

2021

Trends in Careers Education



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About this report

This report presents trends in careers education over the past two years. It is focused on areas relevant to current debates and where there has been substantial change since before the pandemic.

The trends were identified from the findings of a national dataset of 3,893 secondary schools and colleges (78% of all state-funded schools and colleges) and the careers programmes they delivered in the 2020/21 academic year. The results were compared with data from two years previously to see how careers education has changed since before the pandemic and reviewed alongside wider evidence published during the last year.¹

The primary data source for this report is drawn from a digital tool, Compass, used by Careers Leaders in England's schools and colleges to measure careers provision across the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

Compass data is based on Careers Leaders' self-reported evaluation of their careers programme and use of this tool is voluntary. The goal is to promote continuous school and college-led improvement. Guidance, training and resources are provided to support the use of Compass.

The Careers & Enterprise Company, as the national body for careers education, tracks national and regional progress against the benchmarks, which are the international standard for best practice in careers education. This insight is shared publicly to inform policy and practice.

[See the full set of results from Compass](#)

[Find out more about The Careers & Enterprise Company's plans for the year ahead](#)



¹ For previous years' reports about careers education, go to <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/archive/>



Foreword

Oli de Botton

Chief Executive at The Careers & Enterprise Company

Last year was a year like no other in education - and the world of work. And whilst it is easy to be pessimistic about what has been lost, the extraordinary efforts of schools, colleges and employers - detailed in this report - give cause for optimism. Our collective mission to help every young person find their best next step must be part of the way we help this generation bounce back.

Past, present and future

One way of thinking about the purpose of education is to see it as connecting the past, the present and the future. The past being shorthand for the powerful knowledge children need, the present standing for supporting well-being and the future for making sure children are ready for what comes next.

High quality careers education takes care of the future part. Like all durable things in education, it starts with a whole school or college approach full of crafted inputs from teachers, specialists and employers and ends up opening pathways for young people based on aspirations rather than circumstance.

Careers education is fundamentally inclusive - dispelling stereotypes and amplifying high quality technical and vocational routes. No binary distinction between academic and technical, just a no wrong door approach.

What happened last year?

This report seeks to share trends in careers education since before the pandemic. It charts the ups and downs, the innovation, the progress, the areas we need to work on. We have included perspectives from experts - researchers, thought leaders, practitioners - to help us chart a way forward.

Some trends point to the power of new approaches. Teachers used the curriculum to highlight where subjects can lead, creating more opportunities for students to think about their future. At its most ambitious, 'careers in the curriculum' meant teachers and employers co-designing meaningful and relevant learning - inside and outside the classroom.

Equally, while work experience was down overall, virtual innovation pointed to the possibility of dynamic and powerful new models. Many businesses reached young people across a wider area and provided opportunities in harder-to-reach industries. Some began using different formats, including longer-form programmes, and new mediums, including mobile phones and virtual technology.

Other trends highlight the value of depth and quality. So whilst there was information about apprenticeships in the system, there is more to do to convert interest to uptake. And whilst there was more emphasis on personal support, we need to make sure we reach every young person.

What comes next?

Employers are showing greater appetite to get involved, careers leaders are becoming more powerful and young people are demanding more guidance to navigate the opportunities and challenges that await them. This context gives us a platform to work together to deliver greater impact.



Key terms

Gatsby Benchmarks

The eight aspects of high-quality careers provision based on international evidence.²

- 1| A stable careers programme
- 2| Learning from career and labour market information
- 3| Addressing the needs of each student
- 4| Linking curriculum learning to careers
- 5| Encounters with employers and employees
- 6| Experiences of workplaces
- 7| Encounters with further and higher education
- 8| Personal guidance

Compass

A digital tool used by schools and colleges to track careers provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks based on approximately 50 questions. The data from Compass forms the basis of this report. Compass+ is an upgraded version which allows Careers Leaders to track individual interventions and cohorts.

Careers education

A term used in this report to encompass all elements of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Careers Hub

Groups of schools, colleges, employers and providers within a local area working together to improve practice. Hub Leads oversee the work and target support to local priorities.

Careers Leader

A leadership role overseeing a college or school's provision. Careers Leaders implement and quality assure a careers strategy, network with employers and providers and coordinate the contributions of Careers Advisers and subject teachers.

Careers Adviser

A careers professional who provides personal guidance to students and may also have other roles in relation to the delivery of careers provision.

Enterprise Adviser

A volunteer from business matched with a school or college to provide strategic support on the careers programme.

Cornerstone Employer

Provides the employer voice and leadership within a Careers Hub and works nationally, with other cornerstones, on shared careers-related priorities.

² Gatsby Charitable Foundation (2014). Good career guidance. London: Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

Executive Summary

This report seeks to draw out key trends in careers education in the 2020/21 academic year compared with two years previous (before the pandemic). It is based on Careers Leaders' evaluation of careers provision in 3,893 state-funded schools and colleges and wider research published over the past year.

[Further data is available to review here](#)

Trend 1

Careers education became more prominent in the curriculum last year

The number of staff helping students explore their future has expanded beyond Careers Leaders and Careers Advisers. More classroom teachers linked specific subject content to jobs and industry, highlighting the pathways into professions and the skills required. At its most ambitious, careers in the curriculum meant teachers and employers co-designed meaningful and relevant learning.

When teaching maths, 64% of schools linked parts of the curriculum to the world of work for most students. A similar proportion (65%) taught English in this way. This is an increase of 44% and 45% since 2019. Examples from schools included teaching shape and measurement by responding to a challenge set by an engineering firm and reading 'An Inspector Calls' while working with local charities to understand the theme of social responsibility.

Colleges are further ahead in this area, having long been leaders in linking vocational subjects to specific jobs. In 2021, 90% of colleges reported that most of their students experienced career-relevant learning, up 22% since before the pandemic.

The majority of special schools linked a person-centred curriculum to future careers or progression pathways.

Trend 2

Innovation helped young people to engage with employers despite the impact of the pandemic

Young people had fewer experiences of the workplace than two years previously due to the pandemic. The proportion of schools reporting that most of their students had access to a workplace experience by the end of Year 11 fell from 57% in 2019 to 39% in 2021. In colleges, it fell from 46% to 40%.

Other employer encounters with young people remained stable. Some 57% of schools and 77% of colleges reported that most of their students had an employer encounter each year, (compared with 55% of schools and 73% of colleges in 2019). The ways in which young people interacted with employers included online talks, dedicated events hosted on digital platforms and virtual careers fairs.

Whilst lockdowns reduced the overall volume of workplace experiences, virtual interaction spurred innovation.

Employers were able to reach young people across a wider area and provide opportunities in harder-to-reach industries. Some began using different formats to achieve meaningful engagement, including exposure to a wider array of teams within an organisation and longer-form programmes. Others used new mediums, including mobile phones and virtual technology.

Feedback from Careers Hub Leads showed that nine in ten expect a blend of virtual and face-to-face to stay, the latter being particularly important for learning about hands-on, practical professions.

Trend 3

There was information about apprenticeships in the education system, but there is work to do to convert interest to uptake

Schools and colleges used a range of approaches to increase awareness. Providers showcased their offer, businesses were invited in, support organisations delivered programmes and apprentices themselves shared their experiences.

Last year 84% of schools reported that most students had access to information about the full range of apprenticeships, a continued increase from 2019 driven mainly by schools with sixth forms.

This work appears to have had some impact on student understanding. Research by the Department for Education showed that, by the end of last year, Year 9s and 10s had almost as strong an awareness of apprenticeships as A Levels.³

New evidence confirmed the importance of increased access to information.⁴ Apprenticeship uptake for school leavers in 2018 was 16% higher in schools that provided information to most or all students compared with the schools that did so for a small minority.

There remains work to do to meet growing student demand for more detailed information about all non-academic pathways, including apprenticeships, and addressing the barriers to translating interest into uptake.

Trend 4

There was an increased focus on individuals and their context through personal guidance, links to the labour market and digital tools

Some 80% of secondary schools and 65% of special schools reported providing personal guidance interviews to most students. 95% of colleges made interviews with qualified advisers available.

There was a 24% increase in schools providing labour market information to most of their students, with 73% of schools and 77% of colleges reporting this in 2021 (compared with 59% and 63% in 2019). This was often supported by Careers Leaders being linked to organisations with a role in local economic growth, such as Combined Authorities or Local Enterprise Partnerships. Local employers played an important role too.

There was greater use of a range of digital tools by Careers Leaders to personalise provision. There are 2,000 schools now using the Compass+ careers platform to manage their programme, to target support and collect student feedback systematically.



Trend 5

Training and local collaboration led to increased progress

Careers Leaders continued to play a central role in careers provision and took advantage of new tools and resources. Over 600 Careers Leaders took part in formal training during 2020/21, as well as more informal masterclasses. The majority drew on support from a business volunteer partnered with their school or college.

Training was shown to make a positive difference to Careers Leader knowledge and skills, the quality of careers programmes and performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks.⁴ Schools and colleges fully achieved an average of 4.2 benchmarks if they had a trained Careers Leader (compared with 3.8 for those without).

Careers Hubs facilitate shared learning between schools, colleges and employers and target support to local need. The longer schools and colleges have been in a Careers Hub, the higher their Gatsby Benchmark scores. Those in Careers Hubs for a full three years met an average of 4.8 Gatsby Benchmarks.

By the end of last academic year 45% of schools and colleges were part of a Careers Hub and reported stronger provision across every benchmark.

Trend 6

New evidence shows that improving careers provision leads to better outcomes for young people

In the first year that destinations data could be linked to Compass returns, analysis showed a positive link between the Gatsby Benchmarks and the likelihood of a student being in education, employment or training (EET) after Year 11.⁵

Based on data from about 2,400 schools, each benchmark achieved by a school increased the likelihood of a student being EET. This amounted to a 9.7% decline in the proportion of students who are not in sustained education, employment or training post-16 if schools meet all eight Gatsby Benchmarks compared to schools achieving none. The decline was twice as great at 20.1% in the schools with the most disadvantaged students.

Evidence from the North-East Gatsby Pilot evaluation, also published last academic year, found a link between the number of Gatsby Benchmarks a school or college achieved and the career readiness of their students.⁶

³IFF Research (2021). Covid-19 Parent and Pupil Panel: July findings report. DFE-RR1157. Department for Education.

⁴Percy, C. & Tanner, E. (2021). The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

⁵Percy, C. & Tanner, E. (2021). The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

⁶Hanson, J., Moore, N., Clark, L. and Neary, S. (2021). An Evaluation of the North East of England pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance. University of Derby, International Centre for Guidance Studies.

Trend 1

Careers education became more prominent in the curriculum last year





44%

increase in schools linking English lessons to the world of work

The number of staff working on careers education has expanded beyond Careers Leaders and Careers Advisers. More classroom teachers linked key subject content to future careers, highlighting the pathways into professions and the skills needed. At its most ambitious careers in the curriculum meant teachers and employers co-designed meaningful and relevant learning.

Teachers were an important part of the careers conversation

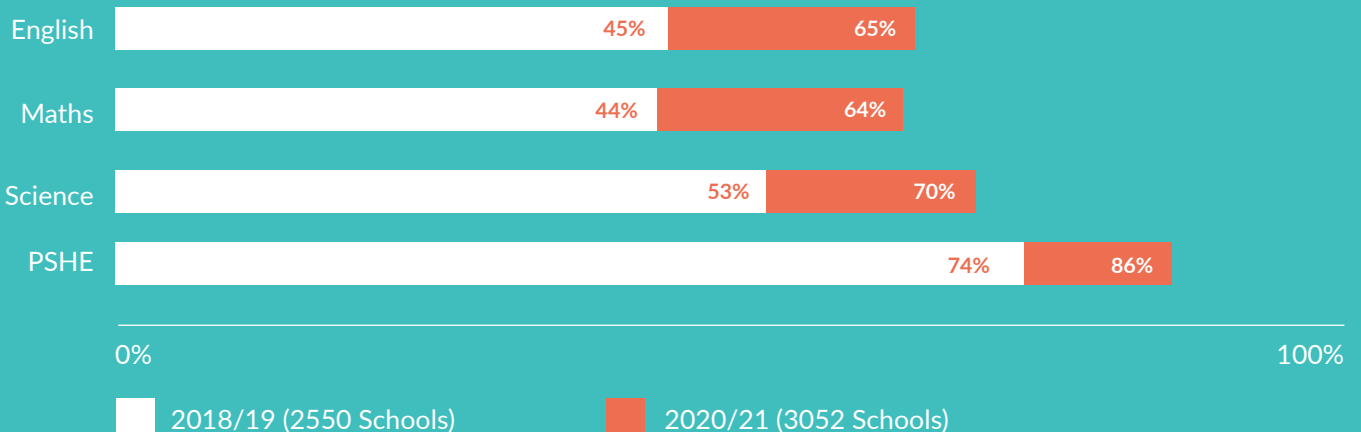
When teaching maths, 64% of schools made links between certain subject content and the world of work for most students. A similar proportion (65%) taught English in this way. This is an increase of 44% and 45% since 2019 (Chart 1). In practice this might mean explaining units of measurements by referencing their use in industries like catering or teaching textual analysis by dissecting and exploring different business propositions.

