

# Closing the gap

The level of employer  
engagement in England's  
schools and colleges



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The text and analysis were prepared by Chris Percy.

## About this report

This report explores the current level of employer engagement in education in England. It compares this with the ambitions set out in the government's Careers Strategy. This analysis reveals that there is a need to substantially increase the level of employer engagement in English secondary schools and colleges and points to where the shortfalls are most acute.

The government has tasked schools and colleges with providing each young person a **minimum of seven encounters with employers<sup>1</sup>** (at least one encounter per year) and **at least two opportunities for workplace experiences.**

# Executive Summary

**There is a strong evidence base which endorses the benefits of providing young people with access to employers, working people and experiences of the workplace. It highlights that employer engagement helps young people make effective transitions to work and improves their long-term earnings. It also helps them understand why it is important to work hard at school.**

The government has drawn on this evidence in its Careers Strategy and tasked schools and colleges with providing each young person a **minimum of seven encounters with employers**<sup>1</sup> (at least one encounter per year) and **at least two opportunities for workplace experiences**, reflecting a total minimum level of nine experiences during secondary education. These are ambitious goals which substantially increase what schools and colleges are expected to achieve and ask for greater support from employers than ever before.

To meet this ambition, employers need to offer at least 4 million employer encounters and 1 million workplace experiences every year. The 4 million employer encounters each year follows directly from the approximately 4 million young people in the seven years of secondary education at any one time. With around 500,000 to 600,000 young people in each year group, providing two workplace experiences at some point over those seven years translates into an average of around 1 million required annually.

A third of the time, those minimum experiences are not taking place (see Page 6 for details). In fact, some young people get more than the minimum level described in the Careers Strategy, while others get a lot less. This uneven distribution is such that the majority of young people miss out on at least one of the recommended nine minimum activities. And at best only 37% of young people are currently benefitting from the full minimum standard for employer encounters (see Page 7 for details).

Our analysis provides a unique level of detail behind the two challenges that need tackling if we are to close this gap:

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<sup>1</sup> An "employer encounter", in the terminology of Gatsby Benchmarks, is an opportunity 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.

**The volume gap.** If we could target extra activities exactly to where the gaps are, 1.7 million more employer encounters and workplace experiences are needed each year to get all young people to the recommended minimum levels.

**The problem of patchiness.** Access to employers and employer activities is peaky and patchy across schools, year groups and young people. Some people are getting a lot, while others are getting very little. If we sought to provide missing activities only by scaling up current provision, without better targeting, it would be highly inefficient and may not be possible.

The volume gap points towards the need for **increased engagement with employers**, but the problem of patchiness makes it clear that doing more of the same is not enough. We also need better and more deliberate **micro-targeting**, to ensure that where employers are offering their time, they are offering it in the right place and at the right time. In terms of **increased engagement with employers**, to reach the minimum 4 million employer encounters and 1 million workplace experiences each year, we need each employer to:

- reach out to one young person a year for every 7 employees;
- provide a workplace experience each year for every 25 employees.

We need employers that are meeting or exceeding these targets to keep doing what they are doing, indeed to provide even more where they can. Not only because of the problem of patchiness we have today but also because the government's minimum standard for young people is exactly that – a minimum. The evidence shows that young people and the economy continue to benefit as we increase the level of employer engagement beyond those minimum levels.

In terms of **micro-targeting**, we need to think more innovatively about how we engage with schools. We need to work together with employers and schools to identify which schools and which year groups are most short of employer contact. We should explore where employers are able to travel a bit further or deploy a few extra staff to reach areas that have a less diverse base of economic activity. It is also essential for employers of all types to get involved – only then will our young people meet a varied set of role models. Our new data and our regional networks provide a strong starting point for these discussions.

Ensuring this level of commitment is widespread and available in all areas for all young people requires a culture shift, but one that is achievable. We are not beginning from a standing start, many employers across the country are already engaged with education and some have been closely engaged for decades.

Since 2015 The Careers & Enterprise Company has been working to bring education and employers together, building on and collaborating with the many other institutions and charities with similar priorities. We have built a national network of employers working with schools and our first investment fund alone was able to fund around 380,000 new encounters between young people and the world of work. We agree with the government about the minimum level of employer engagement that is needed for each young person. But, we also recognise that there is a lot of work to do to bring this about.

It is not all bad news. The problem of patchiness provides hope as well as challenge. There are peaks as well as patches and while the overall picture suggests that there is a considerable gap between where we are and where we need to be, we can also see that some schools are meeting or even substantially exceeding the standard set out by the government. **This gives us confidence that it can be done.**

## Moving forwards

At The Careers & Enterprise Company we will continue to support high levels of employer engagement and to work with education, employers and careers providers to increase the capacity of the sector to deliver on this. We will also continue to conduct research to increase our understanding about progress towards the standards set out in the Careers Strategy.

