained destinations such as apprenticeships, technical routes, school sixth forms, sixth form colleges, further education colleges, universities or employment. [Destination measures](#) provide clear and comparable information on the success of schools and colleges in helping all their students take qualifications that offer them the best opportunity to continue in education, training or employment. Local authorities have a range of statutory duties to track the destinations for young people, and to identify and support young people who are not in education, employment and training. To facilitate this schools should ensure that they maintain contacts with the local authority in their area. The department publish key stage 4 and 16 to 18 (key stage 5) education destinations in [performance tables on gov.uk](#), meaning that they are now an established part of the accountability system. The Gatsby Benchmark 3 section of this guidance provides further detail on destinations data.

Schools and colleges can gain formal accreditation of their careers programme through the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) - the single national quality award for careers education, information, advice and guidance. The Standard is owned by the [Quality in Careers Consortium](#) which involves the major professional associations of school and college leaders alongside the Career Development Institute and Careers England. The Standard is fully aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks and incorporates Compass and Compass+ into its processes. The Standard seeks additional evidence of outcomes for students from the school or college careers programme. As the Standard is externally assessed by one of the [Licensed Awarding Bodies](#), appointed by the Consortium, student voice is a key part of assessors evidence gathering on the impact the careers programme has had on students' career-related learning. We strongly recommend that all schools and colleges work towards the single national Quality in Careers Standard to support the development of their careers programme.

We require colleges to hold the [matrix Standard](#) if they are in receipt of funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency adult education budget. The matrix Standard is a national quality standard that helps organisations to assess, measure and improve the management and delivery of their information, advice and/or

guidance services. The matrix Standard focuses on leadership and management, how the college provides the service, the quality of delivery including how useful customers find the service and how the college evaluates and continuously develops the service.

The rest of this document provides further detail on what schools and colleges are expected to do to meet their statutory and contractual careers requirements, structured around the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Throughout this guidance, the department encourages schools and colleges to consider using digital resources and online communications to deliver virtual careers experiences if activities cannot be delivered in person. It is important to make sure the activities are high quality and meaningful for students. The Careers & Enterprise Company has developed a [Can-do Guide](#), in collaboration with The Gatsby Foundation. The National Careers Service has resources to support digital or virtual experiences including '[making the most of virtual jobs fairs](#)' and '[how to find a virtual internship](#)'.

## **What is the governing body expected to do?**

In schools and colleges, the governing body should provide clear advice and guidance on which the school or college leader can base a strategic careers plan which meets the legal or contractual requirements of the school or college. The plan should be developed in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks and informed by the requirements and expectations set out in this document. This plan should show how the careers programme will be implemented and how its impact will be measured. Every school and college should have a member of their governing body who takes a strategic interest in careers education and guidance and encourages employer engagement. The governing body must make sure that independent careers guidance is provided to all pupils throughout their secondary education (11 to 18 year olds) and students aged up to 25 with an education, health and care plan, and that it is:

- presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option;
- includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes;
- guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the students to whom it is given.

In schools, the governing body must also make sure that arrangements are in place to allow a range of education and training providers to access all students in years 8 to 13 to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships, and that a policy statement setting out these arrangements is published (the legal requirements of the provider access legislation). Following the



changes to the duty, the governing body must ensure schools comply with the minimum requirements (page 42). This should be part of a broader approach to ensuring that students are aware of the full range of academic and technical routes available to them at each transition point.

The CEC has produced [Guidance for Middle Schools](#), which will help Middle Schools understand their requirements and how best to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks.

[The governance handbook](#) provides information on governors' other legal duties, for example making sure the careers programme and name of the Careers Leader are published on the website.

## **Compliance with legal duties, funding requirements and statutory guidance**

Where someone has a complaint about a maintained school not complying with these duties or considers a school has not complied with this statutory guidance, these should be resolved locally. This will usually include considering a complaint in line with the school's published complaints procedure, which all schools are required to have by law. Complainants should be able to lodge their complaints or objections easily and we expect governing boards or schools to consider complaints impartially. If a complaint remains unresolved and is raised with the department, the department can review whether the school has failed to have regard to this statutory guidance. The department may take further action if, following a complaint, it finds fault with a school's policies. Such action could include an official or a minister from the department writing to the school or the use of the Secretary of State's intervention powers to require appropriate remedial action to be taken as per section 496 and 497 of the [Education Act 1996](#).

Before escalating an academy complaint to the department, the complainant should first complain to the academy and follow the academy's complaints procedure. We cannot change an academy's decision about a complaint. The role of the department is to make sure the academy handles your complaint properly. For further information please refer to [How ESFA handles complaints about academies](#).

The department has evidence that some schools are not complying with the provider access legislation which is why we have taken steps to strengthen the law. For the provider access legislation, we have introduced a ladder of support and intervention which sets out the range of support that we will make available to help all schools to comply with their statutory duty and the steps we will take in the event of concerns about persistent non-compliance, more details can be found on page 51.

Colleges comply with the conditions of their contracts and department funding rules. For further information on complaints about colleges and training providers please refer to the department's [Complaints procedure](#).



# Meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks

## Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

**Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors, employers and other agencies.**

- Every school and college should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it.
- The careers programme should be published on the school's or college's website in a way that enables students, parents, school/college staff and employers to access and understand it.
- The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from students, parents, school/college staff and employers as part of the evaluation process.

This benchmark provides a foundation for the other seven benchmarks. A stable careers programme allows schools and colleges to meet their legal or contractual careers requirements by offering a range of high-quality and inspiring, progressive careers activities that enable students to make well-informed decisions about education, training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities. The careers programme should have strong backing from the governors and senior leadership team and be embedded in school or college structures through the development of a strategic careers plan.

The careers programme should inform young people, teachers, parents and employers what each student can expect from their careers education and guidance, in each year at the school or college. Schools and colleges should identify and agree learning outcomes for students taking part in the activities organised under the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Schools and colleges can consider using the [Career Development Framework](#), published by the Career Development Institute, to shape career learning outcomes within the careers programme.

Careers Leaders are the critical factor in the development and implementation of an effective strategic careers plan and of a progressive careers programme, developed in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks. Every school and college should appoint a named person to the Careers Leader role: a dedicated professional who is a member of the senior leadership team, or works directly with them, and who is responsible and accountable for the delivery of the school or college careers

programme. Careers Leaders should be well supported by the senior management team and by their peers. This role is distinct from the careers adviser or college careers services, who provide personal guidance to students and offer specific expertise on the labour market, educational pathways and progression routes and career decision-making. The Careers & Enterprise Company has published a guide, [‘Understanding the role of the Careers Leader’](#), that defines the responsibilities of the role. They can be summarised under four main headings:

- Leadership – a good leader who takes responsibility for developing, running and reporting on the school or college careers programme.
- Management – a skilful manager who is able to plan careers activities, manage the careers budget and, in some cases, manage other staff involved in the delivery of careers guidance.
- Coordination – a careful coordinator of staff from across the school or college and from outside.
- Networking – a good networker who can establish and develop links with employers, education and training providers and careers organisations.

Schools and colleges have the autonomy to shape the Careers Leader role in line with their priorities but should consider evidence about what works and examples of good practice. [Research](#) with 750 Careers Leaders identifies that the amount of time spent on careers leadership and the allocation of a budget are both factors associated with achieving a higher number of Gatsby Benchmarks. Schools and colleges should allocate sufficient time and resource for Careers Leaders and discuss priorities to ensure that the time is used to best effect.

The department is funding The Careers & Enterprise Company to develop the Careers Leader role through training, resources, peer learning, business connections and wider networks. An [independent evaluation](#) showed that the department’s investment in this training has improved practice in schools and colleges. In addition, The Careers & Enterprise Company are developing free online learning modules which will include, online [Careers Leader induction and modules](#) for key education stakeholders (including governors and school and college leaders) covering careers awareness. Schools and college leaders should meet staff following completion of Careers Leader training to discuss how they are going to implement their learning and improve provision in the school or college.

The Careers & Enterprise Company’s Enterprise Adviser Network has built a national network of Enterprise Coordinators co-funded with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to help schools and colleges increase engagement with employers. Enterprise Coordinators work with clusters of up to 20 schools and colleges, connecting them with local employers and careers providers and supporting achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks. In addition, each school or

college in the Network is supported by an Enterprise Adviser – a senior volunteer from business – who can provide strategic support in developing a careers and enterprise plan and build employer networks. All schools and colleges are encouraged to [sign up](#).