The proportion of schools teaching careers through aspects of science increased by a third (32%) over the past two years. 70% of schools ensured that most students accessed this type of learning.

PSHE continued to be the subject most closely related to careers learning (and was up by 16% over the past two years).

Chart 1: Change in the proportion of secondary schools achieving Gatsby Benchmark 4 sub-benchmarks

76-100% of students have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of subjects to future career paths



Source: Compass data from 2018/19 and 2020/21



Building careers into the curriculum was most common in schools that had been part of a Careers Hub for longest. 68% of schools in a Careers Hub for three years fully met Gatsby Benchmark 4, compared with 52% of schools that were not part of a Careers Hub.

A 'careers focused' college curriculum

Colleges have long been leaders in linking vocational subjects to the specific jobs a learner might go onto. Colleges also deliver a huge variety of non-vocational courses, and research published this year showed they are putting more emphasis on a 'careers focused curriculum' across the whole college⁷.

In the research, embedding careers learning within core teaching and learning was seen as an effective route to engage learners. This often involved discussions about labour market information, inviting in guest speakers from different industries and employers delivering workshops that related the curriculum to their sector.

The insights from College Careers Leaders were reflected in the Compass data. In 2020/21, the vast majority of colleges reported that learners experienced a curriculum that highlighted the relevance of their subject to future career paths, with substantial growth over the past two years (Chart 2).

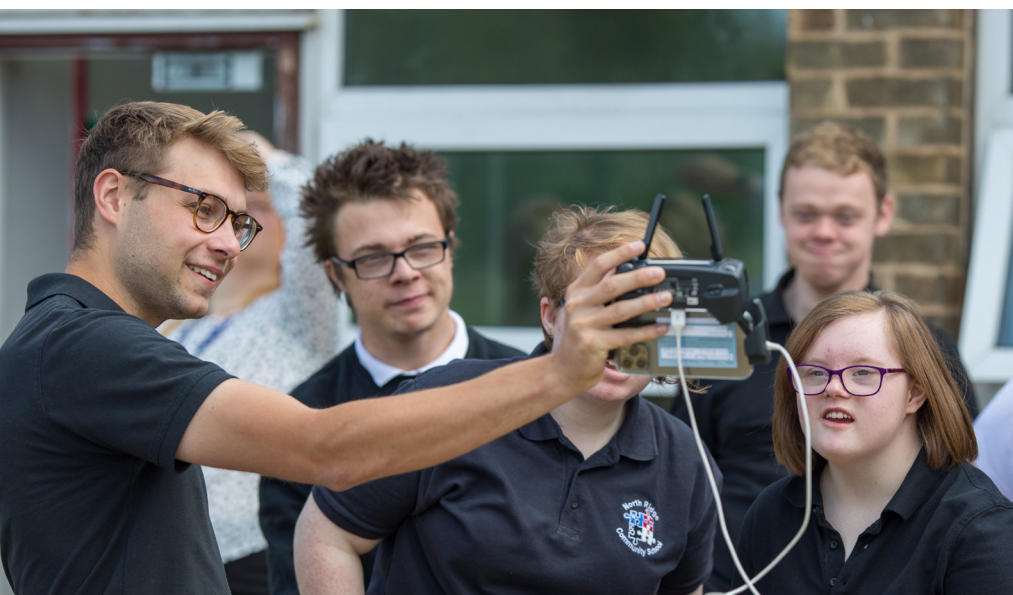
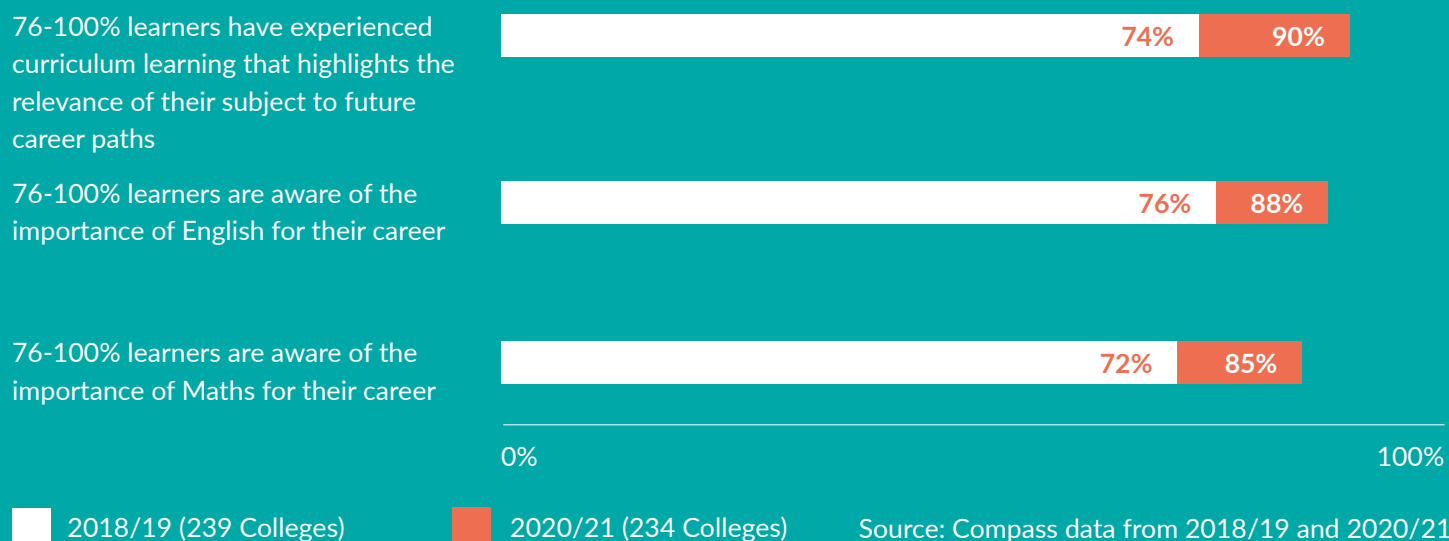


Chart 2: Change in the proportion of colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmark 4 sub-benchmarks



The majority of special schools linked curriculum learning to future pathways

A new national dataset about careers education in special schools was created in 2020/21. 57% of Careers Leaders in special schools (533) and a number of Alternative Providers used a specifically designed Compass tool.⁸ The data returned showed how students learned about the world of work through the day-to-day curriculum and person-centred learning.

88% of special schools reported that they highlighted the relevance of PSHE to future careers or progression paths for most students.

The majority of special schools also highlighted the relevance of English (76%) and maths (73%) to future careers and, to a lesser extent, science (59%).

What does this look like in practice?

Schools and colleges connect the curriculum with careers in many different ways including:

- **Careers-focused curriculum design:** Some schools and colleges spotlight careers in specific lessons, others embed 'career learning objectives' into every lesson. Examples include teachers designing and using resources linking subjects like languages⁹ or computer sciences¹⁰ to industry and the skills required. Others use lessons co-created with employers like Pinewood Studios.¹¹ Weston College in Somerset has created 'career excellence hubs' in each of the college's fourteen faculties. This allows every subject area to have a focus on how it helps to prepare young people for the world of work.¹²
- **Projects with business that extend beyond the classroom:** Thomas Dudley, a 100 year-old manufacturing company in the West Midlands, have worked with local schools to develop history, business, design, English and maths mini-challenges that link topics with jobs in the local economy. Pupils then visit the business, and experience how the skills they learnt could translate into a future career.¹³
- **Careers learning and experiences for classroom teachers:** While training often focuses on the Careers Leader, some classroom teachers are also engaged in careers-related professional learning.¹⁴ An extension of this model, delivered by organisations including the Edge Foundation and STEM Learning, involve 'externships', with teachers spending time with local businesses to increase their knowledge of career pathways.

⁷Gibson, S., Tanner, E. and A. Webster (2021). *Careers Leadership in Colleges: Supporting learners through a 'whole college' approach*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

⁸ Of the 550, 533 were special schools, which is 57% of all special schools in England. Of the 329 alternative providers in England, 65% have completed Compass – either the school or special school version.

⁹ <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/my-learning-my-future-mfl-languages>

¹⁰ <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/my-learning-my-future-computer-scienceit>

¹¹ <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/news/pinewood-studios-helps-to-transform-careers-education-for-tens-of-thousands-of-students/>

¹² <https://www.weston.ac.uk/career-excellence-hubs>

¹³ <https://www.thomasdudley.co.uk/works/schools-programme/>

¹⁴ <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/my-learning-my-future>

Case Study

How a school in Buckinghamshire puts careers at the heart of the curriculum

The Misbourne is a secondary school and sixth form based in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire. Helen Hill has led their careers programme for eight years, and she's seen careers education become more important for the school. "Careers is seen as a bigger priority. As a careers coordinator, I was on my own, now I feel part of a wider team – with more support in school from the senior leadership team and out of school from our Careers Hub."

“

We're making sure every young person learns about careers in every subject, every year they're in school, so they're as prepared as possible when they leave the school gates.

”

Linking the wider curriculum to jobs and careers is a key focus at The Misbourne. "All our Curriculum Leaders are great, and take responsibility for ensuring that careers is embedded in their scheme of work. Many staff organise their own activities but I am always available to discuss ideas and provide contacts from industry to support delivery."

Students in Year 8 maths classes worked with a local computer company to learn about data analysis. Helen said: "Students had to complete a real-world data analysis task from the company, present their findings as though they were in a board meeting, and then be judged by the company's staff. The staff were also ex-students from the school, so our young people could ask them about their career journey."

In GCSE photography, teachers invited a medical photographer and an RAF photographer in to support their class. This helped them see how the skills they were learning applied in a business environment.

Talking about how careers in the curriculum has developed, Helen said: "One of the things that lifted me this year was when I was walking around the school in advance of our open evening and I realised that departments like modern

foreign languages, geography, ICT and science all had noticeboards showing where their subjects can take students in the future. These teachers had taken careers into their own hearts, as this wasn't requested by SLT or me!"

The Misbourne puts careers in the curriculum to improve teaching and learning too: "Yes it's about firing up our young people's imaginations. But it's also about better teaching, making lessons more enjoyable and subjects easier to learn and understand. Careers talks can be great and have a role, but our Curriculum Leaders embrace projects that involve local businesses, like the supportive accountants who come in to work with our business studies sixth form students."

Helen also uses the Compass+ digital platform to monitor how each subject is doing. "I audit each department once a term to check what career plans they have and input how careers is being incorporated into each subject area. We're making sure every young person learns about careers in every subject, every year they're in school, so they're as prepared as possible when they leave the school gates."

An expert's perspective

Olly Newton

Executive Director at the Edge Foundation

When we visited leading schools in the US that are connecting careers into the curriculum, something one of the Superintendents said really stuck with me.

Kids only put up their hands in high school for two reasons – to ask for the bathroom and to say 'when am I ever going to need to use this'. If we can't answer the second question, we might as well stop the lesson right there.