In April 2018 we launched our plan setting out how we will be responding to the Careers Strategy. In it we described how we will be rolling out our Enterprise Adviser network to every school and college in England, scaling up support for the Gatsby Benchmarks, and testing and sharing best practice. This is an ambitious and transformational plan which will drive the careers landscape in England to evolve and improve.

To support this work we would like to ask employers to:

- view employer engagement as a key responsibility;

- encourage senior employees to become Enterprise Advisers;
- provide one encounter every year for every seven employees;
- offer at least one work experience opportunity every year for every 25 employees; and
- take a leadership role locally to galvanise business engagement with education (e.g., consider becoming a Careers and Enterprise Cornerstone Employer).

We would like to ask secondary schools and colleges to:

- ensure that they have identified a Careers Leader;
- have a careers plan in place which sets out how employer engagement fits into a wider careers programme;
- commit to delivering at least seven employer encounters and two work experience placements for every student; and
- learn from one another, and especially from those schools that are already providing high levels of employer engagement, about how employer engagement can best be delivered.

As well as our work supporting employers and schools to work together, we will also commit to conducting new research to help the sector understand the challenge and move towards solving it, covering such topics as:

- how to measure and promote quality in employer activities;
- how some schools are able to provide very high levels of employer engagement;
- defining a 'best in class' level of employer engagement, to complement the minimum standard set out in the Careers Strategy; and
- the return on investment from different approaches to careers and enterprise provision.



90% of 15,025 surveyed teenagers agreed that work experience had helped them better understand why it is important to do well at school.<sup>5</sup>

# 1 | Introduction

**The government's recent Careers Strategy<sup>2</sup> makes an explicit link between careers provision, social mobility and ensuring that England has the skills that it needs. It sets high ambitions for that provision with the adoption of good practice in the form of the Gatsby Benchmarks<sup>3</sup>, and prioritises employer engagement in schools.**

In the Careers Strategy the government has endorsed the expectations set out in the Gatsby Benchmarks to task secondary schools and colleges with providing at least one encounter with an employer per year for young people (a minimum of seven encounters) and at least two experiences of the workplace before they leave full-time education.

This paper discusses the changes that are needed in careers provision in England based on the new proposals. It also explores the existing levels of careers provision and employer engagement. It presents new analysis of data held by The Careers & Enterprise Company.<sup>4</sup> But before we present our new analysis it is useful to revisit the case for employer engagement in education.

Research has demonstrated that opportunities for young people to interact with employers while they are in full-time education can provide significant benefits. Surveys of teachers emphasise short-term benefits in areas like motivation and behaviour, while data from government studies and from young people themselves reveal long-term benefits in employment outcomes both inside and outside the UK.

A survey of 700 classroom teachers by NFER in 2012 found two thirds identifying an improvement in pupils' motivation after a work experience placement. Half of teachers felt it increased the chances of borderline pupils achieving five A\*-Cs at GCSE or equivalent.<sup>5</sup> In another study, 90% of 15,025 surveyed teenagers agreed that work experience had helped them better understand why it is important to do well at school.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education. (2017). *Careers Strategy: Making the Most of Everyone's Skills and Talents*. London: Department for Education.

<sup>3</sup> The Gatsby Charitable Foundation. (2014). *Good Career Guidance*. London: The Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> See the appendix for further details on the approach to analysis taken in this paper.

<sup>5</sup> For these and other examples, please see: Mann, A. and Dawkins, J. (2014). *Employer Engagement in Education: Literature Review*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust.

Employer encounters have also been found to have a positive impact on wages. In the UK, a wage premium of 5% was linked to each additional employer experience organised by the school.<sup>6</sup> In the USA, a 10%-13% wage premium was identified in a longitudinal, control-group based evaluation of a work-related learning programme, which contained both in-school employer engagement and work-based experiences.<sup>6</sup>

The benefits that have been identified are particularly important as they result from interventions that take up a relatively small amount of the school day. Typically careers activities might account for 1% to 2% of total school time for pupils in secondary education.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that such interventions could fit easily into the school year and lead to proven benefits for young people.

Since The Careers & Enterprise Company was founded, new research has emerged which strengthens the case for employer encounters and workplace experiences. Three insights are worth highlighting in the context of the Careers Strategy.