Careers Hubs build on the support that the Enterprise Adviser Network provides, by co-ordinating activity and building capacity across schools and colleges in the Hub. [Evidence](#) published by CEC in October 2022 shows that schools and colleges in Careers Hubs outperformed those outside of Hubs on every benchmark. The department [requires](#) maintained schools and expects academies and colleges to publish the following information about their careers programme on their websites:

- The name, email address and telephone number of the Careers Leader;
- A summary of the careers programme, including details of how students, parents, teachers and employers may access information about the careers programme;
- How the school or college measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on students;
- The date of the school's or college's next review of the information published.

This information should relate to the delivery of independent careers guidance in accordance with legal or contractual requirements and the expectations set out in this statutory guidance. In particular, schools and colleges should demonstrate how they are working towards meeting all eight Gatsby Benchmarks, as part of a summary of the careers programme that includes aims, objectives and activities provided for each year group. Schools should also incorporate the policy statement on provider access that they must publish under section 42B of the Education Act 1997 (Annex A).

Regular feedback on the careers programme should be invited from students, parents, teachers and employers. This should feed into overall development plans for the school or college to make it easier to evaluate and improve the careers programme to meet the needs of students.

## Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information

**Every student, and their parents (where appropriate), should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.**

- By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options.
- During their study programme all students should access and use information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions about study options.
- Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children.

Schools and colleges should inform students whether courses they are considering lead to good or poor career outcomes, by referring students and their parents to impartial sources of information that allow direct comparisons between different courses. The [Get the Jump campaign](#) on the National Careers Service website promotes the full range of exciting opportunities available to young people to help them work out their next move. Information about [apprenticeships](#), [T levels](#) and [HTQs](#), including course finder tools, is available on gov.uk. The department's ambition is to update the National Careers Service website to become a single source of government-assured careers information. [Discover Uni](#) is the official source of information and guidance on higher education in the UK. The site allows users to search for and compare information and data for individual undergraduate courses across the UK, alongside researching other sources of advice they may need such as application and funding information.

Schools and colleges should use labour market information (LMI) including job roles, pay and vacancies to highlight trends and explore what different sectors might look like in the future. This will equip students to understand the potential opportunities and challenges within each industry and begin preparing for the world of work. LMI can broaden horizons and promote social mobility by helping students to identify careers with good prospects that they may not have considered. Schools and colleges should share information about a diverse range of progression pathways, including technical routes, to strengthen the capacity of students to make effective choices and transitions. Organisations like Local Enterprise Partnerships (find your

LEP on the [CITB website](#)), Chambers of Commerce and local authorities can help schools and colleges to access and interpret local LMI. Careers advisers are expert at interpreting LMI and using this with students to enable them to make effective career decisions.

The government-funded '[LMI for All](#)' service connects and standardises existing national sources of high quality and reliable LMI with the aim of informing careers decisions. This data is made freely available via a single access point for software developers to use in websites and applications to bring the data to life for a range of audiences. It is not a careers website in its own right. The service provides two [widgets](#) - Careerometer and Skillsometer - which are free and easy to embed directly onto a school or college website. These widgets have been designed for students (but can be used by others) and provide an easy way to access LMI. The National Careers Service uses this LMI to inform more than 850 job profiles on its website.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), through the Jobcentre Plus 'Support for Schools' programme, provides information to schools and colleges (including mainstream secondary, SEN and PRU schools as well as sixth form and FE colleges), their students, teachers and parents on the local labour market and employer expectations. Jobcentre Plus school advisers look to respond to local schools and colleges who identify students at risk of leaving education without entering employment or further education or training.

The initiative is designed to facilitate school-to-work transition, training or further study for young people better suited to a vocational qualification, such as traineeships or apprenticeships, instead of a traditional academic route, to help them fulfil their career ambitions.

## Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil

**Young people have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's or college's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.**

- A school's or college's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.
- Schools and colleges should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each student, and subsequent agreed decisions. All students should have access to these records to support their career development.
- The records of advice given should be integrated with those given at the previous stage of the student's education (including their secondary school) where these are made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition.
- Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave school. Colleges should collect and maintain accurate data for each student on their education, training or employment destinations.

The school or college should tailor careers activities and educational goals to the needs of each student, taking account of their prior knowledge and skills, the choices and transitions they face and any additional support that may be needed to overcome barriers to progression. Schools and colleges should challenge the stereotypes and disparities that exist across different courses and jobs to ensure that students from all backgrounds, including those with SEND, consider the widest possible range of careers. This includes using LMI, destinations patterns and employers in a range of jobs to address, for example, gender differences in the take-up of STEM subjects or in the proportion of students pursuing apprenticeships.

Schools and colleges should keep comprehensive and accurate careers education records. This helps students, parents, teachers, Careers Leaders and careers advisers to maintain consistent advice and keep track of agreed actions and next steps. Students can draw on their careers experiences to showcase their skills and develop a compelling story for applications and interviews. The careers education record is most effective when integrated with academic and welfare records to give a more complete picture of progress.

Compass+ makes it easier to target and personalise support by allowing schools to record and track individual student careers interventions. It offers student-level data and integrates with school's management information system data for effective and targeted careers programme planning and delivery.

Schools and colleges should collect and analyse education, training and employment destinations data for all students. This data may help schools and colleges to identify pathways, subjects or courses with low take-up that could be addressed by changes to the careers programme.

Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave school or from the end of KS4, whichever is sooner. To collect individual level data, schools can:

- collect the data themselves by contacting former pupils. Schools will need to be aware that the collection, retention and later use of pupils' contact details will involve the processing of personal data, for which schools will need to satisfy themselves they have the proper legal basis.
- establish an effective data-sharing agreement with their local authority. Local authorities (LAs) have a statutory duty to track and support all 16- and 17-year-olds in their area. This duty extends to young people with SEND up to the age of 25. Schools and colleges have a corresponding statutory duty to collect and share data with LAs to support this. They do not need consent to collect or share this data with LAs. LAs are not required to share data on former pupils with schools but have broad powers under which they may be able to share information on 16- and 17-year-olds if schools request it. The [Statutory guidance for local authorities on their duties relating to the participation of young people in education, employment or training](#) states that LAs should agree data sharing agreements with education providers and other public bodies that set out the information they will provide, when it will be provided and how they will ensure that data is passed securely. Timely and effective collaboration between schools and LAs can result in positive action to support young people who are NEET.

Schools can also use institution level data from [Longer Term Destination Measures](#) experimental statistics to track their former students at aggregate level and to assess their careers provision. The longer-term measure shows the destinations of former students one, three and five years after completing key stage 4, at institution level. The time lag between this activity and publication of the data is seven years (due to the five years of destination activity and the time required to process this data).

To understand their leavers' education, training or employment destinations, colleges can collect the data themselves by contacting former students. Colleges will need to be aware that the retention and later use of pupils' and students' contact details will



involve the processing of personal data, for which colleges will need to satisfy themselves they have the proper legal basis. [16-18 destination measures](#) show the percentage of students continuing to sustained education, apprenticeships or employment in the year after completing 16 to 18 study.

Destinations data can also help schools and colleges to build and maintain alumni networks which will be valuable for giving students encounters with employers and employees (Benchmark 5) and encounters with further and higher education (Benchmark 7). The Destinations data [good practice guide](#) for schools sets out more information on what destinations data is, how it differs from the destination measures accountability tool that the department publishes in performance tables, and how both can be used to help schools improve their careers provision. Government is updating this guide and adding information for colleges.

## **Targeted support for vulnerable and disadvantaged students**

Looked after children and previously looked after children, care leavers and pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds may need particularly strong support to ensure high levels of ambition and successful transition to post-16 education or training. The Careers Leader should engage with the school's designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children to 1) ensure they know which students are in care or who are care leavers; 2) understand their additional support needs and 3) ensure that, for looked after children, their personal education plan can help inform careers advice. For these students, careers advisers should also, in co-ordination with the school's designated teacher, engage with the relevant Virtual School Head or personal adviser (a statutory local authority post that provides support to care leavers up to the age of 25) to ensure a joined-up approach to identifying and supporting their career ambitions.

Schools should continue to work with local authorities, particularly children's social care and Virtual School Heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children, to identify students who need targeted support or who are at risk of not participating post-16. As per the [Education and Skills Act 2008](#), local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and support young people who are not in education, employment and training, more details of this can be found in our [statutory guidance](#) on participation. The statutory guidance places duties on local authorities to help support their participation-related duties including:

- to collect information to identify young people who are not participating, or who are at risk of not doing so, to target their resources on those who need them most. The information collected must be in the format specified in the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) Management Information Requirement;



- to work with schools to identify those who need targeted support or who are at risk of not participating post-16;
- to lead the [September Guarantee](#) process which aims to ensure that all 16 and-17-year-olds are offered a suitable place in education or training;
- to pay particular attention to young people who are NEET, working with local partners to develop provision and referring those who are eligible for support.