For me this really speaks to the power of Benchmark 4. Yes, it's about weaving strands of careers discovery and exploration through the curriculum so that it moves from something that once happened 'at the end of a very long corridor once a year' to the heart of school life. But it's also about enriching the curriculum itself by bringing it to life with real examples that show young people why the knowledge, skills and attributes they are learning are important to their future. It's a symbiotic relationship.

Careers Leaders and teachers across the country should be rightly proud of this trend, particularly in this challenging year. When they really embed Benchmark 4 they give young people the very best start to their work and life journey. The importance of this area was recognised by the House of Lords Committee on Youth Unemployment, which I had the pleasure of supporting as Specialist Adviser. I have also seen the impact on the ground in the schools we work with, such as the fantastic Firth Park Academy in Sheffield, where I am also an Enterprise Adviser, and where teachers have begun to embed project-based learning with real employer connections to bring the curriculum to life.

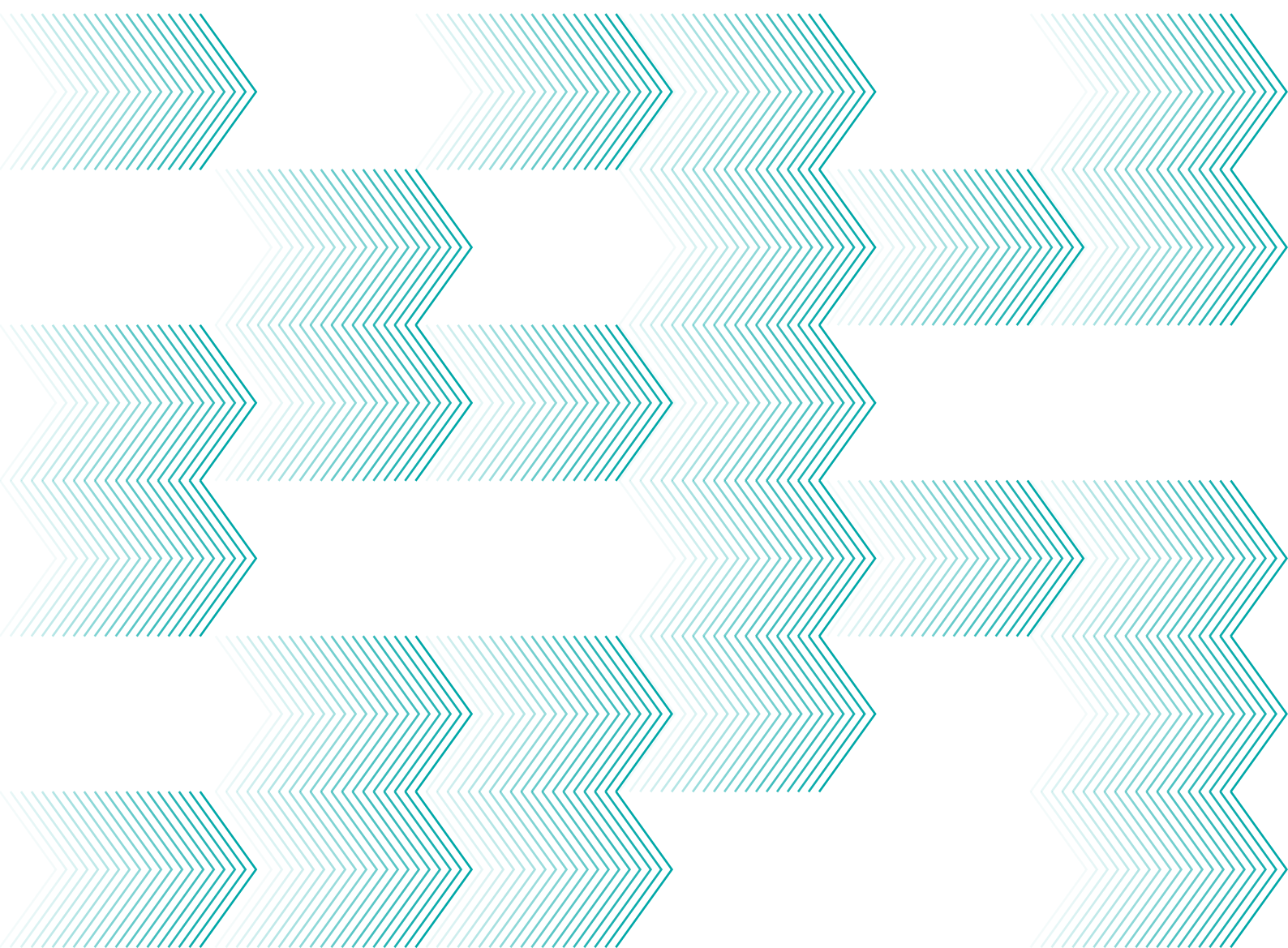
Edge has long been a champion of great vocational education and of our fantastic, and often overlooked, FE sector. So it's also great to see their expertise in this area recognised, but also to see that many colleges are going even further to make careers and connections to real life the centre of their work. We have loved supporting Sunderland College to really take this to the next level over the past year.

Over the coming years, I would love to see these kinds of approaches becoming the norm in every school and college, with teachers and tutors having the time and support to engage with employers on an equal footing and bring back insights and examples that drive engagement and bring the curriculum to life.



Trend 2

Innovation helped young people to engage with employers despite the impact of the pandemic



Fewer young people had opportunities to experience workplaces under lockdown conditions, including, inevitably, face-to-face placements. Despite this other types of employer encounters remained stable and innovative approaches emerged.

There are signs that employers are now starting to open their doors to students again this academic year (although changes in the course of the pandemic may affect this). However there is consensus amongst business and Careers Leaders that virtual approaches can usefully complement face-to-face engagement, with aspects of virtual delivery likely to be retained.^{15 16}

Pandemic disruption impacted opportunities for young people to experience workplaces

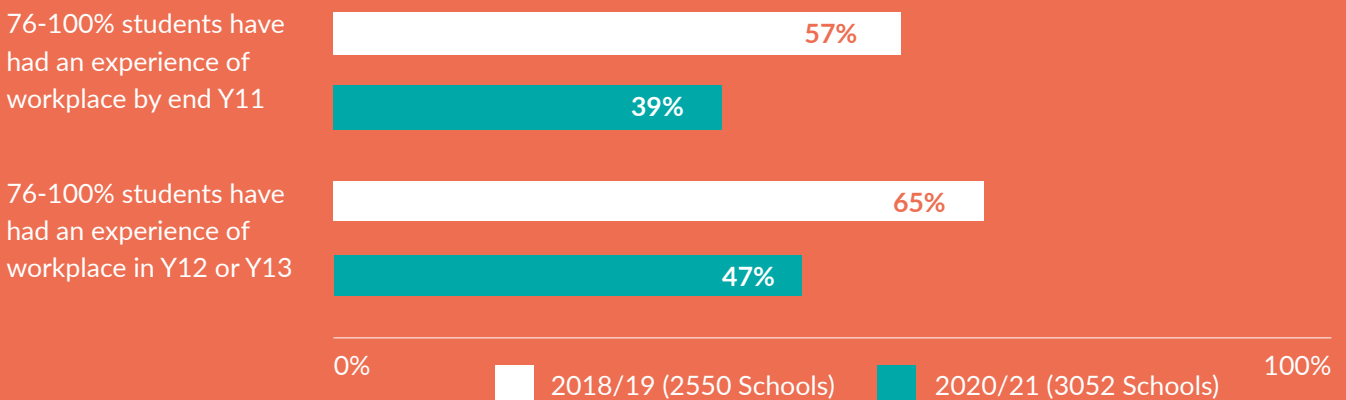
The proportion of schools reporting that most of their students had access to a workplace experience by the end of Year 11 fell from 57% to 39% between 2019 and 2021 (Chart 3).

The impact on colleges was less pronounced. In 2021, 40% of colleges ensured most of their learners had a workplace experience, compared with 46% two years previously.

Over half (52%) of special schools provided experiences of the workplace or experiences of community organisations (such as cafes based within the school) to most of their students.



Chart 3: Change in the proportion of secondary schools achieving Gatsby Benchmark 6 sub-benchmarks



Source: Compass data from 2018/19 and 2020/21

The development of virtual employer engagement for students was widespread

Encounters with employers remained stable with 57% of schools and 77% of colleges providing opportunities for most of their students.

Encounters included virtual talks in assemblies, employers facilitating projects with online groups, and events created and hosted on digital platforms. For example, Hertfordshire Careers Hub brought employers together through the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal to offer live weekly employer webinars and on demand virtual encounters.¹⁷

Virtual careers fairs developed quickly. The Derby and Nottinghamshire Careers Hub My Future platform enabled Year 11 and Year 13 students to 'walk' and immerse themselves in a virtual conference centre to learn more about pathways and careers from businesses and training providers.¹⁸

A blend of virtual and face-to-face engagement is set to continue

Feedback from England's network of Careers Hubs, which connect schools and colleges to local businesses,¹⁹ highlighted the benefits of virtual encounters. These include greater flexibility, efficiency and the ability to draw on a wider pool of employers. In half of areas, employers were reported to be engaging more frequently virtually compared with when all encounters were face-to-face. Nine in ten Careers Hubs were supportive of continuing elements of virtual approaches.

The perspective of employers is similar. In a recent small-scale survey, 78% expect to continue with some element of virtual delivery for employer encounters and 55% for workplace experiences. The key benefits cited were convenience, flexibility and efficiency (93%), reaching students across a wider area (91%) and being able to target specific schools or students (63%).²⁰



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What do virtual approaches to employer engagement look like in practice?

Pivoting to virtual interaction enabled employers to offer support in flexible and innovative ways.²¹ Approaches included:

- **Expanded geographical engagement:** Support was extended to a more dispersed group of young people. For example, water company Severn Trent shifted their work experience programmes online and focussed particularly on social mobility ‘cold spots’.²²
- **Opening up harder-to-reach industries:** There were opportunities for pupils to engage with industries which aren’t always easily accessible. For example, leaders in the UK’s Gaming Industry collaborated to offer the Let’s Build Worlds resource allowing young people to design their own video game with support from live masterclasses led by gaming professionals.²³
- **Longer-form, programmatic interactions:** For example, STEM ambassadors from construction company Jacobs created a programme that took students through the design of a coronavirus vaccine research facility. The sessions took place over a five-week programme.²⁴
- **Multi-location, cross-team experiences:** Two-way interaction between students and employees across different parts of an organisation, sometimes in different areas of the country, was a new-form engagement. Some employers offered ‘carousel’ placements in different departments, or project-based experiences that combined virtual business engagement with building specific skills. Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, for example, organised a three day virtual work experience programme, where Year 10 students could experience different hospital sites. This was supported by virtual career weeks on key professional pathways like Midwifery.²⁵
- **Innovative use of virtual technology:** Some employers used new mediums to reach young people. For example to help tackle digital disadvantage, Turner and Townsend, an infrastructure and professional services firm, and Mace Group, a global consultancy and construction company, worked with the social enterprise Class of Your Own. They offered a work experience programme to St Joseph’s Catholic College in Swindon via mobile phone.²⁶ Barclays, through their LifeSkills programme, launched a virtual interview practice tool which allowed students to watch model answers to real interview questions, as well as record and practise their own.²⁷

¹⁵ Based on evidence gathered from Hub Leads through pulse surveys in August 2021. Publication forthcoming.

¹⁶ Based on responses to the employer survey in September - October 2021. Publication forthcoming.

¹⁷ hopinto.co.uk

¹⁸ [My Future - Destination Chesterfield](#)

¹⁹ Based on evidence gathered from Hub Leads through pulse surveys in 2021. Publication forthcoming.

²⁰ Based on responses to the employer survey in September - October 2021. Publication forthcoming.

²¹ [House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee, \(2021\), Skills for every young person’. London: The House of Lords](#)

²² [Employer-Volunteers-STW-Virtual-schools-activities.pdf \(cwcareershubs.co.uk\)](#)

²³ [Side Quest](#)

²⁴ The Careers & Enterprise Company (2020). *Careers in Context 2020: A can-do guide for employers.*

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*, p28.

²⁷ [Virtual Interview Lesson Plan | Barclays LifeSkills](#)



Case Study

How one academy trust rolled out virtual work experience for over 2000 students

When the pandemic struck in March 2020 plans for work experience were understandably put on hold. Ryan Gibson, National Lead for Careers at Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), knows how valuable engagement with business is for young people across AET's 21 secondary schools: "It's critical. If young people want to explore their futures, and consider what different job roles involve and the skills required to succeed in the workplace, they need to be able to experience it."

“

When done well, virtual work experience, just like physical work experience, can have a really positive impact.

”

As the pandemic began, Ryan, alongside his team of Careers Leaders in each AET secondary school, began developing a new approach to work experience for their students, with the goal of ensuring that every young person who should have been completing physical work experience, would still be able to do so, only this time virtually.

The team set about identifying the key elements of successful physical work experience programmes and considering how these core elements could be replicated in the virtual world. Ryan said: "Work experience is about exploring an organisation, meeting employees, actively engaging with 'real' tasks set by the employer, getting feedback and beginning to reflect on the skills you need to be successful in the workplace. It can ignite a passion, spark an interest or even cause a student to rethink their goals".

To get to the scale required in such a short space of time, AET partnered with Reed Group, the global recruitment specialists. They designed a programme that included a welcome from the company's Chairman, James Reed, and involved young people exploring different departments, from marketing to finance. The programme saw students complete tasks set by the employer, develop key employability skills and gain feedback on their final presentations.

Reflecting on the programme, Ryan said: "I couldn't be more proud of the partnership between AET and Reed. When the pandemic struck, none of us had considered virtual work experience, yet within three months our students were flourishing on the programme and getting excited about the future."

"When done well, virtual work experience, just like physical work experience, can have a really positive impact. The virtual experience affords an opportunity that is not restricted by geography and gives students the chance to experience an employer that they may not have traditionally been able to explore in the physical world."

In the future, Ryan believes a hybrid of face to face and virtual engagement will continue. "Going forward, we hope that all of our schools will re-introduce physical work experience but continue to provide high quality virtual work experience opportunities as preparation, follow up and extension. This hybrid approach will prepare students well for the workplaces and working practices of the future."



Case Study

How BAE Systems moved online to inspire students about the world of work

Peter Caney is the Head of Early Careers & Skills – Service Innovation and Future Capability at BAE Systems. As a large employer, they work with schools and colleges across the country to inspire students about their industry.

“

86,000 young people have benefitted from our careers engagement and outreach activity

”

When the pandemic struck, they adapted and innovated existing education programmes through increased use of virtual engagement. Peter said: “We successfully managed to provide education opportunities for thousands of young people, despite challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Key educational outreach activities were converted into virtual events to ensure young people continued to have access to work experience and meaningful employer encounters.”

Peter knew they had to scale up their offering to reach as many young people as possible. He said, “In total approximately 86,000 young people have benefitted from our careers engagement and outreach activity. This included developing and expanding our school work experience programme by providing 21 cohorts of 1 week accredited Virtual Work Experience for more than 600, 14-18 year olds. We redesigned our flagship schools’ roadshow in partnership with the RAF and Royal Navy into a virtual roadshow, Coding Success, aiming to reach 600

schools, 36,000 young people across the country and deliver 600 hours of teacher professional development.”

BAE Systems rolled out multiple different types of virtual experiences of the workplace, and different ways for young people to interact online with the business. Peter said: “Across our organisation STEM Ambassadors have also been engaging in virtual careers events, interviews and mentoring activities, supporting nearly 700 events this year with more than 5750 hours volunteered.” They also offered 600 hours of teacher professional development in addition to their direct work with young people.

For Peter, diversity and inclusion is a key part of their online engagement with schools and colleges: “Increasing diversity and inclusion has been an underpinning driver across all activities with key engagement targets set and achieved for gender, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged young people participating in our events.” Examples included supporting events on International Women in Engineering Day and running a Young Persons’ World of Work event in place of its traditional Sons and Daughters to Work day.

Reflecting on how they will incorporate virtual engagement into their programmes in the future, Peter said: “Whilst we look forward to welcoming young people back onto our sites and into our learning and work environments we also see the benefits of delivering future services through a hybrid model.

“These broader insights, coupled with our own experiences, will continue to shape our future education services offering. Our future hybrid approach will embrace the benefits of reaching a broader and more diverse demographic of young people through virtual events coupled with the connections created through physical encounters with our people, products and services.”

An expert's perspective

Peter Cheese

Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

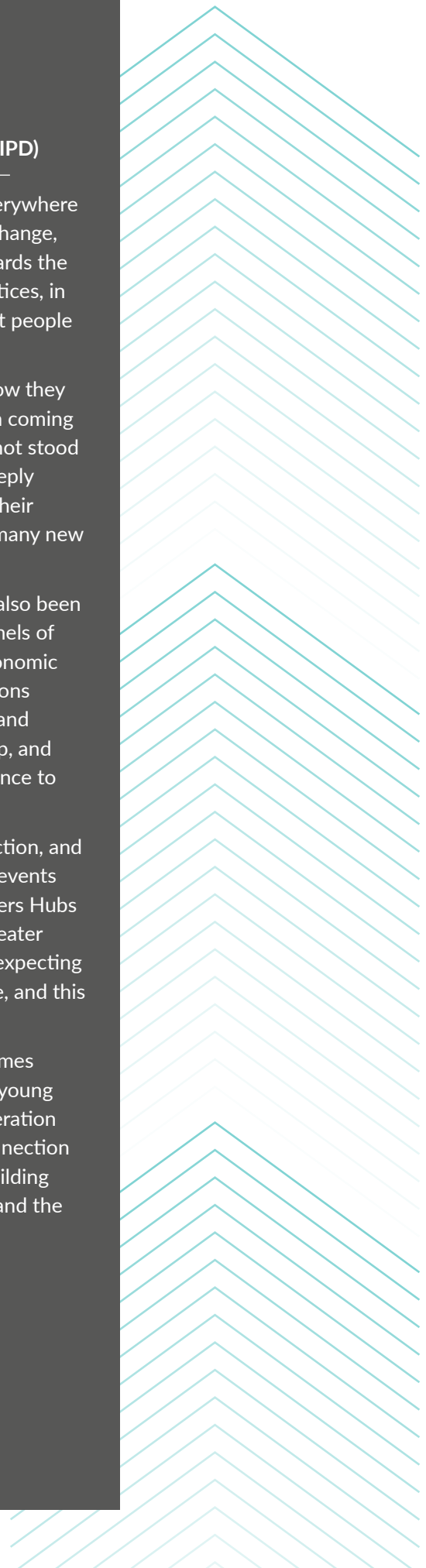
The period of the pandemic has been challenging and organisations everywhere have had to adapt and respond. Crises are times of great learning and change, and we are at an inflection point where we should choose to take forwards the positive learnings for collective long term benefit – in our working practices, in how we learn and connect, in greater inclusion, and how we think about people and their wellbeing.

One of the particularly challenging areas for businesses have been in how they recruit and induct new employees when they have been restricted from coming in to offices and meeting colleagues in person. But organisations have not stood still and waited until 'normality' returns. They have considered more deeply about what induction processes really are, how to teach people about their organisations, and how to adapt to a virtual world. How else would so many new employees become effective and delivered for their organisations.

What is exciting to see from this report is how these adaptations have also been applied to engagement with young people, to help keep open the channels of work experience and opportunity for their futures. Inevitably as the economic slowdown happened in the deepest phases of the pandemic, organisations did slow their recruitment and programmes working with local schools and young people. But it is heartening to see how this has steadily picked up, and the responsibility good businesses show in giving young people the chance to experience the world of work.

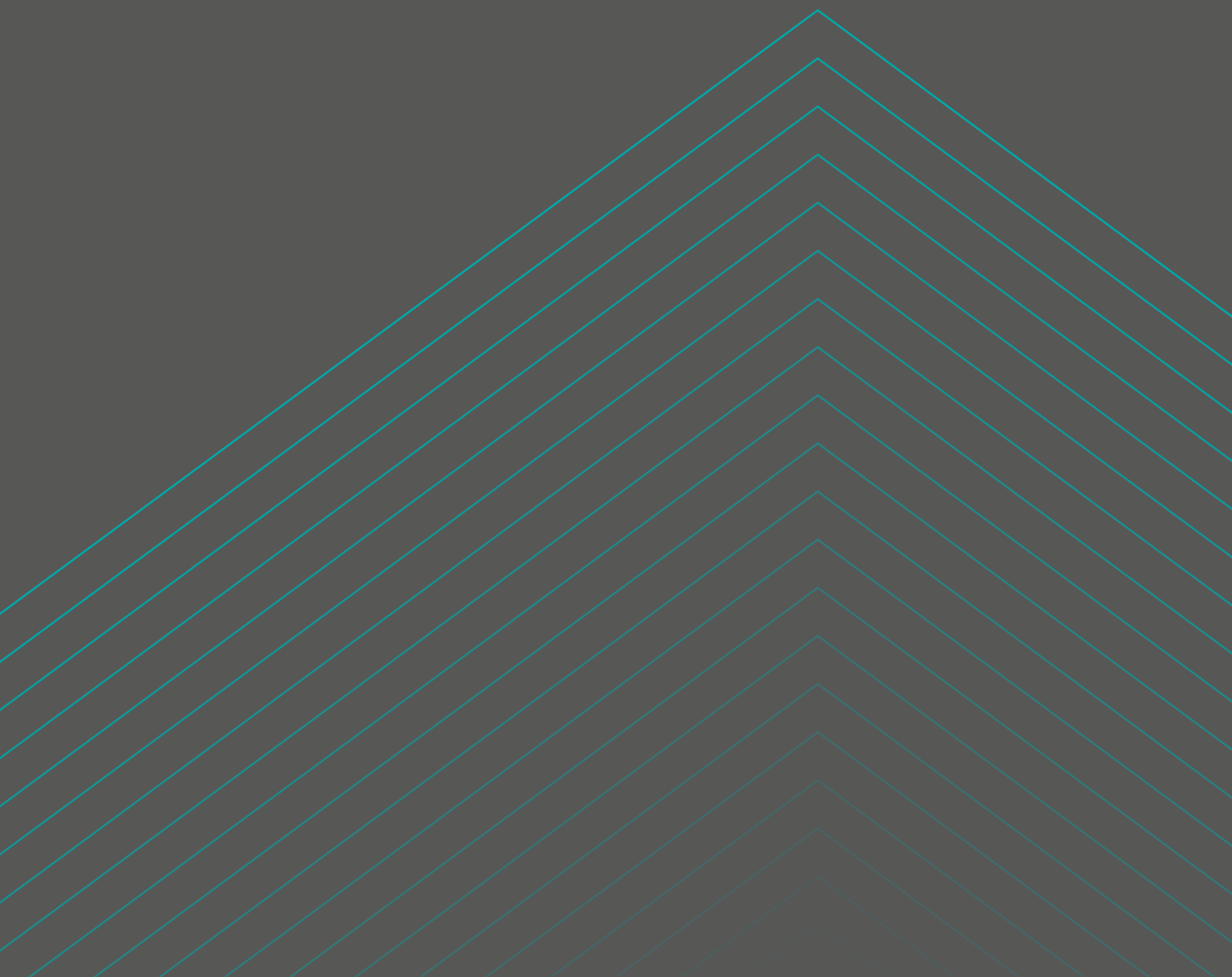
Operating in a virtual world can open up more opportunities for connection, and many positive examples are shown in the report, from virtual talks and events provided by employers to schools, and to virtual careers fairs. The Careers Hubs across England have highlighted the benefits including flexibility and greater reach for schools and employers. Employers are showing that they are expecting to take forward virtual connections alongside face to face for the future, and this should be encouraged with sharing of experiences and best practices.

Just as with work itself and the debates about hybrid working – sometimes in person and sometimes remotely – hybrid forms of engagement with young people can drive significant benefit. After all, it is also this younger generation who themselves have grown up with these rich and varied forms of connection and communication. They would be surprised if we weren't together building a future that embraced technology in these ways to help them understand the world of work and their future in it.



Trend 3

There was information about apprenticeships in the education system, but there is work to do to convert interest to uptake

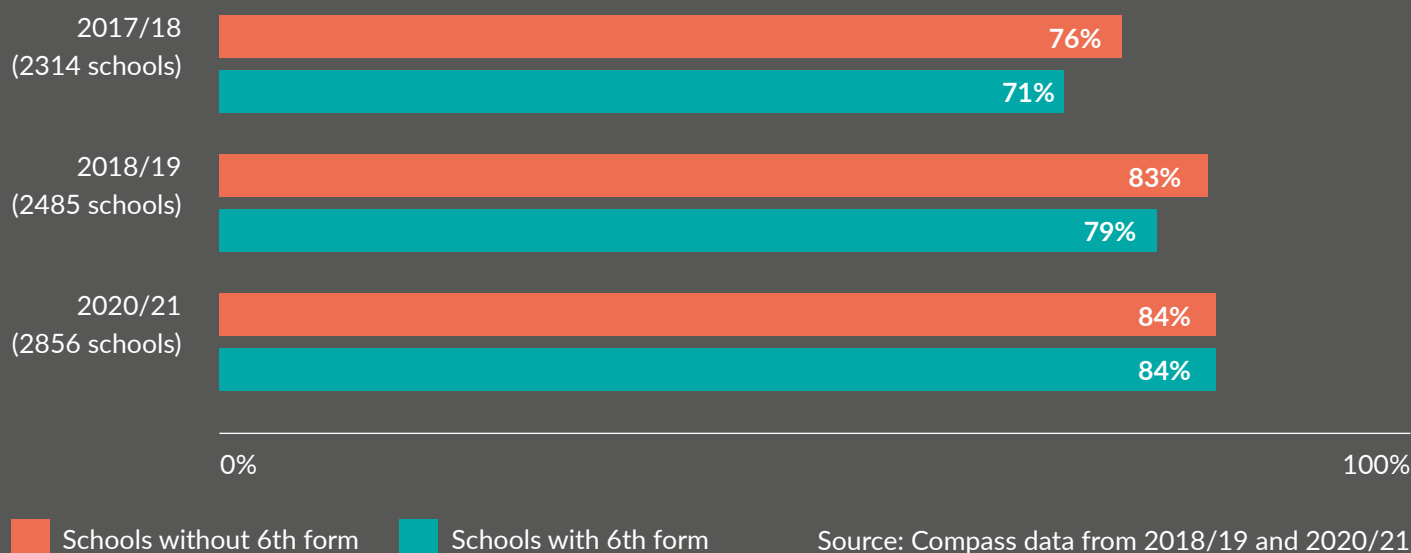


Schools and colleges provided more opportunities for young people to learn about the full range of apprenticeships in 2021. This comes as some evidence suggests public, pupil and parent perception of work-based learning routes is changing.²⁸

There was more information about apprenticeships in the system last year

84% of schools reported that most of their students received information about the full range of apprenticeships. This marks an increase from 80% in 2019 (and 73% in 2018).

Chart 4: Change in proportion of schools where 76-100% of students have had information about the full range of apprenticeships



This increase was driven mainly by schools with sixth forms (Chart 4). The gap previously seen between schools with and without sixth forms closed in 2021. The equivalent figure for special schools was 69%. This work over recent years appears to have had some impact on student understanding and intent.

- Research by the Department for Education showed that, by the end of the last academic year, Year 9s and 10s had almost as strong awareness of apprenticeships as A Levels.²⁹
- In the 2020/21 application cycle, UCAS found that nearly a third (28%) of university applicants were seriously considering an apprenticeship³⁰ and the number of young people searching for apprenticeships on their platform was up by 37%.³¹
- This builds on the trend identified in a recent longitudinal study with over 6000 young people published in October 2021. It found that there was a 49% increase in the number of young people told about an apprenticeship in the ten years between 2009 and 2018 (43% to 64%). Young people also reported improvements in the timing, amount and suitability of careers guidance they received.³²

For colleges the Compass tool asks about meaningful encounters with a range of apprenticeship providers, rather than providing information about apprenticeships. The proportion of colleges reporting that most of their students encountered a range of providers in 2021 was 47% (up from 34% in 2019).

Being informed is important because it increases the likelihood of take-up

Schools and colleges play a role in increasing take-up by providing opportunities for young people to learn about pathways.

New analysis linking schools' Gatsby Benchmark performance with school-level destinations data (available for the first time this year), found there was a positive relationship between good careers guidance and apprenticeships take-up.³³ Uptake was 16% higher in the schools that provided information on apprenticeships to most or all of their students compared with the schools that provided information to a small minority.

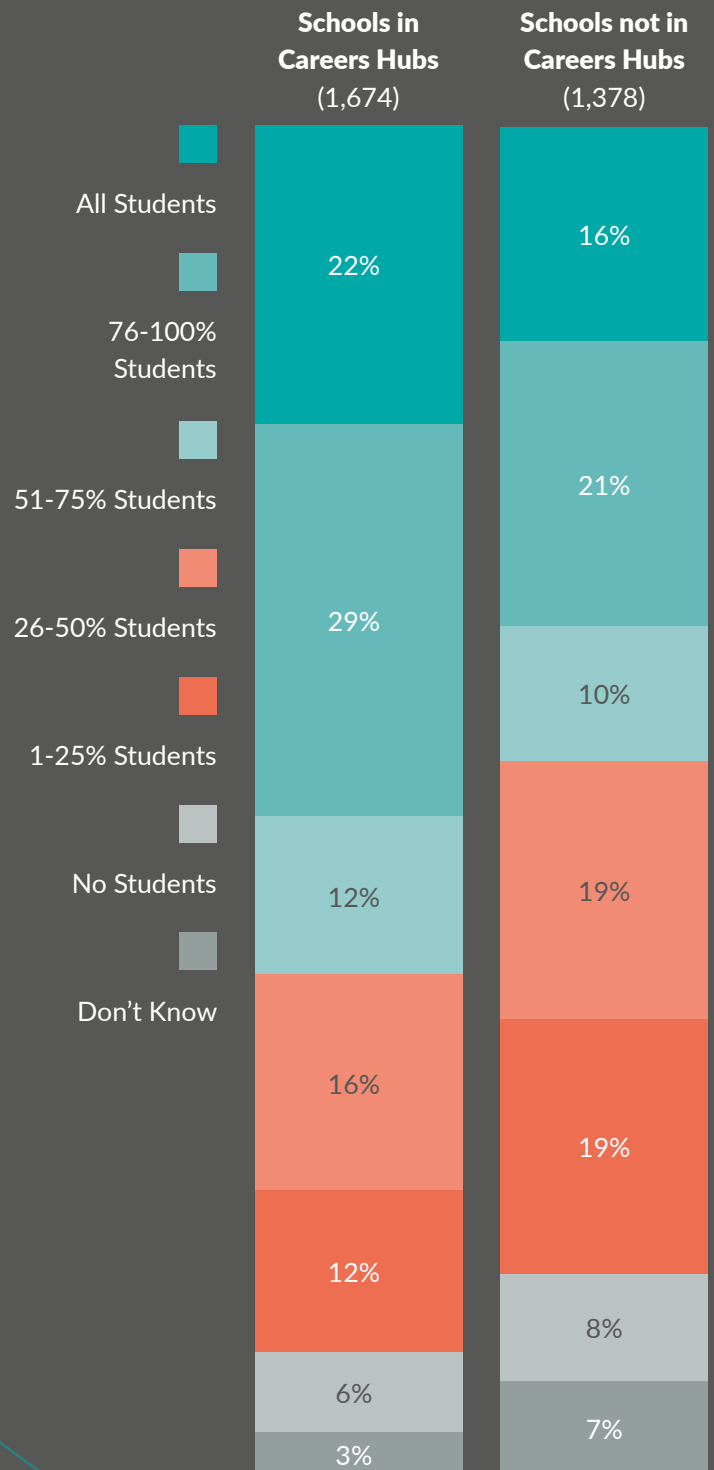
There is more to do to increase student interaction with training providers

Engagement with Independent Training Providers (ITPs) alongside Further Education providers and employers is an important element in raising awareness about apprenticeships.

Last year 45% of schools reported that the majority of their students had encounters with ITPs. This has been stable since before the pandemic.

Chart 5 shows that 91% of schools that were part of a Careers Hub (and 85% outside) had at least some contact with an ITP last year. Schools in Careers Hubs reported that over half their students engaged with an ITP but there is work to do to expand this engagement for all students in all schools.

Chart 5: Proportion of students who have had encounters with Independent Training Providers according to whether schools are in Careers Hubs



Source: Compass data from 2020/21

Students want more detailed information about the full range of pathways

Recent research for the Gatsby Foundation found that young people in school and college still want to receive more information about the full range of vocational and technical pathways, including apprenticeships.²²

Young people reported difficulties in following up their interest in apprenticeships by gaining more detailed information about routes in and the application process.³⁴

In addition evidence shows that there are other significant barriers preventing young people from starting and completing apprenticeships. The House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee's report, 'Skills for every young person', looked in detail at the factors influencing apprenticeship uptake.³⁵



How is information about apprenticeships being shared with students in practice?

- **Provider and specialist input:** Many schools and colleges increase knowledge through apprenticeship fairs, by facilitating provider access and participating in the ASK programme (which works with students, teachers and parents).³⁶
- **School and college-based approaches:** Careers leaders share resources directly with students, parents and teaching staff or plan particular targeted activities.
- **Employer-led engagement:** Across the Southwest, Wessex Water work with teachers to improve understanding about apprenticeships and directly with students to showcase the local offer.³⁷ BAE Systems have designed an apprenticeship approach that starts with talks in partner schools. They invite the most interested on tailored work experience and then fast-track some to application.
- **Local coordination:** The Black Country Careers Hub runs an annual event where Careers Leaders learn more about apprenticeships, meet local providers and employers, and hear directly from apprentices. At the Coast to Capital Careers Hub in Sussex, training provider representatives sit on the steering group and run specific programmes with students to raise awareness about apprenticeships, T Levels and in-work training options.

²⁸ Social Market Foundation (2021). Not just other people's children: what the public thinks about vocational education.

²⁹ IFF Research (2021). Covid-19 Parent and Pupil Panel: July findings report. DFE-RR1157. Department for Education.

³⁰ UCAS (2021). Where next? What influences the choices school leavers make?

³¹ <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/news-and-key-documents/news/new-ucas-research-shows-strong-demand-apprenticeships-students-keen-keep-learning-autumn>

³² Stewart, H. (2021), Young people's experiences of careers information, advice and guidance: Evidence from the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England.

³³ Percy, C. & Tanner, E. (2021). The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

³⁴ UCAS, (2021), Where next? Improving the journey to becoming an apprentice. London: UCAS.

³⁵ House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee, (2021), Skills for every young person'. London: The House of Lords

³⁶ <https://amazingapprenticeships.com/about-ask/>

³⁷ <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/community/education>

Case Study

How one school put apprenticeships at the heart of their careers programme

John Ramsdale is the Senior Assistant Headteacher at Penwortham Girls' High School in Lancashire. He leads on their careers programme and has put apprenticeships at the heart of their offer to students.

“

We didn't just want to talk about apprenticeships and then leave it at that.

”

“The problem we have at Penwortham is we're surrounded by exceptional sixth form colleges. Some of the best sixth forms in the country are on our doorstep, providing genuinely incredible academic courses for our young people. For many years that meant young people would go down that pathway as standard.”

John knew this was a problem. Not only were students not knowing enough about alternative routes, but the school also started to see an increase in the number of their former students dropping out of sixth form.

“Apprenticeships at our school have moved from something people are dimly aware of to having complete parity of esteem. We've moved from 3% of our students going down an apprenticeship route in 2019 to 10% in 2020. But more than that, 100% of our students now go on to a positive, sustained destination after they leave us.”

John, alongside the school's Careers Adviser, took a three-part approach to driving up excitement about apprenticeships.

First, they wanted universal knowledge about apprenticeships among their students. John said: “We took an incredibly activist approach. We carpet bombed Year 10 and Year 11 students with information about what apprenticeships were, how they apply, stories of ex-students, and information about employers who offered them. All year groups had assemblies focused on them.

We had careers days where the whole school downed tools and focused on future careers, which included hearing directly from former students who were now apprentices, as well as other businesses who might recruit them.”

Second, they increased the support available to students when they apply for an apprenticeship. “We didn't just want to talk about apprenticeships and then leave it at that. Whenever a local employer is recruiting an apprentice, we contact the target year group, inform their parents, and invite them to come in and discuss it with us. We help them with the application, answer questions about what it means for their education and provide as much guidance as possible.”

Third, they personalise their careers programme to help those who need additional support. “I regularly meet our Heads of Year, our pupil premium coordinator and our Careers Adviser to identify which students might need additional careers support. They might need more of a hand to hold, more tailored advice and support, or more one-to-one work with their parents. Ultimately we want every one of our young people to go down the right path for them, whatever it might be.”

For John, while these are some of the key ways he has driven up apprenticeship applications, they aren't the only way. “We run CPD for staff. We bring in ex-students and our network of parents, particularly those who work in industries that employ apprentices. During lockdown we ran drop-in sessions and lunchtime workshops.”

When asked what his key advice is for other schools who want to drive up awareness and applications for apprenticeships, John said “make as many contacts with both apprenticeship providers providers and those who have gone down the apprenticeship route, and then use them strategically as part of your careers programme.”

An expert's perspective

Anna Morrison

Director of Amazing Apprenticeships

Here at Amazing Apprenticeships, we have seen first-hand the increase in appetite from schools and colleges to access high-quality information about apprenticeships. We support more than 4,500 schools and colleges with a variety of initiatives including the ASK Programme, and we work to educate and inspire parents, carers and teachers. We partner with The Careers & Enterprise Company to support the skills and knowledge of Careers Leaders and Enterprise Advisers by creating resources, running webinars and providing 1:1 support.

Recent years have seen the introduction of some of the most significant apprenticeship reforms and the demand from educators to keep up with these changes has been met with enthusiasm and interest (and occasional frustration and challenge).

So, why aren't we seeing higher levels of young people moving into apprenticeships?

It's complicated. But the challenges can be categorised into three main areas:

Addressing the decline in confidence

The impact of the pandemic on apprenticeship vacancies was significant. We saw an instant decline in the number of vacancies being advertised and apprenticeship roles withdrawn. We are now seeing a hugely successful and rapid bounce-back with apprenticeship vacancies rising above pre-pandemic levels. However, the reputation of apprenticeships has been damaged, and there is work to do in restoring the confidence in apprenticeships within young people, teachers and careers advisers, parents and carers too.

Converting information to inspiration (and action)

Young people need to be inspired to act. We need to address the disconnect between young people simply being 'informed' about apprenticeships, and pay more attention to the 'inspiration' within the message. It is one thing to deliver information about apprenticeships, but to really take it to the next level, we need to bring the message to life through role models, workshops, case studies, the opportunity to hear directly from training providers and to meeting employers.

Providing more detailed support with applications

Once we have informed and inspired, we need to surround that young person with the support they need to be able to apply with confidence. This needs to come from different sources – school and home – providing consistent messages about the expectations of employers and to also guide that young person with support and resilience strategies if their application is not successful.

This report shows an upwards trajectory in young people accessing information about apprenticeships. We now need to build on this by delivering more meaningful and inspirational encounters between young people and apprenticeship providers, employers and apprentices themselves.



Trend 4

There was increased focus on individuals and their context through personal guidance, links to the labour market and digital tools



Schools and colleges reported that more young people experienced one-to-one personal guidance sessions last year. There was also greater use of labour market information and digital tools to personalise careers programmes. New evidence underlines the importance of data-driven careers interventions for supporting individual students to develop career readiness and make successful transitions, particularly those who face economic barriers.^{38 39}

The provision of personal guidance has increased over the past two years in schools and colleges

Gatsby Benchmark 8, which covers the provision of personal guidance, continued to be the strongest performing benchmark among schools and colleges.

Some 80% of secondary schools reported providing most of their students with an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11 (up from 74% in 2019) and 58% provided students with a further interview by the end of Year 13 (up from 50% in 2019) (Chart 6).

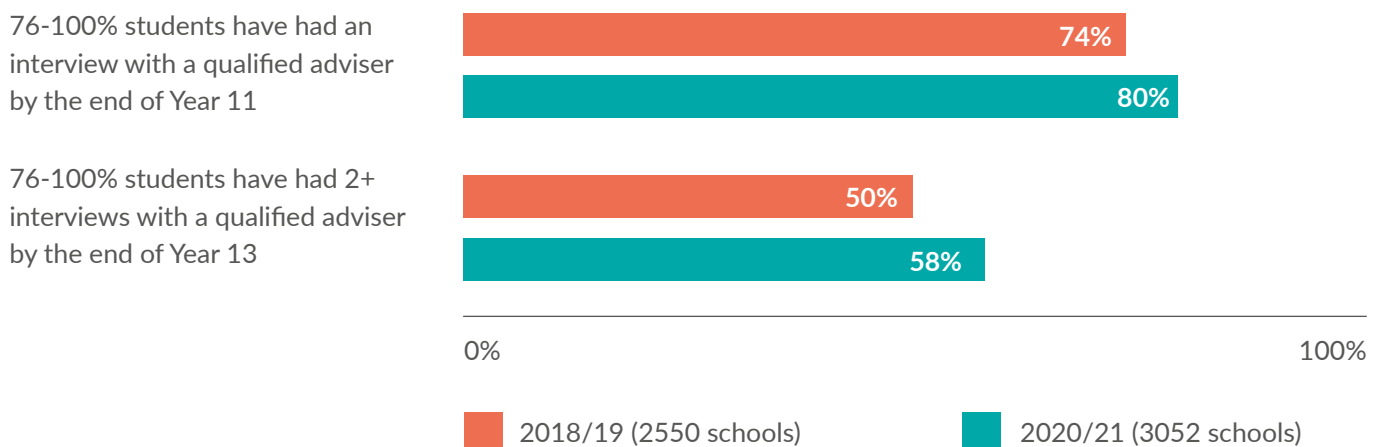
In special schools a lower proportion of students accessed a qualified careers adviser. Two-thirds (65%) of special schools ensured that most students had an interview by the end of Year 11.

In colleges there continued to be a gap between careers advice sessions being offered and the number of young people taking part. Around 95% of colleges offered interviews with qualified Careers Advisers to their students when significant study or career choices were being made, but only a third (33%) reported that most of their learners had an interview by the end of their studies (Chart 7). Possible reasons include learners already being clear on their next steps or resource constraints within larger colleges.

Across colleges and schools Careers Advisers made greater use of online and telephone appointments over the past year.⁴⁰ New evidence highlights the value of personal guidance for young people as well as their appetite for more.⁴¹

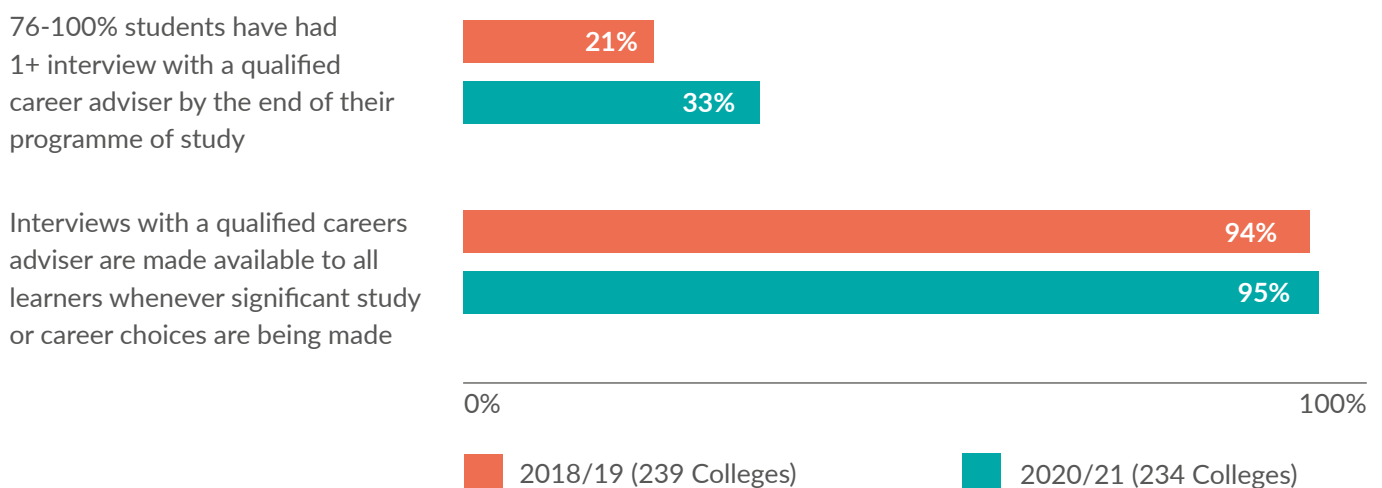


Chart 6: Change in the proportion of secondary schools achieving Gatsby Benchmark 8 sub-benchmarks



Source: Compass data from 2018/19 and 2020/21

Chart 7: Change in the proportion of colleges achieving Gatsby Benchmark 8 sub-benchmarks



Source: Compass data from 2018/19 and 2020/21



80%

of schools providing most of their students with an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11

Schools, colleges and local employers reported increased use of labour market information in careers programmes

Schools and colleges reported sharing more information about the labour market with students. This included information about growth sectors, skills gaps and career progression in different parts of the economy.

There was a 24% increase in the proportion of schools reporting that they provided labour market information to most of their students, with 73% of schools and 77% of colleges reporting this in 2021 (compared with 59% and 63% in 2019).

The proximity of Careers Hub Leads to the local skills and the labour market agenda, through co-location and partnerships, supported schools and colleges to access labour market information.^{42 43} Hub partners include Local Authorities, pan-regional Local Enterprise Partnerships and Mayoral combined authorities (as well as business sector bodies such as Growth Hubs, the Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse.)

Local employers also had an important role to play. In small-scale research carried out in 2021, 76% of employers that worked closely with schools shared information about entry requirements and career progression, 75% shared information about pathways into work and 47% worked with Careers Leaders to increase their understanding of the labour market.⁴⁴

Careers Leaders increased their use of digital tools to target support and gain feedback

Over the past two years 2,000 schools have started using the Compass+ careers education platform to manage their careers programmes. Compass+ links to the schools' data system and records information at the student as well as cohort level, including activities, industry interests and destinations. Integration with other leading digital systems allows activities logged by students to be drawn into Compass+.

Careers Leaders supported the development of the Future Skills Questionnaire to measure a student's career readiness at points of transition.⁴⁵ The tool was piloted with 3,500 students in Autumn 2020 and launched in Compass+ in September 2021. It enables careers professionals to identify students in need of targeted support if, for example, they don't have a plan after Year 11 or have limited awareness of pathways. This data will be analysed in future years and used to assess students' development as a result of careers programmes.

A closer focus on individual students came through in the Compass data. There was a 24% increase over the past two years in schools reporting that they enabled pupils to access accurate records about their own careers and enterprise activities (from 40% to 64%).

Colleges increasingly took into account the types of careers education a young person engaged in before they started at college which is important for supporting students to make successful transitions. There was a 64% increase in colleges doing this, with 47% achieving this in 2021 compared with 29% in 2019.

What meeting the needs of individual learners looks like in practice?

- **Guidance that meets the needs of all students:** One-to-one personal guidance, with a qualified careers adviser, is an important part of careers education. It works best when fully integrated into the wider careers programme and started early, particularly for those who face the most barriers. Guidance sessions provide opportunities for young people to connect their skills and preferences with knowledge of career pathways and experiences of workplaces.
- **Local businesses sharing local information:** Many businesses are supporting schools and colleges to better understand labour market information. In some areas, such as the Thames Valley, employers are delivering workshops to Careers Leaders so they better understand the local job market and how the employment landscape is changing.
- **Digital tools used to target different cohorts:** Digital tools, such as Compass+, are being used by many schools to plan and monitor careers education programmes for specific cohorts of students. This is supporting provision more tailored to the needs of, for example, young people with a special need who may need more personal guidance earlier.

³⁸ Hanson, J. Neary, S. and Blake, H. (2021). Personal Guidance Fund Evaluation: Final Report. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

³⁹ Hunt, J., Atherton, K., Collerton, E. and Wilkinson, N. (2021). Effective Careers Interventions for Disadvantaged Young People: A report by the Behavioural Insights Team.

⁴⁰ Hanson, J. Neary, S. and Blake, H. (2021). Personal Guidance Fund Evaluation: Final Report. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

⁴¹ Hughes, D. (2021). The Big Careers Conversation with Young People in England. Launch Your Careers, DMH Associates.

⁴² Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, The Leicester and Leicestershire Careers Hub world of work programme

⁴³ Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Careers Hub, The Labour Market in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

⁴⁴ Data from a survey of Cornerstone Employers and other leading employer (publication forthcoming).

⁴⁵ Tanner, E. and I. Finlay (2021). Future Skills Questionnaire: The development of a tool to measure young people's career related learning and skills. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Case Study

How two schools are putting digital systems at the heart of their careers programme to deliver more personalised support for pupils

Suzanne Lewis-Dale is the Deputy Head Teacher responsible for careers education at St Josephs Catholic Academy in Hebburn, South Tyneside, and Fran Ackroyd is the Careers Leader at Shuttleworth College in Lancashire. Both use the Compass+ tool to deliver more personalised careers education programmes to their students.

“

As I've taken over the role, I want a clear view so we can deliver the best support possible for our students and target support where it's needed.

”

Fran began using the Compass+ tool when it came out “because of the promise of something better”. For Suzanne the motivation was similar: “I was new to SLT, and I wanted to track and collate what was going on across the whole school, and move away from endless spreadsheets.”

Both use the tool to plan out the range of different careers related activities that happens across their schools. They use it to see what different classes are experiencing, how this compared across different subjects, different years groups and by the characteristics of students, such as whether they have SEND.

Suzanne argues that “I want clarity around my student's journey. Are we just focusing on Year 10 and Year 11, or are we front loading more activity in Year 7 where we know it can combat low aspirations about careers that are crystallised really early on? As I've taken over the role, I

want a clear view so we can deliver the best support possible for our students and target support where it's needed.”

Fran agrees that planning helps to make sure the programme is more personalised, “not least because it saves time, and lets me put more time and energy into direct support to students.” But she also uses the tool to pull up an individual student's record and see exactly what their careers education journey has been. “We've moved from tonnes of spreadsheets that were all out of date with errors, to something which shows me the picture of what a student has experienced. The visit they did in Year 7, the project in Year 8, the links our History and English teachers make to jobs and careers each year, and the talks they've heard from local businesses and former students. All of this means we're more informed when we talk to parents, can use it during careers guidance talks, and get students to reflect back on it as well.”

Both Suzanne and Fran want Compass+ to continue to improve, and want to see even more automation, the system to sync up with other external providers and reduce the time it takes to update individual student activities. But both agree that digital systems are saving time, and helping their schools to plot the individual journey of a student more effectively when it comes to preparing them for the world of work.

An expert's perspective

Lisa Greig & Jackie McGarry

Chief Executive and Careers Leader at Catcote Academy in Hartlepool

How do we help every young person have their best adult life?

Careers education is a massive part of this. But careers education can't be general and off the peg. The magic happens when it's personal, tailored, forensically focused on the individual. Each young person is different and unique, with different interests, skills, approaches, backgrounds and challenges faced and overcome.

In our special school we see that beautiful diversity in every single student. If our careers education programme doesn't reflect that, then there's no point in it existing.

Personal guidance interviews are the cornerstone of how this happens. If you want to prepare young people for the world of work, you need to listen to them, and understand where they want to go and what they might be interested in.

We don't just do one personal guidance interview at the end of Year 11. They happen at the start of Year 10, and every student has another interview every year they are with us.

Our careers team are qualified specialists, but also know how to work with young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They design our employer engagement around what those students are interested in. They organise placements based on those interviews. We invite employers who have a track record of working with young people with SEND to our career fairs based on those one-to-one guidance sessions.

That personalisation starts from the careers interview, but it doesn't end there. Labour market information can often be complex and inaccessible. We want our students to know about the jobs available in our local area, the types of careers they could go into and what the progression through those industries might be. But we personalise the work we do around this to make sure it's as relevant for an autistic young person as it is for a deaf young person.

One way we do this is by highlighting real life stories. Recently, when we were discussing careers paths in catering, we brought a former student back to the school who is now a chef in the army. A former student, standing tall and confident and loving his career and telling our students that "if I can do it, then you can do it too and don't ever think you can't" was the perfect way to bring a labour market session to life.

So what's the trick to rolling out personalised careers education?

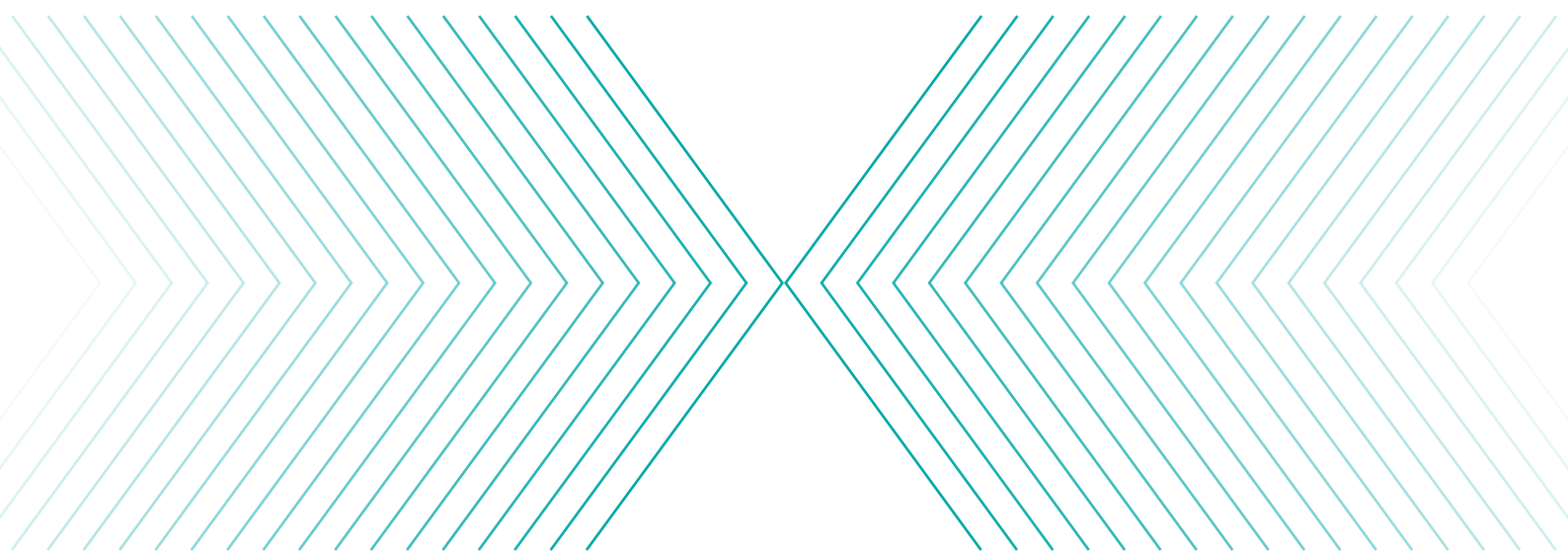
The first is resource. We have a full time Careers Leader, job coaches, a careers advisor and admin support too. We couldn't visit all our employers, work with them on reasonable adjustments, run so many workshops and placements if we didn't have the staff.

The second is passion. We always say "shy bairns get nowt" – our team knock on every door, make those links, get businesses and providers on side so they'll support our students.

If schools and colleges can get this right, then their students will be set up for the rest of their lives.

Trend 5

Training and local collaboration led to increased progress



Careers Leaders continued to play the pivotal role last year. They drew on new tools and resources, took part in formal Careers Leader training (and more informal masterclasses), and most were supported by a local business volunteer partnered with their school or college (Enterprise Adviser).

Ongoing partnership at a local level was shown to lead to sustained improvement. Schools and colleges that achieved the most benchmarks across the country were those that had been collaborating and learning in Careers Hubs since their inception in 2018.



4.8

Schools and colleges that have been part of Careers Hubs for the longest achieved 4.8 Benchmarks on average, compared with 4.4 for all schools and colleges in a Careers Hub, 3.5 for schools and colleges not in a Careers Hub.

Careers Leaders engaged widely in professional development in 2021

During the past academic year, 674 Careers Leaders engaged in funded training, bringing the total number of Careers Leaders participating since the launch of training in September 2018 to over 2,200.⁴⁶

Careers Leaders also made extensive use of the tools and resources on offer. Close to 4,000 schools and colleges completed a Compass evaluation this year, 2,000 are now using Compass+.⁴⁷

Over 60,000 unique users have accessed the Careers Leader Resource Directory, an online portal for information, curriculum plans and other resources.⁴⁸

Over the past year Careers Leaders were active in communities of practice, sharing learning and supporting careers education in specific contexts. Over 460 participated in Connect for Colleges, a further 200 did so in Connect for Training Providers and more than 650 supported the Inclusion community of practice.

Approximately 700 schools and colleges had gained external accreditation under the national Quality in Careers Standard, over half of which were in a Careers Hub.⁴⁹



Evidence confirmed the benefits of Careers Leader training for knowledge, practice and careers programmes

New research published this year explored how participation in training influenced practice.⁵⁰ The study found that training led to increased knowledge across the four core areas of leadership, management, coordination and networking. While the benefits were greater for those new to the role, even those with 6 years or more experience increased their knowledge.

97% of Careers Leaders finished the training with actions to implement in their school or college and, 6-24 months later, 80% of survey respondents had updated their strategic careers programme as a result of the training.⁵¹

Over 80% of Careers Leaders said that their school or college was making faster progress towards meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks as a result of training, even 6-24 months later.

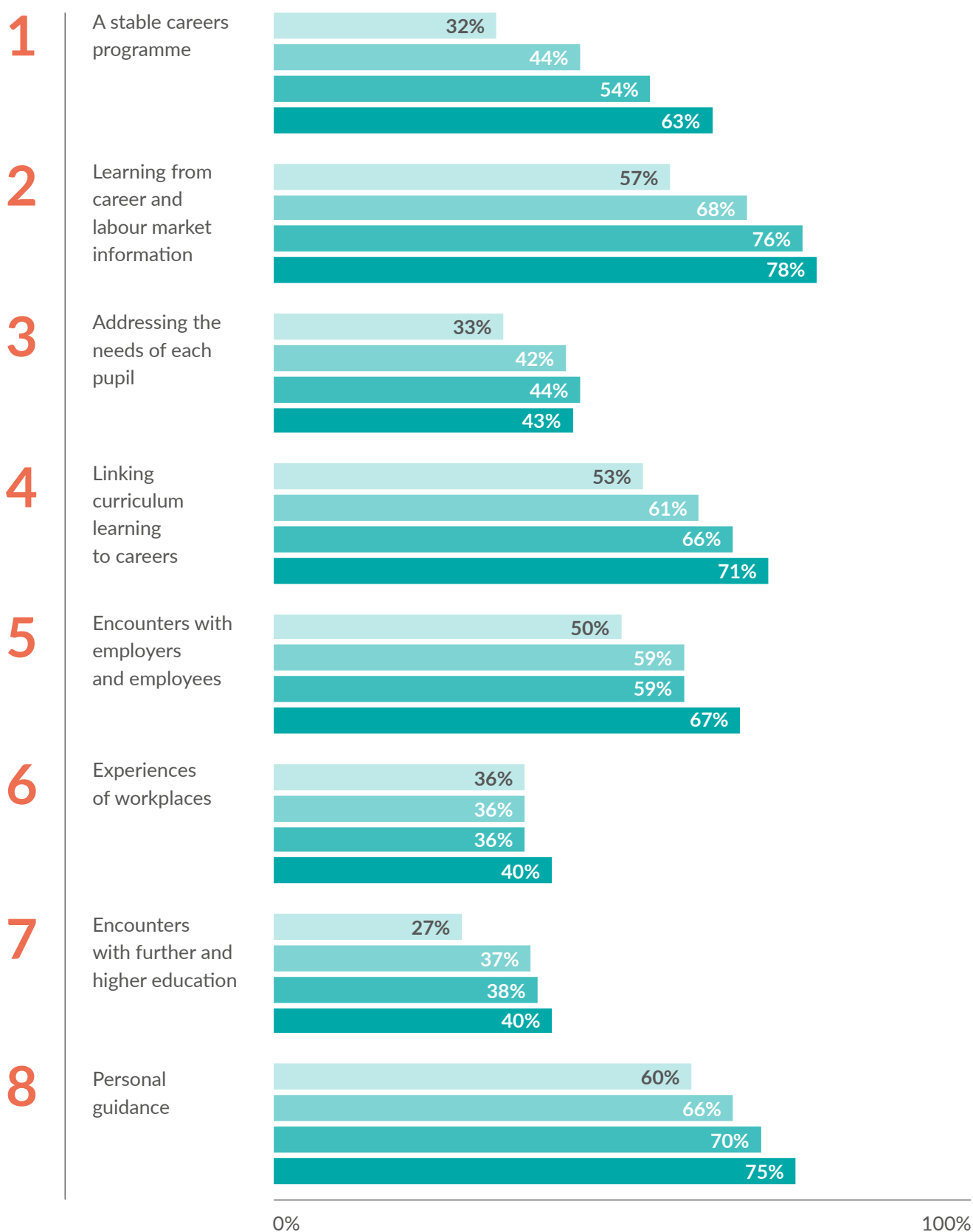
Progress was evident in the Compass data. The average number of Gatsby Benchmarks fully achieved in schools and colleges where Careers Leaders have been trained was 4.2 compared with 3.8 in schools without a trained Careers Leader.



97%

of Careers Leaders agreed the training had helped them identify actions to improve their practice.

Chart 9: Percentage of schools and colleges achieving each of the Gatsby Benchmarks according to length of time in a Careers Hub



■ Not in a Hub 2020/21 (1771)
 ■ Hub since 2020 (877)
 ■ Hub since 2019 (579)
 ■ Hub since 2018 (666)

Collaboration in Careers Hubs supported improvements in careers education

In July 2021 close to half of schools and colleges in England were part of a Careers Hub, and this increased to two-thirds in September 2021.

Careers Hubs, co-funded by Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined or Local Authorities, bring together schools, colleges, employers and providers to learn, work together and improve Gatsby Benchmark provision.

Careers Hubs are charged not only with securing progress but delivering targeted interventions to meet local needs. For example the Birmingham Careers Hub sought to address the low proportion of SEND students transitioning into employment by working with employers to expand inclusive pathways.⁵²

In 2021, as in previous years, schools and colleges in Careers Hubs reported stronger performance on the Gatsby Benchmarks. Schools and colleges that have been part of Careers Hubs for the longest achieved 4.8 Benchmarks on average, compared with 4.4 for all schools and colleges in a Careers Hub, and the national average of 4.0. Provision was stronger in Hubs across every benchmark (Chart 9).

Research published this year found that Careers Leaders in Colleges valued working in Careers Hubs. 96% said they felt connected to national developments, 92% enjoyed sharing good practice and 94% connected with regional and economic priorities.⁵³



⁴⁶ <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/careers-leaders/careers-leader-training/>

⁴⁷ <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/compass>

⁴⁸ <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/>

⁵⁰ Finlay, I. and Tanner, E. (2021). *Careers Leader Training: Impact on knowledge, practice and programmes 2018- 2020*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

⁵¹ See the report for other areas of practice affected to a greater or lesser extent by the training.

⁵² HS2, *HS2 asks pupils with disabilities for ideas on improving stations and trains, 2021*

⁵³ Gibson, S., Tanner, E. and A. Webster (2021). *Careers Leadership in Colleges: Supporting learners through a 'whole college' approach*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company

An expert's perspective

Kelvin Nash

Principal of Kendal College, the Chair of the Cumbria Careers Hub

I write this not as a declared expert, but as the Principal of Kendal College, the Chair of the Cumbria Careers Hub, and more importantly as someone who is interested in securing a better future for our young people.

As the Principal of a college I have seen the importance of supporting our young people, and how helping them find their way onto that vital next step and into their future has become more important than ever.

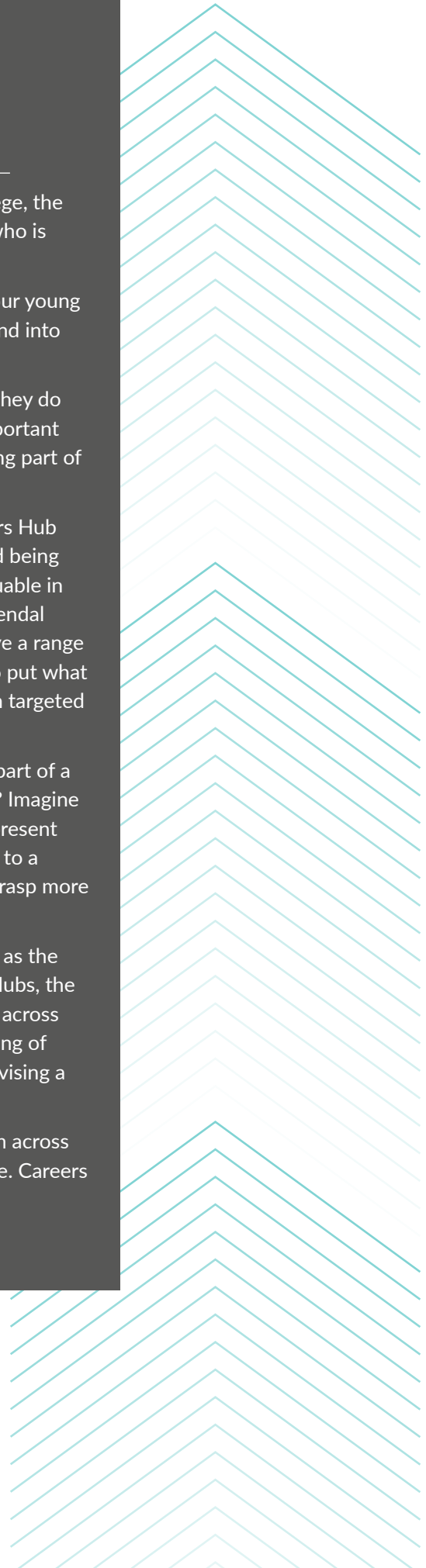
Careers education through the work of the Careers Hub and the work they do with Careers Leaders, employers and Enterprise Advisers all play an important part in giving young people possibility; the possibility of seeing and being part of a future that they may never have thought achievable.

No organisation, including the college, can work in isolation. The Careers Hub joins the dots between education and businesses across the region, and being part of the Careers Hub and the network surrounding it has been invaluable in supporting the work that Kendal College does. Through this network Kendal College has empowered its Careers Leads and curriculum staff to involve a range of employers more in content design, giving learners the opportunity to put what they are learning in the classroom into a more practical context through targeted work placements.

If you consider that over half of the schools and colleges in the UK are part of a Careers Hub, just think how many other stakeholders are also involved? Imagine how many employers, jobs and opportunities a Careers Hub is able to present to our country's young people? Careers Hubs give young people access to a network of employment options and support, by bringing within their grasp more relevant and meaningful encounters with employers.

I have worked with the Careers Hub in Cumbria since its inception and, as the evidence shows, the longer colleges and schools are part of a Careers Hubs, the better they perform. In Cumbria we work with 45 schools and colleges across the county, helping somewhere around 30,000 young people. The sharing of information and learning from each other has resulted in the college devising a careers programme that gives young people a broader experience.

Every young person at Kendal College, across Cumbria, and indeed from across the country deserves to have the best start possible to their working life. Careers Hubs across England are, right now, helping to make this a reality.



Trend 6

New evidence shows that improving careers provision leads to better outcomes for young people



Research published this year showed that increased performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks had a positive impact on the future trajectories of young people. This was an important development for careers education as it seeks to establish itself as a crucial part of school and college life and wider education and skills policy.

In the first year that destinations data could be linked to Compass returns, analysis showed a positive link between the Gatsby Benchmarks and the likelihood of a student being in education, employment or training⁵⁴

Being in sustained education, employment or training (EET) for six months after finishing Year 11 is a key indicator of a successful transition.

Controlling for influences such as level of disadvantage, academic grades, school type, and location, there was a statistically significant relationship (at the 5% level) between school Gatsby Benchmarks and sustained EET destinations for the 2017/18 Year 11 leavers, the most recent cohort for whom data is available.

The analysis, which was based on data for about 2,400 schools, showed that a hypothetical school with Gatsby Benchmark completion of 100% would typically have a 9.7% decline in the proportion of students who do not go into sustained destinations post-16 compared with an otherwise similar school that did not achieve any of the benchmarks.

As such every Gatsby Benchmark a school achieved increased the odds of a student being in education, employment or training by 1.5%.

Among the most disadvantaged quarter of schools the relationship was particularly strong, equivalent to a 20.1% decline in the non-EET rate if schools achieved all the benchmarks.

Positive results linking positive destinations and Gatsby performance were also identified on a smaller sample of Year 11 leavers in 2016/17.





9.7%

decline in the proportion of students who are not in sustained education, employment or training post-16 if schools meet all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.

Evidence from the North East Gatsby Pilot evaluation found improvements in careers readiness

16 schools and colleges in the North-East of England took part in a pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks between 2015 and 2019.⁵⁵ During the first two years, while the Compass tool was being developed, the schools and colleges made substantial progress, with four providers achieving all eight benchmarks and six providers achieving seven benchmarks (the model used during the pilot closely reflects the Careers Hubs approach).

Student 'career readiness' (including career planning and management skills, information gathering ability and job readiness) was found to increase over time from 2016 to 2019. The number of career-related activities recalled by the students and the number of Gatsby Benchmarks achieved by the school or college was directly correlated with career readiness scores.⁵⁶



⁵⁴ Percy, C. & Tanner, E. (2021). The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

⁵⁵ Hanson, J., Moore, N., Clark, L. and Neary, S. (2021). An Evaluation of the North East of England pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance. University of Derby, International Centre for Guidance Studies.

⁵⁶ The correlations were $r=.269$, $p<.000$, $N=5,784$ for number of Benchmarks, and $r=.338$, $p<.000$, $N=5,784$ for number of activities.

An expert's perspective

Dr Aveek Bhattacharya

Chief Economist at the Social Market Foundation

Securing a 'positive post-16 destination' for students - helping them to find a sustained place in employment, education or training nine months after leaving school - is a relatively modest goal compared to some of the loftier ambitions of effective careers services. But it is a vitally important indicator of success, representing the 'bread and butter' for Careers Hubs. Not only is it the first thing most users are looking for from the services, but it is of vital social and economic importance, given the evidence of long-term 'scarring' in the income and employment prospects of those who fall out of education, employment and training.

In this context, the evidence that schools that achieve more of the Gatsby Benchmarks have more students going to positive destinations (all else equal) is extremely encouraging. The fact that the effect of good careers guidance is stronger in disadvantaged schools is even more heartening. This gives us greater confidence that performing better on the Gatsby Benchmarks does in fact lead to improvements in young people's economic outcomes. As such, it strengthens both the case for good career guidance, and also of using the Gatsby Benchmarks as a measure of its quality.

In a context where careers provision funding remains constrained and inconsistent between different schools and areas, such evidence is potentially powerful. With fierce competition for public funds within education, let alone wider public services, demonstrating that improving careers services represents a genuine investment with some positive return can only improve the chances of receiving needed resources.

As I say, achieving an initial positive destination merely scratches the surface of the potential value of careers services. We would hope (or even expect) that the greatest benefits are felt in the long term: helping people to achieve higher earnings, a smoother career trajectory and greater work and life satisfaction. These are tougher metrics on which to measure the impact of careers services, but they might offer fruitful avenues for future researchers to explore. At the very least, they are important to keep in mind to ensure we do not undercount the positive contribution of careers guidance.





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