***(i) Employer encounters and workplace experiences only fulfil their potential when supported by a good careers programme.***

Employer encounters and workplace experiences need to be embedded in broader programmes of careers and enterprise learning. Research shows that in schools with the best careers provision young people were 40% more likely to have found meetings with career-related speakers very helpful.<sup>8</sup> There is also evidence that schools play a key role in preparing young people for employer encounters and workplace experiences and in helping them to reflect on the experience afterwards.<sup>9</sup> These findings endorse the holistic approach of the Gatsby Benchmarks as essential to securing benefits from employer contact.

***(ii) Disadvantaged young people with weaker networks benefit far more from employer encounters and workplace experiences than those with strong networks.***

Young people who are born into well-connected families have an advantage in their career over those who are less well-connected. However, meeting employers through your school can compensate for a more disadvantaged background. A programme of careers talks with external speakers had little to no average future wage benefit for young people who already said they had family connections to help them land a job, unlike the 8.5% average wage premium for young people without those connections.<sup>10</sup> These findings reinforce the emphasis in the Careers Strategy that employer encounters and workplace experiences have a valuable role to play in improving social mobility.

<sup>6</sup> For these and other examples, please see: Hughes, D., Mann, A., Barnes, S-A., Baldauf, B. and McKeown, R. (2016). *Careers Education: International Literature Review*. London: Education Endowment Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> Allowing for 6 hours across the 190 days in the typical school year gives around 8,000 hours across seven years. We estimate that the minimum set of seven employer encounters and two workplace experiences would total 75 to 150 hours, reflecting 1%-2% of the time available.

<sup>8</sup> Percy, C. and Kashefpakdel, E.T. (2018). Insiders or outsiders, who do you trust? Engaging employers in school-based career activities. In Mann, A., Huddleston, P., and Kashefpakdel, E.T. (Eds.), *Essays on Employer Engagement in Education*. London & New York: Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> Rehill, J., Kashefpakdel, E.T. and Mann, A. (2017). *What Works? The Evidence on Careers Events*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

<sup>10</sup> Mann, A., Kashefpakdel, E.T., and Percy, C. (2018). Socialised social capital? The capacity of schools to use careers provision to compensate for social capital deficiencies among teenagers. In Mann, A., Huddleston, P., and Kashefpakdel, E.T. (Eds.), *Essays on Employer Engagement in Education*. London & New York: Routledge.

**(iii) The benefits of employer encounters and workplace experiences extend beyond the “four or more” encounters established in previous research.<sup>11</sup>**

The evidence suggests that the more employer encounters a young person has, the greater the benefits they will receive from them. For instance, the wage premium associated with careers talks from outside speakers has been shown to continue increasing up to 30 or more talks in a year.<sup>12</sup> Expert panels of head teachers and careers experts have also endorsed the idea of ensuring that young people have at least 100 hours experience of the world of work by the age of 16.<sup>13</sup> These findings support the increase in ambition to the minimum standards set by the Gatsby Benchmarks and endorsed by the Careers Strategy.

There are lots of ways that engaging with employers helps young people. Our *What Works?* series shows the diverse range of employer engagement activities and the impacts associated with them.<sup>14</sup> Different kinds of activities are likely to enhance young people’s career building in different ways. Some provide them with new and trusted information, others develop their motivation and personal effectiveness, still others develop the skills that they need to manage their career and be successful at work. Finally, some forms of employer engagement introduce young people to new contacts and help them to build their network.

Given the complexity, diversity and fast-changing nature of the labour market, it’s important for young people to engage with lots of employers and to develop a wide range of skills and personal attributes. Furthermore, the more encounters that a young person

has the more likely they are to encounter an individual, activity, idea or opportunity that really resonates with them.

Our previous research, *State of the Nation 2017*, demonstrates that the Gatsby Benchmarks set a challenging standard, with very few schools achieving them all.<sup>15</sup> However, it also shows that the Benchmarks are achievable by providing examples of schools meeting each Benchmark across all regions and in diverse circumstances, and of a small number of schools achieving all of the Benchmarks. In that analysis 37% of 578 secondary schools reported that they fully met benchmark 5 (which deals with employer encounters), 39% that they fully met benchmark 6 (which deals with workplace experiences) and 21% that they fully met both.<sup>16</sup>

The existing evidence therefore suggests that the seven encounters and two workplace experiences specified in benchmarks 5 and 6 are valuable and possible and that they have been achieved in a substantial minority of English schools. However, at present they are far from being the standard offer across English schools. We will now move on to explore the level and distribution of employer engagement in more detail.

<sup>11</sup> Percy, C. and Mann, A. 2014. School-mediated employer engagement and labour market outcomes for young adults Wage premia, NEET outcomes and career confidence. In Mann, A., Stanley, J. and Archer, L. (Eds.), *Understanding Employer Engagement in Education*. London & New York: Routledge, pp.205-220.