Schools will need to agree how these students can be referred for support drawn from a range of education and training support services available locally. This may require multi-agency working with other professionals involved in supporting the students, such as careers advisers, social workers and Virtual School Heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children. Schools should also work with their local authority and local post-16 education or training providers to share data on students who are likely to need support with post-16 participation costs, such as care leavers or those on free school meals.

All pupil referral units, alternative provision academies and free schools should have high aspirations for these students, some of whom may lack confidence and need encouragement to broaden their horizons. They should help students to explore career options and understand the variety of pathways into work including degrees, traineeships and apprenticeships. Transition to post-16 provision is a crucial stage but not an end in itself, and it is important for students to have a “line of sight” to a future career. Providers of alternative provision should work in partnership with their commissioning schools and local authorities, as well as careers advisers and post-16 providers, to provide support and advice on transitional pathways into further education or training and pathways beyond education into employment. In doing so, they should consider the particular needs of the student in alternative provision and what different or additional support they may need to succeed on leaving school. Providers of alternative provision, and pupil referral units should work closely with post-16 providers on transition to post-16 education and training.

### **Careers guidance for students with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)**

The overwhelming majority of students with SEND, including those with high levels of needs, can access fulfilling jobs and careers with the right preparation and support. They should all be supported with a careers programme that follows the Gatsby Benchmarks. We recognise that some of the benchmarks need different interpretation in Special Schools and for some SEND students in mainstream schools and colleges. [Vocational profiling](#) will help to identify the young persons’ interests, skills and talents and it is a way of opening doors to what is possible. The Careers & Enterprise Company has published a range of [free resources](#) for schools

and colleges working with students with SEND which includes a Gatsby Benchmark toolkit for SEND, teacher guides and practical advice for schools and colleges on how their careers programme can support children and students with SEND. Send Gateway have published a [resource pack](#) to support Key Stage 4 students with SEND to secure good transitions. [Compass for Special Schools](#) is a free digital tool for special schools and specialist colleges to evaluate their careers provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks. A number of Special Schools are also working towards or hold the national Quality in Careers Standard.

The Careers Leader should work closely with the relevant teachers and professionals in their school or college, including the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and inclusion teams, and the careers adviser, to identify the guidance needs of all students with SEND and put in place personalised support and a transition plan. This may include helping students with SEND and their families to understand the full range of relevant education, training and employment opportunities, such as traineeships and apprenticeships, supported internships (for students with education, health and care plans) or routes into higher education. The transition plan should be well informed about ways in which adults with SEN or disabilities can be supported in the workplace (e.g. disability rights, supported employment, ways in which jobs can be “carved” to fit a person’s abilities, job coaching, reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the workplace and Access to Work (DWP support)). Advice on self-employment (e.g. micro-enterprise) can also be especially relevant for some students with SEND.

The Careers & Enterprise Company has a SEND Community of Practice, via Careers Hubs, that aims to support schools and colleges working with students with SEND through the sharing of good practice and the development of resources.

The Careers & Enterprise Company Enterprise Adviser Network connects schools and colleges with employers to provide meaningful encounters with the world of work for students. Encounters with employers can be transformational for students with SEND, particularly hands on experience in the workplace, and schools and colleges should facilitate this where possible. It can be especially powerful to hear from adults with disabilities who have succeeded in their careers. The opportunity to experience lots of different work sectors can be particularly helpful. Schools and colleges should prepare students well for these experiences, so they know what to expect and what is expected of them, match them carefully to each employer and provide any special support the student may need to benefit fully from the experience.

Schools should make use of the SEND local offer published by the local authority. Where students have education, health and care plans, their annual reviews must, from year 9 at the latest, include a focus on adulthood, including employment. Schools should ensure these reviews are informed by good careers guidance, including impartial personal guidance provided by a qualified careers adviser. The

Career Development Institute provides [accredited training](#) for qualified careers advisers who work with students who have SEN or disabilities. Schools must cooperate with local authorities, who have an important role to play through their responsibilities for SEND support services, education, health and care plans and the promotion of participation in education and training. Statutory guidance on the SEND duties is provided in the [0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice](#).

## Information sharing

Local authorities (LAs) have statutory functions in relation to supporting young people's participation in education and training. To identify and support those who need help to re-engage or to find work they rely on information that schools and colleges hold on their students. Under [section 72 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#), schools and colleges are under a statutory duty to provide information to local authority services in order for them to deliver their relevant duties, and to track and maintain contact with these young people. For example:

- basic information such as the students name, address and date of birth;
- other information that the local authority needs in order to support the young person to participate in education or training and to track their progress. This includes for example: students' contact details including phone numbers, information to help identify those at risk of becoming NEET post-16, students' post-16 and post-18 plans and the offers they receive of places in post-16 or higher education.

If a school or college is asked by an LA for information needed to fulfil their statutory duty, about young people living in the local area, then they are under a corresponding statutory duty to give it to the LA. Additional advice can be found via the Information Commissioner's Office [resources](#).

Schools and colleges (including academies and other state-funded educational institutions) must also notify local authorities whenever a 16- or 17-year-old leaves an education or training programme before completion as per section 13 of the [Education and Skills Act 2008](#). This notification must be made at the earliest possible opportunity to enable the local authority to support the student to find an alternative place. It is for schools and local authorities to agree local arrangements for ensuring these duties are met.

## Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

**All subject staff should link curriculum with careers, even on courses that are not specifically occupation-led. For example, STEM subject staff should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career paths. Study programmes should also reflect the importance of maths and English as a key expectation from employers.**

- By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.
- Throughout their programme of study (and by the end of their course) every student should have had the opportunity to experience how their subjects help people gain entry to (and be more effective workers within) a wide range of occupations.

When careers is embedded in curriculum subjects or courses, there are more opportunities for students to explore where their education could take them in the future. In schools, each subject should support students to identify the essential skills they develop and to identify the pathways to future careers. Schools should ensure that students study the core academic subjects at GCSE – English, maths, science, history or geography, and a language – the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). Schools should support students to understand that these are the subjects which provide a sound basis for a variety of careers beyond the age of 16 and can also enrich students' studies and give them a broad general knowledge that will enable them to participate in and contribute to society.

In colleges, the study programme model offers excellent opportunities for developing the broader skills that employers need, such as team working. As part of their study programme, colleges are expected to ensure that every student is exposed to the workplace or other work-related activity. This activity should be tailored to the needs of the student and their longer-term aims and should include emphasis on how their subjects can help to gain entry to occupations and be successful within these occupations.

Schools and colleges should make clear to students the importance and powerful labour market value of securing a good standard in maths and English. If students do not achieve a grade 4 or above in these GCSE subjects by the end of key stage 4, they will be required to continue working towards this aim or a pass in Level 2 Functional Skills if they have achieved a grade 2 or below, as part of their 16-19

study programme – the department has made this requirement a condition of funding.

Schools and colleges should ensure students have the opportunity to learn about how different STEM subjects can lead to a wide range of career paths. The Careers & Enterprise Company have worked with STEM learning to produce a series of [STEM toolkits](#) and STEM Learning have produced [resources](#) linking STEM curriculum to careers.

In schools, Careers Leaders should support teachers to build [careers education and guidance into subjects across the curriculum](#). Useful starting points could include identifying teachers with industry experience who can help to lead this work, bringing employers into subjects where there is a need to raise aspirations or challenge stereotypes and identifying subjects which link more easily to career pathways or employability skills. Each curriculum department may wish to devise schemes of work or lesson plans which show how careers will be embedded into their teaching. The Careers & Enterprise Company has produced ‘My Learning, My Future’, a suite of resources that can be used and applied by subject teachers through lessons, homework and extra-curricular sessions. The [resources](#) span over 20 subjects at key stage 3 and 4.

In colleges, subject staff can be powerful role models, drawing on their industry experience to attract students towards their specialist field and the careers that flow from it. Colleges should ensure that all subject specialist teachers are competent to support the career development of students through their subject teaching.

Career learning can also be provided as a subject in its own right, alongside embedding careers into subject disciplines. Many schools currently deliver careers, employability and enterprise lessons through the curriculum as part of their commitment to Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and citizenship education, which includes finance education. Citizenship supports the development of knowledge and understanding about society and democracy, finance and the economy, employer and employee rights and responsibilities. The [Skills Builder Universal Framework](#) shows how to build essential skills into the school or college curriculum. [The Career Development Institute’s Career Development Framework](#) of learning outcomes provides a useful resource that can both underpin the PSHE curriculum and support Careers Leaders to map career development outcomes across the curriculum.

## Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

**Every student 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 activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and should include students' own part time employment where it exists.**

- Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter<sup>1</sup> with an employer.
- Every year, alongside their study programme, students in colleges should participate in at least two meaningful encounters with an employer. At least one encounter should be delivered through their curriculum area.
- Colleges should record and take account of students' own part time employment and the influence this has had on their development.

The reforms announced in the Skills for Jobs white paper will revolutionise post-16 education and reshape the training landscape. The further and technical education system will be realigned around the needs of employers, so that students are trained for the skills gaps that exist now, and in the future, in sectors the economy needs, including construction, digital, clean energy and manufacturing.

The Skills for Jobs white paper confirms the expansion of our existing reforms to increase the number of people studying high-quality technical education, including the rollout of T Levels. Endorsed by business, T Levels are high-quality, Level 3 classroom-based technical programmes that equip students with the knowledge, attitude and practical skills to thrive in the workplace. Meaningful engagement with employees and employers is central to T Levels as they include a mandatory industry placement of at least 45 days which must take place in a physical workplace setting. This helps young people to put their technical and employability skills into practice and learn what a real career is like. It also allows employers to get early sight of new talent in their industry.

The department has put in place support for schools and colleges and employers to ensure the successful rollout of T Levels. This includes significant investment to support schools and colleges to build their capacity and develop the strong networks needed with local, regional and national employers across all sectors to deliver

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<sup>1</sup> A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has the opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.

industry placements. It also includes a comprehensive package of support for both schools and colleges and employers. This includes the [Industry Placements Delivery Guidance](#), which equips schools and colleges and employers with the key information and resources needed to deliver high-quality placements; [The Student Guide](#), which provides students with advice and resources to help them prepare for their industry placement; and the [Employer Support Package](#), which includes guidance, materials and hands-on support for employers across all sectors.

Every careers programme should have a strong employer focus with opportunities for students to meet businesses and gain insights into a range of different industries and sectors of the economy. Schools and colleges should engage fully with national, regional and local employers and professional networks to ensure real-world connections and [meaningful encounters](#) with employers. Visiting speakers should reflect different levels within an organisation, and individuals who have followed a variety of pathways into employment including technical and academic routes.

[Research](#) from Education and Employers shows that a young person who has four or more meaningful encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training and can earn up to 22% more during their careers. Students with access to meaningful employer encounters build up a rich picture of the world of work and are well prepared to take up workplace opportunities. There should be a clear focus on enterprise and employability skills, experience, and qualifications that employers want.

Schools and colleges should help students gain the confidence to compete in the labour market by providing opportunities to gain the practical know-how and attributes that are relevant for employment. This should include the opportunity for students to develop entrepreneurial skills for self-employment.

Schools and colleges should work with The Careers & Enterprise Company to identify an [Enterprise Adviser](#) who can support them to connect to the labour market. Enterprise Advisers can draw on their business background to help schools and colleges to bolster existing relationships with employers and create innovative opportunities for students to meet local employers.

Schools and colleges should offer a varied range of employer encounters to students, progressive through the age range and tailored to individual need, but this could mean in practice:

- alumni activity;
- [business games and enterprise competitions](#);
- careers fairs;
- employer encounters with parents;
- employer involvement in the curriculum;
- [employer mentoring](#);



- employer talks;
- [mock interviews](#);
- CV workshops;
- mock assessment centres;
- speed networking or careers carousels.

These encounters could be arranged to take place virtually for example, through a virtual tour of a workplace, a [virtual careers fair](#), via a [virtual internship](#), or an employer video calling the school or college for an employer talk.

The demand for STEM skills is growing, particularly for sectors such as engineering, construction and manufacturing. Mathematical and quantitative skills will be increasingly required in the future, not just for traditional STEM routes, but for a wide range of future careers. Schools should make sure one of the encounters their students experience before year 11 is with a STEM employer or workplace, or one of their careers events is focused on STEM. The Careers & Enterprise Company has several resources related to STEM including a series of STEM careers [toolkits](#).

Jobcentre Plus can play a role in facilitating links between schools and employers through the 'Support for Schools' programme. Jobcentre Plus works with many employers that are keen to engage with schools, support careers fairs, or provide work experience or work taster opportunities.



## Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

**Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.**

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.
- By the age of 18, or before the end of their study programme, every student should have had at least one further experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.

This benchmark is less about work experience and more about experiences of the workplace. The focus, particularly pre-16, is on giving pupils a more realistic idea of the workplace to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. This is especially valuable to pupils from more deprived backgrounds where experience of work in the family, or in the local community, may be limited to low skilled occupations.

For older students, the technical education reforms, set out in the Skills for Jobs white paper, will equip students with the skills, knowledge and behaviours to get a foot on the career ladder. Employers will have a critical role in providing students with first-hand experience of their chosen occupational area in an authentic setting over a long period of time. For example, industry placements will be a mandatory and critical part of every T Level and demonstrate a shift from traditional work experience to a longer, more substantial period of time in the workplace.

In addition, employers have an important contribution to make to careers programmes in schools and colleges, including providing shorter work visits, work shadowing or work experience opportunities that introduce students to the world of work. This includes [virtual experiences of the workplace](#), which can be [used to complement in-person experiences](#), but are not suitable for T level industry placements.. There is [evidence](#) that experiences of the workplace give students a more realistic idea of the expectations and realities of the workplace. Students have opportunities to see a work environment, talk to employers about their roles and observe work processes. This is particularly valuable for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may not have access to a diverse range of career role models.

Schools and colleges should encourage students to experience a wide variety of workplaces and support them to plan for, reflect upon and learn from these experiences. Experiences of the workplace should be designed to meet the needs of

students and the local context, while bearing in mind the demands of delivering the full curriculum. Schools and colleges should interpret the benchmark flexibly and could provide short, light touch experiences of the workplace for students up to the age of 16. Following the raising of the participation age in education or training to age 18, the department has placed more emphasis on high quality and meaningful experience of the workplace as a strongly recommended element of [16-19 study programmes](#), and a mandatory part of T Levels, via the industry placement.:

- By the age of 16, experiences of the workplace could include:
  - job shadowing;
  - workplace visits;
  - [volunteering](#);
- For 16- to-18-year-olds experiences of the workplace could include:
  - internships and holiday placements;
  - work experience that takes place during in school or college term time;
  - longer work placements;

The Careers & Enterprise Company has made available a range of resources that help schools, colleges and employers to plan and implement meaningful experiences of the workplace aligned to school and college priorities. These include the [Make it Work](#) guide and training webinar for Careers Leaders, and a [Step by Step Guide](#) which schools and colleges can use to support employers who are interested in providing a young person with an experience of their workplace, either physically or virtually.

Schools and colleges should pay particular attention to work placements for students with SEND. They can be particularly helpful where students find it difficult to imagine a work context, and counter low aspirations. It might be useful to consider using [vocational profiling](#) to help students to understand what they're interested in and why. When arranging these placements, schools and colleges should carefully match the placement to the abilities, needs and aspirations of the student. Schools and colleges may need to work with the employer to put in place additional support in the work placement for some students with SEND. The Careers & Enterprise Company have produced [resources](#) to support employers working with young people with SEND. [Additional support](#) might be needed to help ensure the student is fully prepared for the work placement so that the experience is valuable.

Schools and colleges must decide whether adults working with pre-16 work experience students need to obtain a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) certificate by consulting the regulated activity section in Part three of the statutory guidance, [Keeping children safe in education](#). The department encourages schools and colleges to reduce barriers so employers can offer a wide range of work experience and placements by following the [Work Experience Guidance](#). This includes advice

on whether risk assessments are necessary and makes clear that the placement provider (employer) has primary responsibility for the health and safety of the student and should be managing any significant risks. Schools and colleges, or others organising placements, need to check the employer has risk management arrangements in place, along with appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

**All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both technical and academic routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.**

- By the age of 16, every student should have had a meaningful encounter<sup>2</sup> with providers of the full range of educational opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and students.
- By the age of 18, all students who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and students.
- By the age of 18, or before the end of their programme of study, every student should have had a meaningful encounter with a range of providers of learning and training that may form the next stage of their career. This should include, as appropriate, further education colleges, higher education and apprenticeship and training providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and students.