<sup>12</sup> Kashfepakdel, E.T. and Percy, C. (2017). Career education that works: an economic analysis using the British Cohort Study. *Journal of Education and Work*, 30(3), 217-234.

<sup>13</sup> London Councils. (2015). *London Ambitions: Shaping a Successful Careers Offer For All Young Londoners*. London: London Councils.

<sup>14</sup> All of the papers in our *What Works?* series are available from <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/research/publications/20>.

<sup>15</sup> The Careers & Enterprise Company. (2017). *State of the Nation 2017: Careers and Enterprise Provision in England's Schools*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

<sup>16</sup> To qualify as meeting the benchmark schools must achieve 76%+ pupil participation.



To meet the **ambition** set out in the Careers Strategy employers need to offer **at least 4 million employer encounters** and **at least 1 million workplace encounters** every year.<sup>17</sup>

# 2 | How big is the gap in employer engagement?

**To meet the ambition set out in the Careers Strategy employers need to offer at least 4 million employer encounters and at least 1 million workplace encounters every year.<sup>17</sup> In fact they are likely to need to offer more unless we can ensure that such encounters are equally spread across the country and across school years.**

Our analysis first reviews what proportion of this minimum set of activities is taking place today, identifying a *volume gap*, and secondly highlights a *problem of patchiness* that has emerged from the current mechanisms for connecting schools and employers.

## The volume gap

To explore the existing level of provision we analysed data from the self-evaluation questionnaires completed via the Compass Tool we make available to schools and the school engagement surveys conducted as part of the recent evaluation of our network. The results of this analysis (Figure 1) show that approximately one third of the employer engagement specified in benchmarks 5 and 6 is being missed today.

These gaps are more severe for employer encounters in Year 7 and Year 8 where only around half of all young people participate in at least one such encounter. Years 10 to 12 fared the best with around four in five young people reaching the benchmark. Workplace experiences are generally less frequently achieved than employer encounters, perhaps reflecting the greater difficulty of delivering activities outside of school. Around two in five young people do not have a workplace experience in Key Stage 4 with a similar amount missing out in Key Stage 5.

Extrapolating these results to a total number of missing encounters and workplace experiences across England suggests that around 1.7 million employer encounters and workplace experiences are missing annually across England.

This breaks down into approximately 0.5 million workplace experiences and 1.2 million employer encounters.

<sup>17</sup> Numbers are rounded from a calculation of the current cohort size of students across England according to census data (typically 500-600k each year) and the need to provide encounters to seven cohorts each year and workplace experiences to two cohorts each year.

**Figure 1: Employer encounters and workplace experience missing by year group and Key Stage (schools only)**



Around 60% of the shortfall in employer encounters takes place in Key Stage 3. Because these missing employer encounters and workplace experiences can be found both within and between schools, with no strong concentrations in particular areas, they are hard to target.

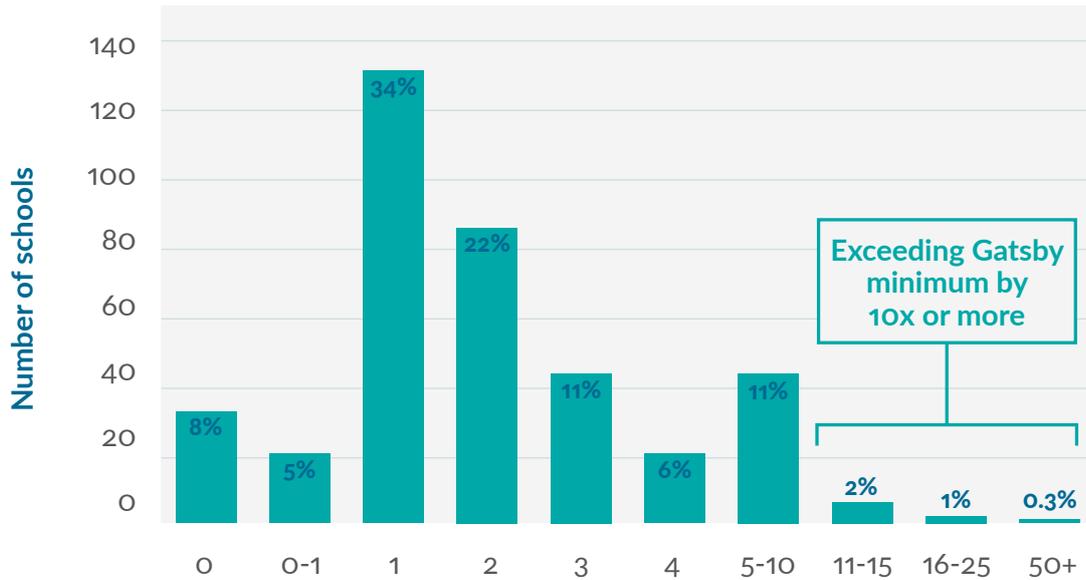
From the point of view of a young person our analysis suggests that at best only 37% of young people are having one meaningful encounter with an employer in each of their seven years of secondary education.<sup>18</sup> This highlights the issue of even distribution: while only a third of the minimum nine encounters are missing on average, at least two thirds of young people fail to get the full complement.

### The problem of patchiness

Examining individual year groups reveals the extent of unequal distribution in today's schools. Figure 2 looks at the differences in the level of employer encounters provided by schools to their year 11 students. It shows that a substantial minority (8%) provide no encounters and a further 5% who did not provide enough encounters for one per pupil, making a total of 13% of schools which are falling short on average. Nonetheless, there are 28% of schools who report an average of three to ten encounters, as compared to a Gatsby minimum standard of only one. 3% of schools report an average number of encounters from eleven up to fifty or more.

<sup>18</sup> See the Analysis 2 section of the appendix for how we have calculated the proportion of young people who are likely to be receiving the full Gatsby level of provision.

**Figure 2: Distribution of average number of employer encounters across Year 11 cohorts by school**



Continuing with Year 11 employer encounters as an example, the minimum number needed each year to give each student a single encounter is around 600,000. However, extrapolating from the distribution described in Figure 2 would suggest over double that is taking place today. But despite all that activity, there are still 13% of schools not providing enough for every Year 11 pupil to have one. This is the peaky and patchy landscape of provision across the country.

The *problem of patchiness* is not an argument for redistribution of current employer engagement. Such redistribution would be difficult, both for pragmatic and for policy reasons. Pragmatically, there are no tools for compelling employer volunteers to stop helping those they currently help and for moving elsewhere – especially where that might be a considerable distance away or where the employer has a personal connection to the school or college or has invested time in building up a relationship with the school. From a policy perspective, the logic of a minimum standard is to be a floor not a ceiling. We support

those below, rather than proactively punish those currently above it, especially where research shows that benefits to the individual and the economy continue to accrue above that minimum level. Nonetheless, the logic of a minimum standard also calls for us to take proactive steps focusing on those who are currently below the standard, targeting new investment and resources disproportionately in their direction.

However, the fact that a sizeable proportion of schools are exceeding the Gatsby minimum and that there are a number of ‘super-engaged’ schools reinforces the conclusion that this standard is achievable. We will now turn to look at the implications of this analysis.

# 3 | Implications

The purpose of this research has been to consider the implications of the Careers Strategy for employer engagement activity in England.

We welcome the government's Careers Strategy and believe that it is setting an ambitious but achievable agenda. By setting a minimum standard of access for all young people, it places a valuable emphasis on social mobility and requires a focus on distributing activity more evenly than today.

Our analysis has identified both a volume gap and a problem of patchiness that we need to tackle in order to achieve the government's ambitions.

The *volume gap* analysis reveals that at least two thirds of young people are currently missing Gatsby's standard minimum of seven employer encounters during secondary education. The total number of missing encounters and workplace experiences is approximately 1.7 million a year across England.

The *problem of patchiness* highlights that some schools and colleges are doing dramatically more employer engagement than others, at least for particular cohorts of students. This gives hope that much more is possible, but we need to better understand what drives this variation in activity and be clever about how we encourage the near-universal provision of the minimum standard anticipated by Gatsby. If additional funding simply increases provision in areas already above the Benchmark, while those young people can be expected to benefit further, we would be doing an injustice to those not reaching those minimum standards.

Unfortunately, the gaps we face today are difficult to target accurately, as they are not conveniently grouped in individual year groups or regions. Nonetheless, some tendencies can be identified, with gaps most serious in Years 7 and 8, and more serious for workplace experiences than for employer encounters. Policies, such as those included in the Careers Strategy, and the work of The Careers & Enterprise Company (including the provision of targeted funding) will support progress but will only succeed as part of a major collective drive across the sector, from schools, employers and activity providers alike.

The *volume gap* points towards the need for **increased engagement with employers**, but the *problem of patchiness* makes it clear that doing more of the same is not enough. We also need better and deliberate **micro-targeting**, to ensure that where employers are offering their time, they are offering it in the right place and at the right time so that all young people in England can get access to the encounters and experiences that they need.