With large scale reforms to technical education and skills, set out in the department's Skills for Jobs white paper, it has never been more important to ensure that students are made aware of the full range of education and training options. Schools and colleges must explain technical education routes alongside academic routes and should not attempt to promote HE as a better or more favourable route than FE or apprenticeships. Schools with sixth forms should take care that their own sixth form is not promoted disproportionately compared to alternative academic and technical study options. The focus should be on the individual student and what is best for them. It is important that students realise that all of their educational choices have implications for their longer-term career. Schools and colleges should encourage students to consider what career options different educational choices open up and close down. [A study of secondary teachers' views on post-18 options](#) shows that teachers are much more confident talking about Bachelor's degrees than any other form of higher education. Schools will need to work hard to counteract that bias, including by supporting staff to develop an understanding of all academic and

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<sup>2</sup> A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to explore what it is like to learn in that environment.

technical routes. The department committed in the Skills for Jobs white paper to build careers awareness into every stage of professional development for teachers.

Under [raising the participation age \(RPA\) requirements](#), all young people in England are required to continue in education or training until at least their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Schools must make sure that students are clear about this requirement and what it means for them. In particular, they must be clear that students are not required to stay in school. They can choose how to participate which might be through:

- full time study in a school, college or training provider;
- an apprenticeship, traineeship or supported internship;
- full time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with part time accredited study.

The [Moments of Choice](#) research commissioned by The Careers & Enterprise Company suggests that leaving decision-making to the last minute results in young people becoming overwhelmed. Students should have opportunities throughout their school and college life for meaningful encounters with a range of education and training providers. This will help students to learn about education, training and career paths throughout their school and college life. The Careers & Enterprise Company has published a [guide to achieving Gatsby Benchmark 7](#) which includes practical ideas from schools and colleges. This includes advice on how to make sure all encounters, including virtual experiences, are meaningful. Provider encounters can be age-specific, depending on the desired learning outcomes, and should be part of a progressive careers programme. Younger year groups can begin with a light-touch introduction to careers while older students and their parents will benefit from specific events and visits that familiarise them with the full range of pathways leading up to when significant education or training choices are about to be made. Students with an education, health and care plan should have formal opportunities to discuss education, training and career opportunities as part of their annual review, from year 9 onwards.

In consultation with a careers adviser, schools and colleges may recommend good quality websites and apps, whether national or local in scope, provided they present the full range of opportunities in an objective way. The National Careers Service website provides information and advice on a wide range of education, training and career options, including [Find a Course](#) which allows users to search for education and training opportunities across England.

Schools and colleges can work together, including through Careers Hubs and other networks, to help put pathways in context and deliver activities across multiple benchmarks. They can invite careers advisers, employers or providers to co-design or deliver part of the curriculum, use labour market information to showcase growth sectors in the local area, or deliver careers fairs. To ensure students understand the

breadth of pathways available, schools and colleges can consider inviting a range of employers and providers to talk to students about their careers and the routes into them. It can be powerful for students to hear from a range of professionals, including alumni and local employers, who have taken many different routes and qualifications to get to their positions, including apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications.

Students value highly the opportunity to attend open days at further and higher education institutions to help narrow down choices and reaffirm commitment to applying to attend further or higher education. Schools and colleges should help and advise students attending such open days.

The [original provider access legislation](#) came into force in January 2018 and placed a new legal duty on all maintained schools and academies to publish a policy statement setting out opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to access year 8-13 pupils, and to make sure the statement is followed. Through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, we strengthened the provider access legislation to specify that schools must provide at least six encounters. More information in the provider access legislation section (page 40-53)

## Benchmark 8: Personal guidance

**Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school or college staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level.<sup>3</sup> These should be available for all students whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all students but should be timed to meet their individual needs.**

- Every student should have at least one such interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18, by the end of their study programme.

Personal guidance is the opportunity for students to make sense of the careers activities they have experienced across the other benchmarks and reflect on what this means for their career plans, with the assistance of a qualified careers adviser. Careers advisers can help students to identify ambitious education, training and career options, and progression routes, by exploring potential opportunities with the student, supporting them in assessing their abilities, interests and achievements, enabling them to reach an informed career decision and empowering them to move forward. Students can gain self-development and careers management skills, develop plans for the future and set goals to achieve them.

Personal guidance interviews work best when the school or college can contextualise them with information about the students' academic performance and careers education. Schools and colleges should integrate personal guidance within the careers programme and wider pastoral and student support system so that other staff, such as form tutors or their equivalent, can consider students' ongoing career planning as part of their overall personal, social and educational development.

Careers advisers working with students with SEND should draw on the outcome and aspirations in the education, health and care plan, where they have one, to focus the discussion. Using a person-centred approach like [vocational profiling](#) can contribute to these discussions. Similarly, when working with looked after children or care leavers, their personal education plan or pathway plan should be used to help focus the discussion. It is good practice for these students to have a named adviser who can build a relationship with them and better understand their individual needs.

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<sup>3</sup> The school or college should ensure that access to an adviser trained to level 6 in a career development subject is available when needed.

The Gatsby Foundation has published a [collection of research on personal guidance](#), including a qualitative review of personal careers guidance in secondary schools in England. The review emphasises the importance of senior leaders ensuring sufficient time is allocated to careers advisers to perform their duties to a high standard. The CDI guidance recommends that at least 45 minutes are allowed for every personal guidance interview.

The Career Development Institute (CDI) has published a [briefing paper which explains the role of the careers adviser within personal guidance](#) and a [blueprint of learning outcomes for professional roles in the career development sector](#). Schools and colleges should make sure that careers advisers (internal and external) providing personal guidance to students are trained to the appropriate level. The main Level 6 and 7 qualifications for careers advisers are the Qualification in Career Development (QCD) at Level 7, (which replaces the earlier Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG) and Diploma in Career Guidance), the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development and the Level 6 Higher Apprenticeship: Career Development Professional.

The Career Development Institute's (CDI) [commissioning guide](#) provides practical information and advice to help schools and colleges commission independent careers guidance for students. The department recommends that schools and colleges view the [UK Register of Career Development Professionals](#), held by the CDI, to search for a careers adviser who can deliver a particular service or activity. Registration shows that a careers adviser is qualified to at least Level 6 in a career development subject, abides by the CDI Code of Ethics and undertakes regular professional development. The CDI monitors adherence to these criteria. The CDI also manages the Careers in Careers [jobs board](#) for the career development sector.

As an indicator of quality, schools and colleges can commission personal guidance from both self-employed careers advisers and organisations which hold the [matrix Standard](#), including organisations who deliver the National Careers Service. All holders of the matrix Standard have undergone an assessment of their delivery of advice and support services on careers, training and work.



## Legal duty for schools and academies: access to providers of technical education and apprenticeships

### Information on skills and technical education reforms for all staff

With the government's large-scale reforms to skills, including the transformation of technical education and training, it has never been more important for schools to make sure that pupils understand the full range of education and training options available. Our reforms are focused on giving people the skills they need, in a way that suits them, so they can get great jobs in sectors the economy needs and boost this country's productivity. We are ensuring people have the opportunity to access technical education and training throughout their lives by delivering the government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee to upskill and reskill at different points in their life. Building on the success of our flagship apprenticeships programme, we are putting employers at the heart of the system, to help ensure that education and training meets their needs. The continued rollout of T Levels, designed by over 250 leading employers, is a key aspect of this skills revolution, as well as the introduction of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs). Skills are a key pillar of the government's Covid recovery strategy. Education and skills are also at the heart of the government's commitment to levelling up opportunities across the UK.

### The range of technical options

Schools and colleges have a responsibility to set pupils on the path that will secure the best outcome which will enable them to progress in education and work. That means schools must act impartially and not show bias towards any route, be that academic or technical. Schools must open their doors to other education providers because it is vital to ensure that all pupils are aware of the benefits of apprenticeships, T Levels and other approved technical education qualifications, so that they can consider them, alongside academic options, when making choices about their future.

Technical pathways offer qualifications designed in partnership with employers which will provide pupils with skills the economy and society need. There are a number of high-quality options available to pupils. Options in full-time education are [T Levels](#) and [Higher Technical Qualifications \(HTQs\)](#). Options that combine work and study are [apprenticeships](#), [traineeships](#) and [supported internships](#). You can explore all the education training choice on the [Get the Jump Campaign website](#).

## Provider access legislation

### The importance of provider encounters

Every pupil, whatever their ambitions, should have the opportunity to explore what it is like to learn at the full range of learning providers, including colleges, universities, apprenticeship and training providers (including employers), University Technical Colleges (UTCs) and Studio Schools. That is why the department introduced a [legal duty](#) in 2018 to require all maintained schools and academies to ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access all year 8 to 13 pupils for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. By hearing directly from a range of providers, every pupil can build up a full picture of the options available and consider how the opportunity to study or train in different ways, and in different environments, might suit their skills, interests and aptitudes. This will lead to better-informed choices and help to reduce the risk of young people dropping out of courses.

### Evidence for strengthening the legislation

Although progress has been made and there are many examples of schools providing opportunities for pupils to meet alternative providers in line with legal requirements, evidence shows that there is still more to do to ensure all pupils hear about the benefits of technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The IPPR report [‘The Baker Clause One Year On’](#) found that fewer than two in five (37.6%) of the 101 schools they examined were complying with the provider access legislation by publishing a provider access statement.<sup>4</sup>

The [March 2021 UCAS report ‘Where next?’](#) highlighted that two in five young people reported that more information and advice would have led to them making better choices. Additionally, almost one in three said they did not receive any information about apprenticeships from their school. This suggests that more needs to be done to promote parity across these routes.

A [report from The Careers & Enterprise Company](#) shows why the provider access legislation is so important. Uptake of apprenticeships was 16% higher in the schools that provided information on apprenticeships to most or all of their pupils, compared with the schools that provided information to a small minority.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ippr.org/files/2019-01/the-baker-clause-one-year-on-january19.pdf>

## Changes to the legislation

In the Skills for Jobs white paper, the department announced plans to strengthen this statutory requirement and create a clear minimum standard for compliance.

Through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 we have made further provision as to the number of provider encounters that schools must offer and when, and set new parameters around the duration and content of each encounter. **All maintained schools and academies must provide six encounters with a provider of technical education or apprenticeships for year 8 to 13 pupils.** We have timed these six meetings to inform consideration of post-14, post-16 and post-18 options and progression to the next stage of education or training.

As a minimum, schools must offer:

- **Two encounters for pupils during the ‘first key phase’ (year 8 or 9) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend**, to take place any time during year 8 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 9.
- **Two encounters for pupils during the ‘second key phase’ (year 10 or 11) that are mandatory for all pupils to attend**, to take place any time during year 10 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 11.
- **Two encounters for pupils during the ‘third key phase’ (year 12 or 13) that are mandatory for the school to put on but optional for pupils to attend**, to take place any time during year 12 or between 1 September and 28 February during year 13.

Schools should encourage all pupils to attend the encounters, however, optional attendance for older pupils recognises that, while many 16- to- 18-year-olds will benefit from finding out more about post-18 technical options, some will be in the sixth form having made a firm decision to pursue their chosen pathway.

All six encounters must happen for a reasonable period of time during the standard school day. Provider encounters that take place outside of school hours, for example parents evenings, do not count towards fulfilment of the legal requirement for six provider encounters, but schools are still encouraged to provide these complementary experiences for pupils and their parents.

Schools and providers should work together and schools must ask each provider to provide information to pupils that, as a minimum, includes:

- information about the provider and the approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships that the provider offers,

- information about the careers to which those technical education qualifications or apprenticeships might lead,
- a description of what learning or training with the provider is like,
- responses to questions from the pupils about the provider or approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Schools are already required by law to prepare a policy statement setting out the circumstances in which education and training providers will be given access to pupils. The new legislation requires schools to set out the times at which access is to be given and explain how they will meet the new legal requirement to put on six provider encounters.

## Approaches to delivering encounters with providers of technical education and apprenticeships

The six provider encounters prescribed by the legislation are a minimum standard. Many schools will choose to offer more opportunities for providers to talk directly to pupils and their parents, as part of a high-quality careers programme, designed and delivered in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance.

We expect schools to provide opportunities for visits from a range of providers to ensure that their pupils better understand all the options available to them to make informed decisions on their future training and education needs. There are a number of high-quality options available to your pupils and the range of providers should include those offering apprenticeships, T Levels, HTQs and other approved technical education qualifications.

## Identifying a range of providers for pupils to meet

Schools have flexibility to decide which providers to invite but should particularly consider those within reasonable travelling distance of the school, including, where available:

- **General Further Education (FE) Colleges** offer a range of qualifications and training including apprenticeships, traineeships, T levels, HTQs, technical qualifications and higher education. Some offer programmes for 14- to- 16-year-olds who would benefit from education in a college environment. Most general and specialist FE colleges in England provide some higher education, much of which is vocationally orientated. The Association of Colleges has published a [list of all General Further Education Colleges in England](#).

- **Independent Training Providers (ITPs)** provide vocational and technical education with learning and training in classrooms on the provider's premises, in workplaces or a mix of both. The Careers & Enterprise Company has published a [resource](#), created by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), that provides information about technical education pathways and the work of the ITP sector. The AELP has created a further [resource](#) that provides key facts about ITPs. Schools can review [the register of apprenticeship training providers](#) to identify ITPs. Careers Hubs will be able to share information on local ITPs on request.
- **Institutes of Technology (IoTs)** are collaborations between existing FE colleges, universities and leading employers. IoTs offer a wide range of technical courses specialising in Level 4 & 5 across sectors such as digital, advanced manufacturing, engineering and construction including higher apprenticeships, HTQs, degrees and T Levels. Further information and the locations of IoTs can be found [here](#).
- **University Technical Colleges (UTCs)** are established by universities and employers. They work with a network of local industry partners to design a learning programme which covers the core curriculum of English, Maths and Sciences, and technical qualifications taught by specialist staff with industry standard equipment. The majority of UTCs are for 14- to- 19-year-olds and specialise in one or two STEM curriculum areas to address a defined skills shortage in the local area. Further information can be found on the [Baker Dearing Education Trust website](#) along with a [list of all UTCs](#) in England.
- **Studio Schools** are small schools designed for 14- to- 19-year-olds of all abilities and offer a range of academic and vocational qualifications, often taught through project-based learning, alongside work experience. The core purpose of Studio Schools is to improve students' employability and life skills. Further information can be found on the [Studio Schools Trust website](#).
- **Other Schools** that are offering technical education, such as T Levels or other vocational qualifications.

The apprenticeship training provider base is particularly large and diverse. It can include private training providers, further education colleges, higher education institutions, sixth form colleges, and employers. To inform decisions about which apprenticeship providers to invite in, schools may wish to consult [the register of apprenticeship training providers](#).

The department funds the [Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge for Schools and Colleges \(ASK\) programme](#) which provides impartial advice and support for Apprenticeships, Traineeships, HTQs and T Levels and signposting to providers and employers providing technical progression routes. The activities delivered through

the ASK programme can help schools to meet the requirements of the provider access legislation if they include an opportunity for pupils to meet a provider of technical education or apprenticeships, or a provider representative. The advantage of using the ASK programme is that a student can find out about all apprenticeships and technical options in their area, not just the offer from one training provider. For apprenticeships, the ASK programme also links students to apprenticeship vacancies and helps them with their applications. Schools can request support by completing an [online form](#) or emailing [ask.programme@education.gov.uk](mailto:ask.programme@education.gov.uk).

From September 2023, the number of T Level providers will have increased significantly to around 400 colleges, schools and other providers. Schools can find their nearest T Level provider at [www.tlevels.gov.uk](http://www.tlevels.gov.uk)

Schools within a Careers Hub will be eligible to receive local support from their Hub to identify suitable providers in the local area and assist with building partnerships between the school and providers. Schools can identify and contact their nearest Careers Hub [here](#).

We encourage schools with limited access to providers in the local area to consider virtual encounters with providers further afield to ensure their pupils are aware of the opportunities and pathways available.

## **Considering the timing and content of provider encounters**

Schools should design and tailor the programme of provider encounters so that, as pupils progress through school years 8 to 13, they can build up a clear picture of technical education and apprenticeship opportunities available to them at different stages. This means taking account of the key stage 4, [post-16](#) and [post-18](#) options that each provider offers when deciding which year group(s) would benefit most from meeting a provider.

Recognising that providers often have multiple qualifications and courses to offer to young people at different ages, the legislation includes flexibility for schools to arrange meetings with the same provider across more than one 'key phase'. For example, a school may invite an FE college to talk to pupils in the first key phase (year 8 to 9) about key stage 4 options and to talk to pupils in the second key phase (year 10 to 11) about post-16 options. However, within the same key phase, schools must always provide encounters with two different providers to meet the legal requirement. This means that an FE college talking to pupils multiple times across year 10 and 11 (the second key phase) would only count as one mandatory provider encounter under the terms of the legal duty.

The school should not do anything which might limit the ability of pupils to attend. It would not be acceptable for schools to restrict invitations to selected groups of pupils or hold events outside of normal school hours.

The section on legislative changes describes a minimum set of information that the school must ask each provider to cover during each mandatory encounter with pupils. This will ensure that every provider gets the chance to present meaningfully to pupils. Beyond this legal requirement, there is scope for schools to consider carefully the frequency and scale of encounters and work with providers to tailor them to the needs of pupils. For example, the school may decide to arrange an annual event for a whole year group and invite multiple providers, or work with a group of providers to deliver one presentation covering multiple further education, T Level, HTQ or apprenticeship opportunities in the local area.

Persons acting on behalf of a provider may represent the provider, or accompany the provider, if they are particularly well placed to engage and inform pupils about the options available. For example, a University Technical College or an apprenticeship provider may ask to bring a key employer with them on a provider visit. The school should consider such requests and consent cannot be withheld unreasonably. Schools and colleges should not require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for a visitor who is in the school for a “one-off” visit. However, head teachers and principals should decide on the appropriate level of supervision for the duration of the visit.

## **Reviewing your provider access policy statement**

Every school should review their arrangements for provider access in line with the changes to the legislation and prepare a new policy statement setting out the circumstances in which education and training providers will be given access to pupils. This statement, and wider careers programme, will need to be updated with information about how the school will meet the new legal requirement to put on six provider encounters, prior to the new duty coming into force on 1 January 2023. With the changes to the duty coming into force part way through the 2022/23 academic year, we strongly encourage schools to take the necessary steps to transition to the new arrangements as soon as possible.

The policy statement must be published, either as part of or alongside the wider careers programme and should be made available on the school website. We expect a policy statement to be published for each academy within a multi-academy trust. The school should revise the policy statement from time to time as required, we recommend that this is done annually, by the Careers Leader, and agreed with the governing body.



The purpose of the statement is to set out how the school intends to comply with the minimum requirement to provide six encounters and the opportunities for providers to visit and to explain how requests from providers will be handled.

The policy statement must include:

- an explanation of how the school will comply with the new legal requirement to put on at least six encounters with providers of approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships, including the times at which access is to be given;
- any procedural requirements in relation to requests for access e.g., the main point of contact at the school to whom requests should be directed;
- grounds for granting and refusing requests for access e.g., details of timetabled careers lessons, assemblies or careers events which providers may attend; and should include the safeguarding policy; and
- details of premises or facilities to be provided to a person who is given access e.g., rooms and resources to be made available in support of a provider visit.

The policy statement should also include:

- how the school will work with each visiting provider;
- a list of providers that have previously been invited into the school;
- if the school accepts live online encounters;
- destinations of previous pupils; and
- information about how a provider can raise a complaint and the procedure that will be followed.

Beyond these requirements and expectations, the school can design the policy statement in a way which best suits their needs. For example, it could be incorporated into the wider set of information about the careers programme that maintained schools must and academies should publish under the School Information (England) Regulations 2008.<sup>5</sup> What is most important is that the document includes clear details of the opportunities for providers to visit the school to talk directly to pupils and the process for providers to request access. An example

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<sup>5</sup> Schools are required to publish (a) the name, email address and telephone number of the school's careers leader; (b) a summary of the careers programme including details as to how pupils, parents, teachers and employers may access information regarding the careers programme; (c) how the school measures and assesses the impact of the careers programme on pupils; (d) the date of the school's next review of the information".



of a suitable policy statement is at Annex A. The Careers & Enterprise Company will publish further examples online.

## **Provider access legislation and the Gatsby Benchmarks**

Opportunities to meet providers of technical education and apprenticeships are just one of a number of careers activities that schools should provide for pupils as part of an embedded programme of careers education and guidance. The development of a careers programme in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance increases opportunities for pupils to access everything from experiences of the workplace and personal guidance with a careers adviser, to engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities. [Gatsby Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education](#) builds on the requirements of the provider access legislation by setting an expectation that all pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including both technical and academic routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace. This means that the school should also provide a range of opportunities for providers offering academic options, including sixth form and tertiary colleges and higher education institutions, to visit the school to talk to pupils. By following the requirements of Benchmark 7, alongside the requirements of the provider access legislation, schools will help all pupils to develop a comprehensive picture of the education and training options available beyond the school.

# Ensuring provider encounters are meaningful and high quality

## Meaningful encounters

The Careers & Enterprise Company's [Making it meaningful checklist](#) is designed to help Career Leaders ensure that careers activities, including provider encounters, are meaningful for all participants and will ensure quality and consistency of the activity.

## Preparing for provider encounters

Schools should prepare for each provider visit by advising pupils and their parents to consult provider websites for background information, including details of the courses and qualifications that the provider offers and their Ofsted grade. Inspection reports are available on [Ofsted's website](#). Schools can also allow providers to make available copies of their prospectus, as part of their visit. This additional information can help pupils to consider the merits of different providers and make fully-informed decisions about next steps. Schools may want to help their pupils set objectives prior to the provider encounter.

The Careers & Enterprise Company's [Encounters with further and higher education report](#) offers practical tips from schools and colleges for achieving Gatsby Benchmark 7 and provides advice on encounters with further education.

We encourage schools to develop strong relationships with providers in the local area to build trust and make encounters easier to plan and deliver. Schools can access support from The Careers & Enterprise Company's [dedicated webpage](#) to ensure they have the right guidance on how best to prepare for each provider visit. Schools within a Careers Hub can access further support through their Hub to help deliver meaningful encounters.

In addition to Get the Jump and ASK, there are a range of other government-funded resources that offer further information and support for schools, including: [Amazing Apprenticeships](#), National Careers Service website information on [post-16](#) and [post-18 options](#), and [Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme](#).

## Considering the needs of each pupil

All pupils should have the same opportunities for meaningful provider encounters. Some pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children

and pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds may need additional support to access provider encounters. Schools can prepare by talking to providers about the range of provision available for young people with specific needs or disabilities. Schools can also contact their local Careers Hub for support to ensure appropriate providers are identified for the provider encounters. Schools should involve parents/carers, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and other relevant staff to identify any barriers and support needed, and tailor each provider encounter appropriately. Prior to an encounter we encourage schools to prepare their pupils so they are fully aware of what the encounter will be like and what they can expect.

Pupils with an education, health and care plan should have formal opportunities to discuss education, training and career opportunities as part of their annual review, from year 9 onwards. We encourage schools to ensure pupils with SEND and their parents are aware of the [National Careers Service website](#) for education advice for special educational needs or a disability. We would also encourage schools, colleges, and providers to make use of the resources available via the CEC's [resource directory for SEND](#).

## **The role of online provider encounters**

We expect most provider encounters to be face-to-face but encourage a blended approach with the use of virtual engagement where access may be an issue. Online engagement can offer a variety of benefits which include greater flexibility, efficiency and the ability to draw on a wider pool of providers. If a school opts to provide an online provider encounter, they must ensure that the encounter is meaningful and high quality while following the same standards as a face-to-face encounter. The encounter should be live and not a pre-recorded video to ensure it is tailored to the school and that pupils are able to ask questions. Some pupils may benefit from online encounters if they feel less comfortable with face-to-face encounters.

## **Involving parents and carers**

We encourage schools to involve parents in the process by informing them of the providers that are being invited to speak to pupils and advise parents to consult the providers website to find out more information about the courses and qualifications on offer and the provider's Ofsted grade. Providers and schools should also consider how the information their child receives can be reinforced outside of the encounter itself and, for example, how the encounter can be supplemented with follow up resources that are specifically tailored to parents and carers. Schools should make parents aware of the [Talking Futures](#) toolkit which supports parents to have informed and constructive conversations with their child about their future options. We

encourage schools to invite providers to parents' evenings to help parents become familiar with all the options available to their child.

## Ladder of support and intervention

The department has developed a ladder of support and intervention to ensure that there is a transparent and consistent approach to helping all schools to meet the provider access legislation and to taking action to respond to cases of non-compliance.

The Careers & Enterprise Company will provide support to schools and providers at a national, Careers Hub and institutional level.

### **National:**

Every school and provider in England will be able to access support through the [CEC resource directory](#) including templates, guidance on how to maximise encounters, and examples of effective practice. CEC will embed the new provider access statutory guidance into existing support, resources and training such as Careers Leader training. CEC will work with sector partners to ensure that tailored and specific support is available for different audiences, for example on SEND.

### **Careers Hub:**

Providers based within an area that has a [Careers Hub](#), will be able to access support from their local hub including access to local networks and information on existing complementary initiatives, sharing of best practice in maximising the value of encounters, and advice on contacting and maintaining visibility to schools. The Careers Hub will provide personalised advice to providers on request.

Schools in a Careers Hub will have access to support from the hub itself as well as embedded networks such as Enterprise Advisers and Cornerstone employers. Hubs will be the link with local networks in order to share good practice and identify opportunities to align with other existing initiatives such as Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). Hubs will work in partnership with schools to identify relevant providers in their area and support schools to identify opportunities to tailor support based on local context and need.

Compass+, the online self-evaluation tool has been updated to include specific questions that will enable schools to record, track and record evidence against the new requirement. This data will be used by Careers Hubs to target support to schools that require additional help.

Schools that are not yet in a Careers Hub will have access to additional central support from the [CEC](#) in lieu of personalised support from a Careers Hub.

### **Institutional:**

Additional targeted support and guidance will be offered if there are concerns about a school's adherence to the provider access legislation as a result of the department's own monitoring of compliance, information in a published Ofsted inspection report or a complaint from a provider. The Careers and Enterprise Company have set out a process for providers to seek support and raise concerns and this is documented on the CEC website. There is a dedicated email address for providers to raise concerns about access to schools [provideraccess@careersandenterprise.co.uk](mailto:provideraccess@careersandenterprise.co.uk).

It is expected that the vast majority of schools will be able to comply after benefitting from this additional support. However, where a school continues to be non-compliant complaints can be escalated to the Department for Education. In extreme cases, if all other options have been exhausted, the school could lose access to government-funded careers support or be placed under a legal direction to comply with the provider access legislation.

### **Summary of the Ladder of support and intervention**

1. **Support (CEC led)**- The school will be reminded of the requirements of the duty. They will receive targeted support and guidance about what the school needs to do to comply with the provider access duty.
2. **Responding to concerns (CEC led)**- The Careers Hub will review the specific concern with the provider and the school and will deploy additional support if required and suitable. This additional support will depend on the nature of the concern raised but could involve the school being encouraged to undertake an expert review or independent quality assurance of their careers provision focused on the provider access legislation and/or being supported to develop an improvement plan which could include Careers Leader training.
3. **Responding to Complaints (DfE led)**- If the school is found to be non-compliant following a complaint and the support and concern phases have been exhausted, an official or a minister from the Department for Education will write to the school reminding them of the requirements of the duty and will state a date that the school will need to comply by to avoid moving to formal intervention. The letter will state that the senior leadership team and/ or the governors should undertake Careers Leader training (depending on the circumstance, the school may have to fund the training).
4. **Intervention (DfE led)**- The use of the Secretary of State's intervention powers, under Section 496 and 497 of the Education Act 1996, to require appropriate remedial action to be taken.

Schools that reach step 3 on the ladder of support and intervention will be subject to further monitoring in the current and following academic year to ensure they have the right support going forward.

## **The role of Ofsted**

Ofsted's school inspection handbook sets out strengthened expectations with respect to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), and specifically the provider access legislation. Ofsted's grade criteria set out the expectation that a school with 'good' personal development will meet the requirements of the provider access legislation. Where this is not the case, inspectors will state this in the published inspection report. They will consider what impact this has on the quality of CEIAG and the subsequent judgement for personal development.

## **Examples of good practice**

To support schools and providers, we have compiled a collection of good practice examples of how the statutory duty applies in practice to enable schools and providers to understand the new legal requirements. The examples of good practice can be found [here](#).

## **Annex A: Example of a policy statement on provider access**

This policy statement could be integrated into a wider careers plan or strategy for your school or college.

### ***[School Name]: Provider Access Policy***

#### **Introduction**

This policy statement sets out the school's arrangements for managing the access of providers to the school for the purpose of giving them information about the provider's education or training offer. This complies with the school's legal obligations under Section 42B of the Education Act 1997.

#### **Pupil entitlement**

All pupils in years 8 to 13 are entitled:

- to find out about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships opportunities, as part of a careers programme which provides information on the full range of education and training options available at each transition point;
- to hear from a range of local providers about the opportunities they offer, including technical education and apprenticeships – through options events, assemblies and group discussions and taster events;
- to understand how to make applications for the full range of academic and technical courses.

**For pupils of compulsory school age these encounters are mandatory and there will be a minimum of two encounters for pupils during the 'first key phase' (year 8 to 9) and two encounters for pupils during the 'second key phase' (year 10 to 11). For pupils in the 'third key phase' (year 12 to 13), particularly those that have not yet decided on their next steps, there are two more provider encounters available during this period, which are optional for pupils to attend.**

These provider encounters will be scheduled during the main school hours and the provider will be given a reasonable amount of time to, as a minimum:

- share information about both the provider and the approved technical education qualification and apprenticeships that the provider offers
- explain what career routes those options could lead to
- provide insights into what it might be like to learn or train with that provider (including the opportunity to meet staff and pupils from the provider)

- answer questions from pupils.

### **Meaningful provider encounters**

One encounter is defined as one meeting/session between pupils and one provider. We are committed to providing meaningful encounters to all pupils using the [Making it meaningful checklist](#).

Meaningful online engagement is also an option, and we are open to providers that are able to provide live online engagement with our pupils.

### **Previous providers**

In previous terms/years we have invited the following providers from the local area to speak to our pupils:

- [stats on providers]

### **Destinations of our pupils**

Last year our year 11 pupils moved to range of providers in the local area after school:

- [stats on destinations]

Last year our year 13 pupils moved to range of providers in the local area after school:

- [stats on destinations]

### **Management of provider access requests**

#### **Procedure**

A provider wishing to request access should contact *[Name]*, *[Job title]*, *[Contact method]*

#### **Opportunities for access**

The school offers the six provider encounters required by law (marked in bold text) and a number of additional events, integrated into the school careers programme. We will offer providers an opportunity to come into school to speak to pupils or their parents or carers.

Please speak to our Careers Leader to identify the most suitable opportunity for you.



	<b>Autumn Term</b>	<b>Spring Term</b>	<b>Summer Term</b>
Year 8	<b>Event for University Technical College</b>	Employer event for pupils, parents – market stall event giving overview of local, regional and national opportunities and skills requirement	Technical/vocational tasters at local college/s, training providers
Year 9	Meeting with careers adviser	<b>KS4 options event – Y college and Z apprenticeship provider attending to give presentations to pupils</b>	<i>No encounters – legislation requires encounters to take place by 28 February if in year 9</i>
Year 10	<b>Post 16 technical education options assembly with General Further Education College</b>  Life Skills – work experience preparation sessions	Technical/vocational tasters at local college/s, training providers	Technical/vocational tasters at local college/s, training providers
Year 11	Post 16 provider open evenings. <b>Post 16 apprenticeships assembly</b> Meetings with careers adviser Post 16 applications	Post-16 interviews	<i>No encounters – legislation requires encounters to take place by 28 February if in year 11</i> Confirmation of post-16 education and training destinations for all pupils
Year 12	<b>Higher Education fair for a variety of HE providers including local Further Education colleges</b>	Small group sessions: future education, training and employment options Meetings with careers adviser	Technical/vocational tasters at local college/s, training providers

	<b>Autumn Term</b>	<b>Spring Term</b>	<b>Summer Term</b>
Year 13	<b>Post 18 assembly – with higher and degree apprenticeship providers</b> Workshops – HE and higher apprenticeship applications	Meetings with careers adviser	<i>No encounters – legislation requires encounters to take place by 28 February if in year 13</i> Confirmation of post-18 education and training destinations for all pupils

## **Premises and facilities**

The school will make the main hall, classrooms or private meeting rooms available for discussions between the provider and pupils, as appropriate to the activity. The school will also make available AV and other specialist equipment to support provider presentations. This will all be discussed and agreed in advance of the visit with the Careers Leader or a member of their team.

Meaningful online engagement is also an option and we are open to providers that are able to provide live online engagement with our pupils.

Providers are welcome to leave a copy of their prospectus or other relevant course literature at the Careers Resource Centre, which is managed by the school librarian. The Resource Centre is available to all pupils at lunch and break times.

## **Complaints:**

Any complaints with regards to provider access can be raised following the school complaints procedure or directly with The Careers & Enterprise Company via [provideraccess@careersandenterprise.co.uk](mailto:provideraccess@careersandenterprise.co.uk)

## **Approval and review**

Approved *[date]* by Governors at Curriculum and Standards Committee

Next review: *[date]*

Signed: *[name]* Chair of Governors

*[name]* Head teacher



Department  
for Education

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