In terms of **increased engagement with employers**, to reach the minimum 4 million employer encounters and 1 million workplace experiences each year, we need each employer to:

- reach out to one young person a year for every 7 employees in their workforce; and
- provide a workplace experience each year for every 25 employees.<sup>19</sup>

Some employers already do far more than this, not least of which the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) who may have fewer than 25 employees. We need these employers to keep doing what they are doing, indeed to provide more where they can, not only because of the *problem of patchiness* we have today but also because the government's minimum standard for young people is exactly that – a minimum. The evidence shows that young people and the economy continue to benefit as we increase the level of employer engagement beyond those minimum levels.

In terms of **micro-targeting**, we need to think more innovatively about how we engage with schools. We need to work together with employers and schools to identify which schools and which year groups are most short of employer contact, exploring where employers are able to travel a bit further or deploy a few extra staff to reach areas that have a less diverse base of economic activity. It is also essential for employers of all types and stripes to get involved – only then will our young people meet a varied set of role models. Our new data and our regional networks provide a strong starting point for these discussions.

Schools and colleges act as the gatekeepers to young people's time and so activities will not happen if they

do not value and support them. However, the level of resource available to support individual schools and colleges varies widely. Employer volunteering potential and capacity is not evenly distributed, nor is the presence of third party providers to help teachers run programmes of activity, and nor is external funding to support such activity.

In most cases, schools rely on their core budgets and core staff time to deliver employer engagement activities. There are many calls on schools' resources especially the strong pressure that they are under to maximise academic attainment. While employer encounters and workplace experiences can contribute to improving attainment<sup>20</sup> it is not the primary purpose of such careers-related activity. This activity is primarily about preparing young people for future success in the world of work, something which schools and colleges are not as closely scrutinised on. Many schools tell us they would love to provide more employer encounters and workplace experiences, recognising the long-term benefit for many of their students, but they lack the time and capacity to do so. In this context, it is valuable to understand why some schools choose to do ten or twenty times as much as others, what types of activity they are offering, and whether their approaches might be relevant to their peers.

Finally, it is important to highlight that this analysis has focused on the volume and distribution of employer engagement. Other research has also revealed the importance of the quality of employer activities and the uneven distribution of quality with respect to socio-economic background, highlighting concerns over social mobility.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Based on an estimate of the working population from NOMIS. (2018), specifically those economically active and in employment in England, being c. 27.3 million. The presented values of 1 in 7 and 1 in 25 derive from using the more accurate figures of 3.9 million and 1.1 million as numerators. Available from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> [Accessed 26th February 2018].

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, Hughes, D., Mann, A., Barnes, S-A., Baldauf, B., and McKeown, R. (2016). *Careers Education: International Literature Review*. London: Education Endowment Foundation.

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, Percy, C. and Kashefpakdel, E.T. (forthcoming). Social advantage, access to employers and the role of schools in modern British education. In Hooley, T., Sultana, R., & Thomsen, R. (Eds.), *Career Guidance for Emancipation*. London: Routledge.

Analysis by Ofsted<sup>22</sup> as well as insights from young people<sup>23</sup> and employers<sup>24</sup> reveal that there is much to do to bring up quality across the board.

## Recommendations

At The Careers & Enterprise Company we will continue to support high levels of employer engagement and to work with education, employers and careers providers to increase the capacity of the sector to deliver on this. We will also continue to conduct research to increase our understanding about progress towards the standards set out in the Careers Strategy.

In April we launched our plan setting out how we will be responding to the Careers Strategy. In it we described how we will be rolling out our Enterprise Adviser network to every school and college in England, scaling up support for the Gatsby Benchmarks and testing and sharing best practice. This is an ambitious and transformational plan which will drive the careers landscape in England to evolve and improve.

To support this work we would like to ask employers to:

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As well as our work supporting employers and schools to work together, we will also commit to conducting new research to help the sector understand the challenge and move towards solving it, covering such topics as:

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- how some schools are able to provide very high levels of employer engagement;
- defining a 'best in class' level of employer engagement, to complement the minimum standard set out in the Careers Strategy; and
- the return on investment from different approaches to careers and enterprise provision.

<sup>22</sup> For Ofsted reports highlighting the need to do more on quality and consistency, please see: Ofsted. (2013). *Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012*. London: Ofsted; Ofsted. (2016). *Getting ready for work*. London: Ofsted.

<sup>23</sup> For young person views, see for instance the YouGov survey reporting that only 27% of young adults felt that their employer engagement activities at school had been helpful upon entering the labour market (Mann, A. et al. (2017). *Contemporary transitions: Young Britons reflect on life after secondary school and college*. London: Education and Employers).

<sup>24</sup> For employer views, see for instance the CBI employer survey in 2017 in which 84% of employers felt the quality of careers advice for young people was not good enough (CBI. (2017). *Helping the UK thrive*. London: CBI).



At The Careers & Enterprise Company we will continue to **support** high levels of employer engagement and to work with education, employers and careers providers to **increase the capacity of the sector** to deliver on this.

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# Appendix: Research methodology

## Data source and quality

This report draws primarily on aggregated, anonymised data from two sources: (i) the Compass survey tool; and (ii) a survey of schools conducted by Pye Tait as part of their evaluation of The Careers & Enterprise Company in 2017.

The online Compass survey tool was developed jointly by The Careers & Enterprise Company and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, from whom it has received ongoing funding and advisory support. It is hosted by the Company and is supported by an advisory board drawn from the sector. The tool is a series of questions designed to measure the Gatsby Benchmarks and is completed on a voluntary, self-reported basis by schools. When schools join the Enterprise Adviser Network, they are encouraged to complete Compass, if they haven't already. In these cases, they may be supported through the survey by their Enterprise Adviser or Enterprise Coordinator. For more details, please visit our website: [www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/enterprise-adviser-network](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/enterprise-adviser-network).

The Compass data used is a May 2017 snapshot of the database, very similar to the sample used in the State of the Nation 2017 report. Pages 3 to 4 of that report analyse the characteristics of the sample and compare them with the school population in England. These analyses cover school type, presence of a sixth form and region, providing confidence that the sample is indicative of the general population of schools. There is likely to be some sample bias as the schools that complete Compass may be different in their engagement with careers and enterprise provision to those that did not complete the tool. However, it is not clear what direction this sample bias would operate in as possible drivers have been identified in both directions and the results suggest that we have schools at all levels of engagement completing the tool. We have therefore not attempted to adjust for sample bias.

Pye Tait were commissioned to provide an evaluation of The Company's Enterprise Adviser Network from 2015 to 2017. As part of this evaluation, they conducted an online survey of 503 schools, among the questions for which were several that captured activity against the Gatsby Benchmarks and which can be used for this report. All the schools surveyed were part of The Company's Enterprise Adviser Network. With 2,007 schools and colleges in the Network at the time of Pye Tait's evaluation, this reflects a substantial proportion of the secondary schools and colleges in England. For more information on Pye Tait's approach to the evaluation, please see their report.

## Analysis 1: Employer encounters and workplace experiences missing by year group (Benchmarks 5 and 6; schools only)

For Benchmark 5, employer encounters, the questions were framed in similar ways in both Pye Tait and Compass surveys and data from both are used to generate the results. Overall the gaps were slightly higher in the Pye Tait sample, but with variation by year group and overall within normal bounds for statistical variation given the sample size.

For the Pye Tait survey, schools were asked for the total number of pupils in each year group, from Year 7 to Year 13 and for the number of pupils by year group who had at least one employer encounter, enabling a direct ratio to be calculated. Data cleaning was applied by both Pye Tait and The Company to a small number of extreme answers where it was clear schools had not understood the questions.

For the Compass survey, the questions are more involved. Schools were asked whether the "overwhelming majority or all" of each year group had participated in at least one meaningful employer encounter, with 76%+ given as an indication of overwhelming majority. Where schools say yes,

we assume there are no gaps in that year group, i.e. the answer may reflect 100% participation or there may be a good reason why a small number do not participate. Where the overwhelming majority of a particular year group did not participate, we apply the percentage who participated in at least one meaningful encounter each year at the school. These answers were reported in bands from 0%, 1%-25%, 26%-50%, 51%-75%, 76%-99%, 100%, and Don't Know; for calculations the midpoint of each band is taken and Don't Know is treated as 0%. Finally, to obtain the number of pupils in each year group, we drew on government records from the school's unique reference number (URN), provided as part of the survey. Where there were no students in a particular year according to government data, even if the survey questions had been answered for that year, they were not included in the analysis.

The total number of pupils in each year group across all qualifying schools in both samples who have an employer encounter is added up and divided by the total number of pupils. This implicitly weights responses by the number of pupils in each year group and removes schools with no pupils in each year group for the calculation in that year group, allowing for more reasonable extrapolation to a wider population of schools. In this way, the exact sample size varies by year as schools are implicitly only included if they have at least one student in that year group, subject to the following restrictions. Within Compass, just schools that were still open were included, giving a total potential sample size of 443. Within Pye Tait, only schools who provided a URN and answered the relevant questions are included. Schools who answered the Compass survey are excluded from the Pye Tait sample to avoid double-weighting those returns. This results in a total potential sample size of 358.

For Benchmark 6, only the Compass dataset is used as the questions align directly to the structure of the Benchmark. The Pye Tait questions provide some indication and are used as a sense-check, but are not sufficiently close to the necessary definitions to be included. In the Compass survey, schools were

asked directly: "Approximately what proportion of your students have had a meaningful experience of a workplace by the end of Year 11?" and "What proportion of students would you estimate obtain a meaningful experience of a workplace during Years 12 and 13 (whether they already have had workplace experience before this age or not)?" The same answer bands as before are available and the bands are treated the same in this analysis. The population references used are the year 11 and year 13 cohort sizes.

In order to extrapolate to the 1.7 million total missing employer encounters and workplace experiences, it is necessary to make estimates for the college sector<sup>25</sup>. The college sector accounts for some 0.8 million learners across Key Stage 5, compared to around 0.4 million learners in schools, so uncertainty in this sector is significant for Key Stage 5. Unfortunately, the Compass and Pye Tait surveys were neither designed for nor targeted towards college respondents. Nonetheless, 14 college responses were received from which an initial estimate can be generated. A degree of confidence can be taken in the observation that there were no qualitatively major differences between average Key Stage 5 ratios for schools as compared to colleges across that sample.

## Analysis 2: Proportion of young people attaining Benchmark 5

Analysis 2 builds on the cleaner data derived from Pye Tait in analysis 1, but seeks to estimate the experience from a young person's perspective by the time they leave education aged 18/19, rather than assessing each year group individually. The sample size is 419 schools, larger than in analysis 1 as there is no need to remove schools who also completed Compass.

Since the surveys are snapshot data of year group-level views, bridging assumptions are required to translate this to a student-level view. In order to proceed, we assume we can treat this snapshot of all year groups simultaneously as a reflection of the seven-year journey a young person would take through the year groups,

<sup>25</sup> This analysis follows the Association of Colleges definition of a college, i.e. schools with sixth forms who name themselves as a college but appear in the Department for Education schools census would be counted as a school rather than a college.

and assume that young people stay in the same school as much as possible (noting that most schools are not all-through schools).

Two further sets of assumptions are needed, to specify what happened when the young person was not in that school and to what extent those who miss out on employer encounters in one year are the same as those who miss out in another year. As there are multiple possible assumptions for those two factors, we identify two sets, one which results in a lower estimate and one which results in a higher estimate, such that the actual number is likely to lie between them.

For the lower estimate, we assume that all individuals had the employer encounter in years when they were not in that particular school and assume maximum overlap of gaps across year groups. For instance, if 10 students did not get an encounter in year 7, and 15 students did not get an encounter in year 8, we assume that 10 of those 15 would be the same as the 10 who missed the encounter in year 7, so that the maximum number possible do achieve the minimum standard.

The implementation of this estimate within the Pye Tait dataset is to take the maximum number of gaps in a single year group for each school and divide that by the largest number of students in a single year group for that school (only applied to year groups with a non-zero number of students). As with analysis 1, the results are summed directly, with an implicit weighting across schools according to the number of pupils in the year group.

For the higher estimate, we assume that all individuals who could have been at the school in a particular year group (i.e. the school does offer teaching to that year group) but were not, missed the employer encounter in that year. However, we assume they would have had the employer encounter if it were year groups outside the school's control. We further assume minimum overlap between year groups.

The implementation of this estimate within the Pye Tait dataset is to add up all gaps across all non-zero year groups (gives the minimum overlap assumption) add on the difference between the year group with largest total number and smallest total number (assumes those who came from outside the school got nothing), divide by the year group with the largest number of people, and cap at 100%.

These two methods suggest a range of 19% to 37% of young people who reach at least one employer encounter in each of the seven years. Including the requirements of Benchmark 6 for two workplace experiences would further reduce the proportion of young people benefiting from the recommended minimum level of activity.

### Analysis 3: Distribution of average number of employer encounters across year 11 cohorts by school

Analysis 3 draws on the same sample of Pye Tait respondents as analysis 2, but only includes those with at least one pupil in year 11, giving a sample of 396 schools.

Pye Tait asked schools directly: "In 2015-16, considering all students in each year group, what is the average number of meaningful encounters with employers at the school/college location for each student?" with answers requested for each year group. In 91% of cases, this is the answer used for the analysis. However, 9% of schools with pupils in year 11 were unable to answer this question and left it blank. To avoid including a nil return for these schools, we draw on a separate question which had higher completion rates and reported the number of pupils in year 11 having at least one encounter. This can be divided by the total number of pupils in year 11 to provide an entry for the 9% of schools missing the more detailed data. This is likely to bias the analysis towards slightly lower levels of employer encounters, as some of the 9% would likely have some students benefiting from more than one encounter in the year, but this effect would not materially shift the conclusions.



THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY

**The Careers & Enterprise Company**  
2-7 Clerkenwell Green  
Clerkenwell  
London EC1R 0DE

[www.careersandenterprise.co.uk](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk)