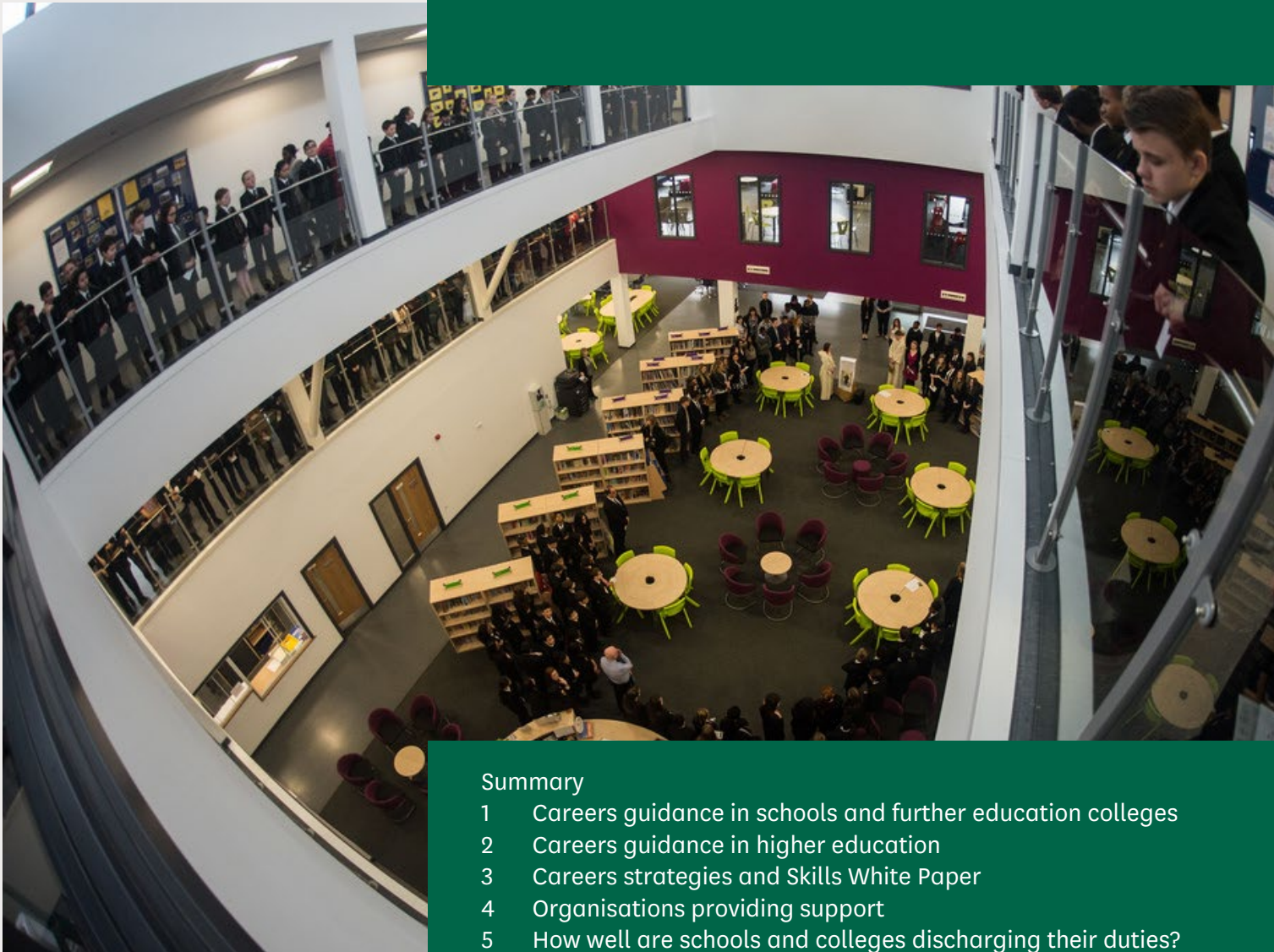


By Robert Long,
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1 November 2023

Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities (England)



Summary

- 1 Careers guidance in schools and further education colleges
- 2 Careers guidance in higher education
- 3 Careers strategies and Skills White Paper
- 4 Organisations providing support
- 5 How well are schools and colleges discharging their duties?
- 6 Select committee reports
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Summary

Overview

State-funded schools and further education colleges in England are required to provide careers guidance to their pupils from ages 11-18. This duty has been steadily extended over recent years.

In September 2012 local authority-maintained schools became subject to a statutory duty to provide impartial careers guidance to pupils in years 9 to 11. In September 2013, this statutory duty was expanded to cover pupils in school years 8 to 13, and in September 2022, following the passage of the [Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Act 2022](#), it was extended to children in year 7, and also to academy schools.

The Department for Education has published [statutory guidance](#) for education providers on their duty to provide careers guidance (most recently updated in January 2023).

Higher education institutions are not required to provide careers advice, but nonetheless this service is offered across institutions.

DfE Careers Strategy and the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022

The Department for Education's [Careers Strategy](#) was published in December 2017. It set out a series of measures to be implemented between 2018 and 2020 to improve careers guidance in England, including the introduction of new benchmarks for careers education, an investment fund for disadvantaged pupils, and a named Careers Leader in every school and college.

The Government's '[Skills for Jobs' white paper](#) on further education and skills, published in January 2021, included further plans to strengthen careers advice. This informed changes included in the [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022](#).

Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Act 2022

On 16 June 2021, Mark Jenkinson presented the [Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Bill](#), which would extend the duty to provide careers guidance in schools. In his [announcement of the Bill](#), Mr Jenkinson stated that the Bill would extend the requirements to provide careers guidance to children in year 7, and also implement the proposals in the Skills White Paper. The Bill was supported by both the Government and the Opposition, and received Royal Assent in March 2022. It came into force in September 2022.

1 Careers guidance in schools and further education colleges

1.1 Requirements on schools

State-funded schools and further education colleges in England are required to provide careers guidance to their pupils from ages 11-18. This duty has been steadily extended over recent years.

In September 2012 local authority-maintained schools became subject to a statutory duty to provide impartial careers guidance to pupils in years 9 to 11.¹ In September 2013, this statutory duty was expanded to cover pupils in school years 8 to 13,² and in September 2022, following the passage of the [Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Act 2022](#) (see section 3.4), it was extended to children in year 7, and also to academy schools.

The Department for Education has published [statutory guidance](#) for education providers on their duty to provide careers guidance (most recently updated in January 2023).³

The DfE published an article on [How we are helping to inspire primary school children about their future careers](#) in January 2023, which discusses a pilot scheme on careers guidance in primary schools.⁴

The DfE's [2017 Careers Strategy](#) adopted the benchmarks of good careers guidance developed by the Gatsby Charitable foundation. Schools were initially expected to adopt the benchmarks by January 2018 in order improve their careers provision.⁵ Since 2020, the Government has expected schools to work toward achieving all 8 benchmarks, including that all young people should have a careers interview by the age of 16, and an additional interview by age 18.⁶

¹ [The Education Act 2011](#), Pt 4, Sect 29.

² [Careers Guidance in Schools Regulations, SI 2013/709](#), Regulation 2.

³ Department for Education, [Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers](#), January 2023.

⁴ Department for Education, [How we are helping to inspire primary school children about their future careers](#), 5 January 2023

⁵ DfE, ['Careers Strategy: Making the Most of Everyone's Skills and Talents'](#) (December 2017), p. 8.

⁶ PQ, ['Schools: Vocational Guidance'](#), 286227, 3 September 2019.

Gatsby benchmarks

1. A stable careers programme;
2. Learning from career and labour market information;
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil;
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.

[Good Career Guidance: Reaching the Gatsby Benchmarks](#), p. 9.

Gatsby have also published advice for the use of the benchmarks for students with Special Educational Needs or disabilities.⁷

In June 2023, the Skills Minister Robert Halfon gave an overview of the Government's position on careers advice in response to a Parliamentary Question:

Robert Halfon: The government is investing over £87 million in 2023/24 in high-quality careers provision for all ages. This includes a grant of up to £29.7 million for The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) to support secondary schools and colleges to improve their careers programmes in line with the government's careers framework, the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance.

The vast majority of secondary schools and colleges are now voluntarily working with the CEC through accessing training for Careers Leaders, joining a Careers Hub, partnering with an Enterprise Adviser (business volunteer) and using Compass/Compass+ digital tools.

Over 90% (4,568) of schools and colleges in England are now part of a Careers Hub, benefiting 2.3 million students. 70% (3,520) are partnered with an Enterprise Adviser to support the development of career strategies and employer engagement plans.

The department is ensuring parity of esteem for technical and academic options. We strengthened the provider access legislation which came into force in January 2023 and specifies that schools must provide at least six

⁷ Gatsby Trust, [Good Career Guidance: Perspectives from the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sector](#) (2019).

opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to speak to all pupils, during school years 8 to 13.

The department is also putting £3.2 million into the Apprenticeship, Support and Knowledge programme which supports students in years 10 to 13 in schools and colleges, along with their parents/carers and teachers to understand and apply for apprenticeships, T Levels and traineeships.

The department's approach is working with evidence pointing to improved outcomes for young people. Evidence from three cohorts of year 11 leavers (2016/17 – 2018/19) suggests that each of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks achieved reduces the likelihood of any young person being not in education, employment or training, or in an unknown destination by 1.1%. The relationship is twice as strong in the quarter of schools with the most economically disadvantaged intake, as measured by free school meal entitlement.

Career readiness grows as young people move through secondary school. In 2021/22, a CEC survey of 34,986 young people shows their career readiness improves as they progress through school, rising from 45% in year 7 to 67% in year 11 and 74% in year 13.⁸

1.2

Advice about technical education and apprenticeships

Requirements of the “Baker Clause”

The “Baker Clause” was introduced as an amendment to the [Technical and Further Education Act 2017](#) by Lord Baker, and requires every state school (since January 2018) to give training providers and colleges access to pupils aged 8 to 13 to discuss technical education and apprenticeships.

Under the clause, schools are required to publish a “provider access statement” of how they give access to alternative training providers.⁹ Inspectors are required to establish how effectively this is being delivered in schools.

Enforcement of the “Baker Clause”

In response to a [House of Lords Debate on Vocational Education and Training](#) in October 2019, the Schools Minister Lord Agnew stated that the Baker Clause was being increasingly complied with:

We surveyed a number of schools recently and 76% stated that the duty is being partially complied with. A further review this summer found that compliance, although patchy, is improving. In January of this year, a report from the IPPR contained similar findings: 70% of providers found it difficult to access schools in their area, but one in three said the situation had improved. I

⁸ [PQ 190606, 30 June 2023](#)

⁹ [Technical and Further Education Act 2017](#), Pt 1, ch 2.

am not complacent, and we will continue to put pressure on schools to be more open to this.¹⁰

The Government's [‘Skills for Jobs’ white paper](#) on further education and skills, published in January 2021, included plans to strengthen the enforcement of the Baker Clause, which were subsequently legislated for in the [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022](#). Further information can be found in section 3.3 of this briefing.

The January 2023 [statutory guidance](#) for education providers on their duty to provide careers guidance:

The provider access legislation (occasionally referred to as the ‘Baker Clause’) requires all schools and academies to provide opportunities for a range of education and training providers to access all year 8 to 13 pupils to inform them about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Through the Skills and Post-16 Act 2022, the government has strengthened this legislation by introducing a minimum number of six provider encounters that every school must provide and, for the first time, introduces parameters around the duration and content of these encounters so that we can ensure they are of high quality.¹¹

1.3

Careers guidance in further education colleges

Following a [public consultation](#) in 2012 on extending access to careers guidance, all further education (FE) colleges and sixth form colleges have been subject to a requirement to secure access to independent careers guidance from September 2013. This requirement is part of FE college and sixth form college funding agreements and support on fulfilling the duty is provided by [DfE guidance](#).¹²

¹⁰ HL Deb, [‘Vocational Education and Training’](#), 28 October 2019, cc. 858-859.

¹¹ Department for Education, [Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers](#), January 2023, p6

¹² DfE, [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#), January 2023

2

Careers guidance in higher education

Higher education providers are autonomous bodies and have no statutory requirements around the provision of careers advice. However, due to a range of political, economic, and social factors, universities are increasingly expected by the Government, students, and employers to produce highly skilled graduates ready for the graduate labour market. As a result, many higher education providers are investing more resources into their employability and careers services.¹³

Most higher education providers will offer careers advice and guidance as one of their student services. Careers services will offer trained professionals who can provide careers advice, help with writing CVs and application forms, interview skills sessions, and networking/mentoring opportunities. Careers services will often also arrange career fairs that bring employers onto campus. These opportunities will be open to a provider's students as well as their recent graduates.

Several different organisations support the provision of careers guidance in higher education, including:

- The [Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services](#) (AGCAS), which is a professional association for higher education careers practitioners, which provides advice to members and aims to develop best practice across the sector.
- [Prospects](#), which is now part of [Jisc](#), the technology solutions organisation funded by the UK higher and further education and research funding bodies and member institutions. Prospects' careers advice work includes the [UK's biggest graduate careers website](#).

Employability skills and careers advice

Many university degree courses now include employability skills in their curricula, and some include compulsory careers sessions. Providers also offer extra-curricular schemes to help students to develop the “soft skills” valued by employers, and some of these schemes may lead to awards which students can include on their CVs. Higher education careers services also provide advice on self-employment and entrepreneurship.

A November 2021 review of employability programmes and work placements at UK higher education providers found evidence of providers also offering sandwich placements, placements abroad, and work-based projects with

¹³ Prospects report, [How should universities teach employability?](#) March 2019

external organisations as part of their efforts to improve students' employability.¹⁴

¹⁴ Department for Education, [Employability programmes and work placements in higher education](#), November 2021, pp9-12

3 Careers strategies and Skills White Paper

3.1 Northern Powerhouse Strategy

The [Northern Powerhouse Strategy](#), published in November 2016, set out how the Government intended to approach careers guidance in the North of England:

The government will work with the North to ensure that local priorities are fed into the provision of careers advice, so that it is employer led, integrated and meets local needs. This will involve joint working on the design of careers and enterprise provision for all ages, including collaboration on the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service. Where the government is piloting new approaches to careers advice and guidance, we will ensure areas in the North have the opportunity to be part of any trials taking place.¹⁵

In 2015, a two-year pilot began in 16 schools and colleges in the North East of England, coordinated by the Local Enterprise Partnership, in order to test the Good Career Guidance benchmarks, set by the Gatsby Charitable Trust. After 2 years, 85% of the participating schools and colleges achieved between 6 and 8 benchmarks, whilst only 50% had achieved at least 1 benchmark in 2015.¹⁶

In evidence to the Education Select Committee in 2018, the then-Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds, outlined further what this commitment to the Northern Powerhouse meant in practice. This included a £5 million investment in the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to help disadvantaged students receive additional support. Additionally, the CEC, to June 2018, had formed a network of 42 enterprise coordinators and 806 enterprise advisers to work with 741 schools and colleges and 120 special schools and alternative providers in Northern England.¹⁷

3.2 DfE Careers Strategy 2018-2020

The Government's [Careers Strategy](#) was published in December 2017. It set out a series of measures to be implemented between 2018 and 2020 aimed at

¹⁵ HM Treasury, [Northern Powerhouse Strategy](#), November 2016, p. 14.

¹⁶ Gatsby Trust, ['Be Inspired'](#)

¹⁷ [Secretary of State for Education to Chair of the Education Committee](#), 13 June 2018, p. 3.

improving careers guidance in England.¹⁸ A full timetable is set out on pages 8-9 of the strategy.¹⁹ Its objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Using the Gatsby Benchmark to improve careers provision;
- Publishing a careers programme by each school & college;
- Naming a Careers Leader for each school & college;
- Providing information about T-Levels, apprenticeships and technical information to pupils;
- Collecting & publishing data on student destinations;
- Improving the National Careers Service website;
- Ensuring every child has at least one encounter a year with an employer. These should include Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) employers.

[Statutory guidance](#) sets out how schools should meet the Gatsby Foundation benchmarks for excellence in careers education.²⁰

Since January 2018, Ofsted has been required to comment in school and college inspection reports on the careers guidance provided to young people. Ofsted inspectors are asked to bear in mind the Government's Careers Strategy when assessing schools and colleges. Since September 2021, these requirements have been strengthened, particularly with reference to the 'Baker Clause' (see section 1.2). If a school is not meeting the requirements of the Baker Clause, inspectors will state this in the inspection report, and will consider what impact this has on the quality of careers guidance and the subsequent judgement for personal development.²¹

3.3 Skills for Jobs White Paper 2021 and Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022

The Government's ['Skills for Jobs' white paper](#) on further education and skills, published in January 2021, included proposals on careers advice.

The white paper included proposals to more strictly enforce the 'Baker Clause' (which requires schools to inform pupils about technical and vocational paths), as well as extending careers advice to pupils in year 7 (to then

¹⁸ PQ, [Schools: Vocational Guidance, 286227](#), 9 September 2019

¹⁹ Department for Education, [Careers Strategy: Making The Most Of Everyone's Skills And Talents](#), December 2017

²⁰ DfE, [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#), January 2023

²¹ Ofsted, ['Building Confidence, Encouraging Aspiration'](#), 12 June 2018; Ofsted, [School Inspection Handbook](#) October 2021; Ofsted, [Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook](#) September 2021

required in years 8-13), and reforming the work of existing careers advice bodies.

The paper stated that “at the moment, there is no single place you can go to get government-backed, comprehensive careers information”, and that:

We will address this problem by updating the [National Careers Service website](#) to become a single source of government-assured careers information for young people and adults. [...]

We will improve both local and national alignment between The Careers & Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service to create a clear, all-age careers system. We have appointed Professor Sir John Holman to advise on this alignment, as Independent Strategic Adviser on Careers Guidance, working closely with The Careers & Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service. We have developed four principles for increasing alignment which we will implement over the next 18 months as we work towards a longer-term review of the delivery system.²²

The paper then set out the following on providing information to pupils about technical paths and more widely, including plans to update the relevant guidance:

[...] We will introduce a three-point-plan to enforce the Baker Clause: a new minimum requirement about who is to be given access to which pupils and when; tougher formal action against non-compliance; and government-funded careers support for schools to be made conditional on Baker Clause compliance. Alongside this, we will lower the age range of the duty on schools to provide independent careers guidance, requiring schools to offer this support from year seven, bringing it in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks. We will publish updated guidance setting out what we expect for secondary schools (as statutory guidance) and colleges (as a requirement for funding). We will ask Ofsted to undertake a thematic review to provide an up-to-date assessment of careers guidance in schools and colleges and provide recommendations to improve practice.²³

The Library briefing [FE white paper: Skills for Jobs for Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#) provides wider information on the white paper.

The proposals in the white paper were included in the Bill that became the [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022](#).

Section 14 of the 2022 Act requires schools in England to allow a range of education and training providers to inform pupils directly about technical education qualifications or apprenticeships. This access to pupils must be on at least three occasions during each of the first, second and third key phases of their education between the ages of 13 and 18-years-old. The first key phase is school years 8 or 9, the second key phase is the school years 10 or 11 and the third key phase school years 12 or 13.

²² Department for Education, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), January 2021, p45

²³ Department for Education, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), January 2021, p47

The [Library briefing on the original Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#) provides some further background (see pages 27-29).

3.4 Education (Careers Guidance in School) Act 2022

At the start of each new parliamentary year, all backbench MPs are invited to enter a ballot. The few MPs who are lucky in the draw may each bring in a Bill of their choosing. In the [ballot held on 20 May 2021](#), Mark Jenkinson was drawn in first position.

On 16 June 2021, Mr Jenkinson presented the [Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Bill](#), which would extend the duty to provide careers guidance in schools. In his [announcement of the Bill](#), Mr Jenkinson stated that the Bill would extend the requirements to provide careers guidance to children in year 7, and also implement the proposals in the Skills White Paper.²⁴

A [Library briefing on the Bill](#) provides information on the details of the Bill and its progress in parliament.

During the [Second Reading debate](#) held in the House of Commons on 10 September 2021, both the Government and Opposition indicated their support for the Bill.

The [Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Act 2022](#) received Royal Assent on 31 March 2022 and came into force on 1 September 2022.²⁵

²⁴ Mark Jenkinson MP, [Twitter post, 17 June 2021](#)

²⁵ [The Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Act 2022 \(Commencement\) Regulations 2022](#)

4 Organisations providing support

4.1 National Careers Service

The [National Careers Service](#) (NCS), [launched in 2012](#),²⁶ provides people over 13 years old with free and impartial information, advice and guidance on learning, training and work opportunities. The service is available in England and is supported by qualified careers advisers. NCS services may be provided face-to-face, via telephone or online. It has a dedicated young people's telephone service.

In an [annual survey of NCS effectiveness](#) published in March 2023, the overall quality of the service was rated highly by telephone and face-to-face customers, with over nine in ten agreeing that it was good (94%). 88% of customers were satisfied with the National Careers Service overall.²⁷

Economic Evaluation of the NCS

An [economic evaluation of the NCS](#), commissioned by the Department for Education, was published in March 2017.

The evaluation “could not identify a positive impact of the National Careers Service on employment or benefit dependency outcomes” but did “identify a relatively strong positive effect in relation to education and training.”²⁸

4.2 Careers and Enterprise Company

In 2014, the then-Education Secretary, Baroness Morgan, announced the creation of a new careers and enterprise company for schools, the [Careers and Enterprise Company](#) (CEC). The role of the company is to support collaboration between schools, colleges and employers to help pupils aged 12 to 18 access better careers advice, rather than to deliver programmes

²⁶ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, [New National Careers Service Launched](#), 5 April 2012.

²⁷ Department for Education, [National Careers Service satisfaction and progression surveys: 2021 to 2022](#), March 2023, p6

²⁸ DfE, [An Economic Evaluation of The National Careers Service](#), (March 2017), p. 31.

directly.²⁹ The CEC is required to support schools for free and target resources in areas most of need.³⁰

Objectives and Programmes of CEC

Under the [2017 Careers Strategy](#), the Government set several goals that the CEC would be responsible in delivering. The current [Grant Funding Agreement](#) between the DfE and CEC provides further details on its objectives.

These include:

Cornerstone Employers

The CEC works with ‘cornerstone employers’ who committed to working with schools and colleges across the country. The Government says there are now more than 400 cornerstone employers.³¹

Careers Leaders

As of September 2018, all schools and colleges should have a named careers leader to lead their careers guidance programme.³² The CEC says that over 2,000 careers leaders have completed relevant training.³³

Establishment of Careers Hubs

A Careers Hub, funded by the Government but coordinated by the CEC, is a group of secondary schools and colleges in a dedicated area that work together to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The Government has said that as of April 2023, coverage of the careers hubs network has been expanded to cover over 90% (4,621) of schools and colleges.³⁴

Enterprise Advisors

The [2017 Careers Strategy](#) stated that all schools should be offered the support of an enterprise adviser by 2020.³⁵ Enterprise advisors support local headteachers to develop a career plan.³⁶ Announcing the role, the CEC described enterprise advisors as:

Volunteers from the world of work (businesses and the public sector, organisations of all sizes including the self-employed). Working directly with school and college leaders, they will be responsible for helping schools and colleges build careers and enterprise and employer engagement plans drawing on their own local business networks. They will be supported by full-

²⁹ DfE, ‘[New Careers and Enterprise Company for Schools](#)’, 10 December 2014.

³⁰ [DfE to Careers and Enterprise Company](#), 24 April 2019, p. 25.

³¹ [PQ 197991 \[Schools: Vocational Guidance\], 15 September 2023](#)

³² DfE, [Careers Strategy \(2017\)](#), p. 8.

³³ Careers and Enterprise Company, [Careers leader training](#), accessed 31 October 2023

³⁴ [PQ 197991 \[Schools: Vocational Guidance\], 15 September 2023](#)

³⁵ DfE, [Careers Strategy \(2017\)](#), p. 6.

³⁶ CEC, ‘[Our Network](#)’.

time Coordinators who will have simple tools available to lay out the range of programmes available to schools and colleges nationally and locally, for example speakers in schools, CV and skill building, work experience. The Enterprise Adviser network will help 'join the dots' at a local level and increase coverage across the country.³⁷

In May 2019, there were 2,600 enterprise advisors, and around 2,000 schools and colleges had been matched with an advisor. A CEC-commissioned survey in 2018 suggests that 54% of advisors are women and commit on average 8 hours a month to working with schools and colleges.³⁸

Funding of the CEC

In the 2014 announcement on the CEC's creation, the then-Education Secretary Baroness Morgan stated that the new company would receive £20 million in start-up funding for 2015/16, including £5 million as investment funding to stimulate good practice across England. The Education Secretary said that "in the longer term, the company will sustain itself".³⁹

In April 2019, the Government stated that it no longer intended for the CEC to sustain itself without government grants. In its statement to the CEC, the Government said:

The nature of the CEC's work has expanded significantly to deliver the Government's Careers Strategy to the extent that the CEC and DfE no longer envisage replacing Government funding with alternative sources of income in the way that was originally intended when government set up the CEC.

[...]

However, the Government expects the CEC to continue to leverage additional funding to deliver its objectives, including through the sources of external match funding and support [...] whilst respecting the impartiality of careers provision in schools and colleges.⁴⁰

In 2023/24, £32.5 million has been provided by the government in grant to the CEC.⁴¹

4.3

Jobcentre plus employment advisers: 14-17-year olds

In the [2015 Summer Budget](#), the Government announced the creation of a new Jobcentre plus employment advisor role, working with schools and sixth-form

³⁷ CEC, '[New Enterprise Advisers to Connect Young People and the World of Work](#)', 16 September 2019.

³⁸ CEC, '[Win-Win: New Research Highlights the Impact of Enterprise Advisers and the Personal Benefits](#)', 13 May 2019.

³⁹ HC Deb, '[Preparing Young People for Work](#)', c. 843, 10 December 2014.

⁴⁰ [DfE to Careers and Enterprise Company](#), 24 April 2019, p. 25.

⁴¹ CEC, '[Grant Funding Agreement and Variation 2023/24](#)', March and July 2023

colleges to help improve the ability of young people to find work. In evidence to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee in 2017, the Government stated that the scheme was “not a competitor” to the existing Careers and Enterprise Company. Evidence was heard from witnesses that the scheme should be rebranded to distinguish it from Job Centre Plus.⁴²

The new provision, aimed at 14-17-year olds, was initially trialled in 10 pathfinder areas in Greater Birmingham and Solihull.⁴³ Following the pilot, the scheme was to be gradually rolled out nationally in England from November 2016.⁴⁴ In 2017, around 1,000 secondary schools in England were intended to be involved (a third of the total).⁴⁵

An evaluation of the programme by the DWP and the Government Social Research Body concluded in 2018 that the programme was “well received by schools and other stakeholders” and that “students themselves typically spoke positively about the programme, particularly those who had received more targeted support”.⁴⁶ The evaluation also recommended that because demand for the programme was expected to grow, it would be necessary for the government to either increase resources or target resources to specific groups.⁴⁷

In October 2019, the DWP announced it would extend the programme with an additional £7 million, in order to employ a further 90 advisers and provide targeted support for those with special educational needs under the age of 24. To October 2019, the scheme has worked with 1,400 schools in England.⁴⁸

4.4 Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) Programme

The Education and Skills Funding Agency provides the [Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge Programme](#) (ASK) free to schools in England to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and support to enable them to promote apprenticeships. The scheme was introduced in 2016, originally for students in

⁴² Work and Pensions Committee, [Employment Opportunities for Young People](#), HC 586 (March 2017), para 29.

⁴³ HM Treasury, [Summer Budget 2015](#) (2015), p. 80.

⁴⁴ DWP and Government Social Research, [Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Programme](#) (April 2018), p. 12.

⁴⁵ Work and Pensions Committee, [Employment Opportunities for Young People](#), HC 586 (March 2017), para 25.

⁴⁶ DWP and Government Social Research, [Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools Programme](#) (April 2018), pp. 8, 10.

⁴⁷ [Ibid.](#), p. 10.

⁴⁸ [‘DWP Extends Jobcentre Support for Schools Programme with £7m Funding’](#), Schools Week, 11 October 2019.

years 10 to 13. From September 2019, the programme has been extended to include years 7 to 9.⁴⁹

The Government stated in March 2023 that the programme is supported by £3.2 million of funding per year and has worked with 5,000 schools, reaching over 1.7 million students and over 230,000 parents.⁵⁰

4.5

Discover Uni

[Discover Uni](#) (formerly Unistats) is an official source of information on higher education that allows students to compare university courses and outcomes. It is owned and operated by the UK higher education funding and regulatory bodies:

- [The Office for Students in England](#)
- [The Scottish Funding Council](#)
- [The Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland](#)
- [The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales](#) (soon to be replaced by the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research](#))

Discover Uni publishes information submitted by higher education providers about their undergraduate courses, as well as data from the following datasets:

- The [National Student Survey \(NSS\)](#), which is an annual survey for final-year students to provide feedback about their experience at university or college.
- The [Graduate Outcomes Survey](#), which collects information from students 15 months after they finish their course. It asks them what they are currently doing, how much they are earning, and their perceptions of work following their graduation from their course.
- The Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset combines education data from the Department for Education (DfE) with employment, earnings, and benefits data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC. Using these sources, LEO provides earnings and benefits information for graduates one, three, five, and ten years after completion of their qualifications.

⁴⁹ PQ 240522, '[Students: Apprentices](#)', 3 April 2019

⁵⁰ [PQ HL5773, 7 March 2023](#)

4.6

Calls to Streamline Organisations

When the CEC was [launched in 2014](#), it was intended to work closely with the [National Careers Service](#) (NCS), established in 2012, which provides careers advice and guidance to people through telephone and digital services in England.

The Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees in 2016 reported concerns that there was too great an overlap between the work of the CEC and NCS:

There were also concerns about the potential for overlap between the work of the Careers & Enterprise Company and that of the National Careers Service. Katharine Horler, Chair of the Board of Careers England, told us the National Careers Service’s inspiration agenda was “exactly the same” as the work the Careers & Enterprise Company was doing. The Science, Engineering, Manufacturing and Technologies Alliance saw “no real reason for the continued existence of the National Careers Service as a separate entity” and called for it to be subsumed within the Careers & Enterprise Company.⁵¹

The then-Secretary of State for Education, Baroness Morgan, emphasised the different roles performed by the NCS and CEC:

Nicky Morgan: First, I do not think [schools and employers] are confused [about the respective functions of the two NCS and CEC]. Secondly, I think the NCS and the new company are doing different things. The company, as we have discussed, is very much employer-led, and I think that is not the case with the NCS. The NCS also focuses particularly on a number of priority groups. I want the new company to be very much about going into schools, with a particular focus on 12 to 18-year-olds. The NCS is an all-age service, although of course they will particularly focus on some younger people and lowskilled adults without a level 3 qualification, as well as NEETs, as we have already discussed, and adults facing redundancy.⁵²

Following the launch of the Government’s Careers Strategy in 2017, the then Chair of the Education Committee, Robert Halfon, said that the Government should “avoid the duplication of the National Careers Service, Careers Enterprise Company and the like, and reallocate the many millions of pounds that go to careers and create a one-stop shop of a National Skills Service.”⁵³

In 2019, the Local Government Association called upon the Government to “end the patchwork of careers activity in England”, and hand funding and control of employment schemes to local authorities.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees, [Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance](#), HC 205 (5 July 2016), paras 37 & 38.

⁵² Education Committee, [Oral Evidence: Careers Guidance For Young People: Follow-Up, HC 333](#), 7 January 2015, Q46.

⁵³ [Robert Halfon: Consolidate the UK’s ‘Duplicated’ Careers Services](#), Schools Week, 4 December 2017.

⁵⁴ Local Government Association, [‘Thousands of Young People Missing Out on Vital Careers Support, Councils Warn’](#), 28 October 2019.

The [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#) published in January 2021 stated that the Government had appointed Sir John Holman to advise on the improvement of the local and national alignment of the Careers & Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service.⁵⁵

Sir John Holman [wrote to Ministers with his recommendations in June 2022](#). Sir John put forward nine ‘strategic principles’ for careers guidance, including that:

- Government careers guidance activities should be underpinned by a public strategic framework
- DfE should continue to delegate the delivery of careers activity to schools and colleges, with a single organisation providing support and challenge
- Government should have robust procedures to assure the quality of delivery of careers guidance
- Information about occupations and careers should be based on a single source of government-assured information and data
- There should be a balance between meeting local needs and national needs
- All those who may need or want to use government’s careers guidance offer need to understand what is available and how they can access it.⁵⁶

In December 2022, the Skills Minister, Robert Halfon, [responded to Sir John](#) and said he “will consider [the recommendations] carefully as part of ongoing work to develop the future careers guidance system in England for all ages.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Department for Education, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), January 2021, p45

⁵⁶ Department for Education, [Careers guidance system: letters from Sir John Holman and Robert Halfon](#), 12 December 2022

⁵⁷ As above

5

How well are schools and colleges discharging their duties?

There has been a considerable amount of scrutiny on the quality of careers advice available to children and young people. This section provides an overview of recent reports and reviews.

5.1

Ofsted review careers guidance in schools and further education and skills providers (2023)

In September 2023, Ofsted published a [review of careers guidance in schools and FE and skills providers](#).

The review's findings included:

- The importance of a quality careers programme was understood by leaders and staff, and the role of careers leader well embedded
- Most schools and FE and skills providers were linking curriculum learning to careers well. Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) included dedicated time for direct input on careers guidance in most schools, although in less effective examples, careers was only taught in PSHE
- Many schools find it difficult to collect and use career destinations data
- While many schools made sure pupils received unbiased guidance that included both academic and technical pathways, this was not always the case and some FE providers reported difficulties in accessing schools
- Some changes in working practices following the pandemic, such as increased home working, have led some employers to stop offering work experience, and schools and FE and skills providers are finding it difficult to find alternative placements

Ofsted made several recommendations as a result of the review, including for the Department for Education to consider ways in which it may be possible to improve how post-16 and post-18 destinations data is aggregated back to

schools or FE and skills providers, and consider how to increase the attractiveness of the careers adviser role.⁵⁸

5.2 CEC's Insight report into careers education (2023)

In October 2023, the CEC published [From coverage to quality](#), a report discussing progress in the careers system and the impact of a Careers Impact System developed by the CEC to improve careers guidance. The report found:

- Progress across the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, with on average 5.5 benchmarks fully achieved per institution, up from 4.9 a year previously
- Careers education having more impact on disadvantaged schools, in particular sharpening focus on pupil outcomes
- Sustained engagement with Careers Hubs and having a trained Careers Leader are both associated with higher benchmark scores
- More than four in five school leaders (83%) say their senior leadership team now give a high priority to careers education⁵⁹

5.3 CEC's Trends in Careers Education Report (2021)

In December 2021, the CEC published its [Trends in Careers Education](#) report, which sought to assess careers education in 2020/21 compared with the situation two years previously, before the pandemic.

The report focused on six identified trends:

- Careers education had become more prominent in the curriculum
- While the pandemic had stifled workplace experiences, virtual interaction had enabled some employers to meet young people over a wider area, and provide access to 'hard-to-reach' industries
- Information about apprenticeships was growing, but interest was not yet converting into uptake

⁵⁸ Ofsted, [Independent review of careers guidance in schools and further education and skills providers](#), 29 September 2023

⁵⁹ CEC, [From coverage to quality: a careers system of continual improvement](#), October 2023

- Increased focus on individuals and personalised guidance
- Training and local collaboration in careers advice increased progress
- A positive link between meeting the Gatsby career guidance benchmarks and the likelihood of a student being in education, employment, or training after Year 11⁶⁰

5.4 Sutton Trust report on careers guidance in secondary schools (2022)

In March 2022, the Sutton Trust published [Paving the Way](#), a report on careers guidance in secondary schools.

The report noted that, while progress had been made, provision of careers advice remained variable, with gaps between state schools with more and less deprived intakes, and between state and private schools.

The report also highlighted continuing gaps in the availability of advice between technical and academic routes:

Nearly half (46%) of 17- and 18-year olds (Year 13) say they have received a 'large amount' of information on university routes during their education, compared to just 10% who say the same for apprenticeships.⁶¹

The report also found that teachers in state schools were more likely than their colleagues in private schools (by 75%-59%) to report that the Covid-19 pandemic had negatively impacted their school's ability to deliver careers advice and guidance.

The report made a number of recommendations, including better enforcement of the Baker Clause, and that every young person should have access to a professional careers adviser and a set minimum number of interactions with employers, including work experience.⁶²

5.5 Augar Review (2019)

Although schools were outside the remit of the [Augar Review](#), which focused on post-18 education and funding, because careers advice influences the

⁶⁰ Careers and Enterprise Company, [Trends in Careers Education 2021](#), December 2021

⁶¹ Sutton Trust, [Pupils four times less likely to say they have received substantial guidance on apprenticeships than university](#), 10 March 2022

⁶² As above

choices that students make for their post-18 career or study, the report did reflect on its delivery.

The report stated that it believed careers support to be under-funded, and called for a roll-out of career hubs between education institutions and employers:

We believe that careers support is still underfunded and therefore recommend that the strategy is rolled out nationally so that every secondary school is able to be part of a careers hub, that training is available to all careers leaders and that more young people have access to meaningful careers activities and encounters with employers.⁶³

The review also expressed disappointment at the relative lack of discussion of technical education and apprenticeships in schools, but supported the “Baker Clause”:

We welcome the new requirement on schools (from January 2018) to allow technical education and apprenticeship providers to talk to pupils, but were disappointed to learn that there is evidence that schools still fail to tell pupils about the full range of post-18 options. We welcome Ofsted’s focus on schools’ provision of independent advice, careers guidance and opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work, as part of judging pupils’ personal development.⁶⁴

5.6 CEC’s Closing the Gap 2019 report

The CEC published [Closing the Gap 2019](#), on employer engagement with careers education in schools and colleges, in January 2020. The report stated:

Four out of five young people now meet employers every year to learn about the world of work and two out of three leave school and college having had experiences of the workplace. In the last 18 months the number of young people who don’t regularly meet employers has fallen rapidly.

Thanks to the efforts of employers this gap has reduced by nearly half in the past 18 months - from 1.2 million to 700,000 out of a total student population of 4 million.⁶⁵

5.7 DfE’s School Snapshot Surveys (2018)

In its Winter 2018 survey, the DfE reported on progress against the statutory guidance that a range of education and training providers engaged with pupils in years 8 to 13, that education establishments would publish a policy

⁶³ [Review of Post-18 Education and Funding](#), CP 117 (2019), p. 55.

⁶⁴ [Ibid](#), p. 55.

⁶⁵ Careers and Enterprise Company, [Closing the Gap 2019](#), January 2020, p1v

statement outlining the nature of provider access, and that the institution would adopt the Gatsby Benchmarks to improve their career provision.

The [survey](#) was conducted with 836 school leaders, and 1,010 surveys with teachers.

It found that in the Winter of 2018:

- The majority of secondary schools (95%) had arranged a visit from at least one technical education provider during the past 12 months;
- Secondary schools had most commonly arranged a visit from apprenticeship providers (90%) followed by a visit from an FE college (81%);
- Close to three quarters (73%) of secondary schools had published a provider access statement on their website or were planning to;
- Subjects in which STEM careers are most commonly promoted are the 'science curriculum' (99% of secondary schools), maths (94%) and design & technology (93%);
- The most common ways of promoting STEM careers outside of the curriculum were through 'STEM clubs, societies and weeks' (24%) and through 'links with employers (talks, visits, work experience etc.)' at 23%.⁶⁶
- The [Summer 2018](#) survey had previously assessed other aspects of school's career education, finding that in the summer of 2018:
 - The vast majority of secondary school leaders said that their school had an identified Careers Leader with responsibility for overseeing the school's careers programme (94%);
 - 90% of secondary school leaders said that all 14 year old pupils at their school used career paths information to inform their study options;
 - In primary schools, the most common approach to careers education was delivery through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons (87%) and topic work (84%). Only 4% said that they did not provide any careers education to their pupils.⁶⁷
- The Summer 2018 survey interviewed 758 school leavers and 1,040 classroom teachers.

⁶⁶ DfE, [The School Snapshot Survey: Winter 2018](#) (July 2019), p. 11.

⁶⁷ DfE, [The School Snapshot Survey: Summer 2018](#) (September 2018), p. 13.

5.8 Failing to Deliver? Career Education Provision in England (2017)

The academics Julie Moote and Louise Archer, from King's College London, published '[Failing to Deliver? Exploring the Current Status of Career Education Provision in England](#)', Research Papers in Education (2017).

Based on data collected via a national survey of 13,000 Year 11 students attending 296 state-maintained schools and 44 independent schools in Autumn 2014, the paper argued that careers education in England was "currently patterned in ways that may be working to promote inequalities relating to gender, ethnicity and social class". The authors argued that "the majority of careers support is provided by a 'self-referral' system, in which the onus of responsibility is placed on the students themselves", which for pupils created "anxieties in navigating this self-referral support".

The authors recommend that greater targeting of resources was needed and the introduction of monitoring student participation as well as provision by schools.

Findings from the [survey](#) of 2014 included that:

- 63% of students reported receiving careers advice at secondary school;
- 44% of girls wishing to pursue a manual trade received careers information, compared to 66% of boys wishing to do the same;
- 65% of white students reported having met with a careers adviser, compared to 33% of Asian students;
- 64% of students planning to enrol in A-levels reported receiving careers advice, compared to 58% of those planning to pursue part-time work.

5.9 All-Party Parliamentary Group reports (2017)

In January 2017, the [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility](#) published its report [The Class Ceiling: Increasing Access to the Leading Professions](#), which raised concerns about careers advice in schools and universities. The report described the quality of careers advice as "too varied, leaving young people unaware about steps to build a career especially in the most selective professions."⁶⁸

⁶⁸ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, [The Class Ceiling: Increasing Access To The Leading Professions](#) (January 2017), p. 9.

The [All-Party Group for Education](#) published [How Well Do Schools Prepare Children for their Future?](#) in May 2017. Many respondents to the enquiry reported that careers education, information and guidance was “patchy” and that career development for children with special educational need and disability (SEND) lacked prominence.⁶⁹ The All-Party group recommended that:

The government reinstates mandatory work experience. In order to prevent the organisation of placements adding to teacher workload, secondary schools should have a clear structure for careers provision, with a non-teaching member of staff having overall responsibility.

Careers advice and guidance should always be provided by a qualified, independent and impartial counsellor. There is no point adding stricter CEIAG accountability measures to Ofsted inspections when there are not enough qualified careers advisers. We recommend that the Department defines a minimum qualification that counsellors must achieve and investigates ways to further professionalise the careers guidance sector. The Department should consider the coverage of high quality careers guidance as one of its own key performance indicators.

Children with SEND must be more visible in debates around careers provision. The Department should seek to identify what “good” careers education looks like for children with SEND, so that careers guidance counsellors can receive appropriate training and ultimately forge a strong network of local partnerships with businesses that lead to positive career outcomes for children with SEN (p. 21).

5.10

Ofsted Comments 2013-18 and Inspection Framework

Current Ofsted inspection framework

Ofsted carries out routine inspections of maintained and academy schools (and some other providers) in line with the current [framework for school inspection](#). The inspection handbook describes the standard of careers advice that Ofsted expects “good” secondary schools to meet:

Secondary schools prepare pupils for future success in education, employment or training. They use the Gatsby Benchmarks, a framework that defines the best careers provision in schools and colleges, to develop and improve their careers provision and enable a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils in Years 8 to 13. All pupils receive unbiased information about potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance; the school meets the requirements of section 42B of the Education Act 1997. The school provides

⁶⁹ All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education, [How Well Do Schools Prepare Children for their Future?](#), pp. 11, 12.

good quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work.⁷⁰

Thematic review and Government response (2013)

In September 2013 Ofsted published a thematic review, [Going In The Right Direction? Careers Guidance In Schools From September 2012](#).⁷¹ This reported that careers guidance in schools was not working well, with only one-fifth of the schools visited being “effective in ensuring that all [...] students in Years 9, 10 and 11⁷² were receiving the level of information, advice and guidance they needed to support decision-making.”⁷³

The report also raised concerns about the breadth of information and guidance students in the surveyed schools were typically given:

The information students received about careers was too narrow. Too many students were unaware of the wide range of occupations and careers that they might consider. About half the schools used their own staff to inform students about careers but these staff often had insufficient training and did not provide students with up-to-date information.

Schools did not work well enough with employers to provide their students with direct experience of the world of work, which would help to broaden students’ minds about possible future employment. Vocational training and apprenticeships were rarely promoted effectively, especially in schools with sixth forms. The A-level route to universities remained the ‘gold standard’ for young people, their parents and teachers.⁷⁴

In September 2013, the Government published its [response](#) to Ofsted’s thematic review in the form of an “action plan” for careers education.⁷⁵

Sir Michael Wilshaw Comments (2015 & 2016)

In [evidence to the Education Committee](#) in September 2015, HM Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw described careers guidance as a “disaster area” in schools.⁷⁶ In January 2016, he told CentreForum that “preparation for employment remains poor and careers guidance in both schools and colleges is uniformly weak”.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Ofsted, [School Inspection Handbook](#), September 2023

⁷¹ Ofsted, [Going In The Right Direction? Careers Guidance In Schools From September 2012](#) (September 2013).

⁷² The thematic review was carried out when the duty only extended to pupils in school years 9-11.

⁷³ Ofsted, [Going In The Right Direction?](#) (2013), p. 5.

⁷⁴ [Ibid](#), p. 4.

⁷⁵ DfE & Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, [Careers Guidance Action Plan](#) (September 2013).

⁷⁶ Education Committee, [The Work of Ofsted: Oral Evidence](#), HC 400, 16 September 2015 (2016), Q26.

⁷⁷ [‘Ambitions for Education: Sir Michael Wilshaw’](#), 18 January 2016.

Getting Ready for Work Report (2016)

A November 2016 Ofsted report on enterprise education and work-related learning, [Getting Ready for Work](#), described “limited” chances for children “to take part in meaningful work-related learning or work experience” at key stage 4. The report also stated that a poorly-co-ordinated, “chaotic” environment often existed locally, with projects such as those sponsored by local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) in their infancy and business leaders reporting that there was:

little coherence to provision and a lack of strategy by government, business organisations or individual schools. [Business leaders] were largely unaware of the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company. School-business links were most productive when they were official and between organisations, rather than informal and between individuals. Relationships were often hampered by poor communication between school and business staff and a lack of clarity over what was wanted from the partnership.⁷⁸

Ofsted’s National Director of Education Comments (2018)

Ofsted’s National Director of Education, Sean Harford, stated that on the provision of careers advice in schools, “the current picture is more encouraging than has been the case in the past”. Based on a representative sample of 120 school inspection reports from 2016 to 2018, he noted that “careers guidance within schools is improving” and that the “publication of the careers strategy has given schools and colleges a solid framework to build their careers around”.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Ofsted, [Getting Ready for Work](#) (November 2016), pp. 4-5

⁷⁹ Ofsted, [‘Building Confidence, Encouraging Aspiration’](#), 12 June 2018.

6 Select committee reports

6.1 Education Committee report (2023)

The Commons Education Committee launched an [inquiry into careers education, information, advice and guidance in schools](#) in January 2022.

The announcement stated that the inquiry would explore whether the careers advice currently provided was sufficient, and also whether current arrangements “could better support disadvantaged or left-behind groups to access career opportunities that may otherwise not be available to them.”⁸⁰

In June 2023, the committee published its report on [Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance](#). The report’s recommendations included that:

- The Government should publish an updated careers strategy
- That, if a pilot on careers advice in primary schools is a success, it should be extended across England
- Ensuring that careers advice for younger children seeks to break down negative stereotypes
- The DfE should create a national platform for work experience opportunities, including virtual placements
- Ofsted should be tasked with upholding a strong focus on CEIAG provision
- Teaching on careers guidance should be part of teacher training, and that Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators (SENCOs) should be fully trained and working with careers leaders
- The Department should issue a one-off round of developmental funding to support schools that have the worst record on achieving the Gatsby benchmarks to improve their CEIAG provision⁸¹

⁸⁰ Education Committee, [Education Committee launches new inquiry on careers education in schools](#), 27 January 2022

⁸¹ Education Committee, [Raise aspiration and counter negative stereotypes by teaching young children about careers](#), June 2023

Government response

The government response to the report was published in September 2023. The Committee Chair, Robin Walker, welcomed that the response was “broadly positive” about the committee’s recommendations. The response included plans from the government to:

- Publish a Strategic Action Plan for Careers in 2024, to set out measurable outcomes for careers guidance and dates by which these should be achieved
- Publish a first interim evaluation of its careers programme in primary schools in 2024, and a final evaluation report in summer 2025
- Strengthen the content on work experience, setting clear expectations for schools and colleges, in annual revisions to careers guidance

The government also reiterated its commitment to introducing registers for children not in school, but did not set out a timeline for doing so.

The response did not accept the committee’s recommendations on funding a programme of careers advisers directly through the Careers and Enterprise Company, or making one-off developmental funding available for schools and colleges with the worst record of achieving the Gatsby benchmarks.⁸²

6.2 Public Accounts Committee Inquiries (2018)

The House of Common’s Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in 2018 published a report on the [Government’s strategy to address STEM skills shortages](#). The report stated the Committee’s concern about the Government’s 2017 Careers Strategy, and recommended that the:

DfE should make better use of data on career destinations and salaries to incentivise young people to work towards careers in particular STEM sectors where there is higher need. As part of its plans to improve the quality of careers advice, DfE should work with Ofsted to consider rating the quality of advice provided in schools.⁸³

In response, the DfE said it has asked the CEC to focus particularly on STEM when producing toolkits for schools and colleges on what works.⁸⁴

The PAC also published a [report on the Higher Education Market](#) in 2018, which concluded that “young people are not being properly supported in making decisions on higher education, due in large part to insufficient and

⁸² Education Committee, [Education Committee welcomes Government’s response to Careers Education report](#), September 2023

⁸³ Public Accounts Committee, [Delivering STEM Skills for the Economy](#), HC 691 (2018), p7

⁸⁴ [As above](#), pp. 7, 13.

inconsistent careers advice”, though also stated that it was too early to judge the success of the 2017 Career’s Strategy.⁸⁵

In response to the inquiries, the Government stated that by December 2020 all schools are expected to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks in full, and from September 2019 Ofsted would introduce new inspection arrangements, including the review (but not the separate grading of) careers advice provided by schools and colleges.⁸⁶

6.3 Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy Inquiry (2015-16)

The Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, formed by members of the Education Committee and the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, [announced](#) an inquiry into careers advice, information and guidance in December 2015.

Report

The Sub-Committee published its [report](#) on 5 July 2016. The Sub-Committee stated that it was “very disappointed that careers advice and guidance is still poor in so many schools”⁸⁷ and set out several recommendations for its improvement, including:

- Support for the Government’s intention to legislate to require schools to collaborate with training providers;
- That Ofsted introduce a specific careers guidance judgment, with schools unable to be rated ‘Outstanding’ overall if they had careers guidance that was rated ‘Inadequate’ or ‘Requires Improvement’, and unable to be rated ‘Good’ if their careers guidance was ‘Inadequate’;
- The simplification of careers policy delivery at the national level, with a single Minister and a single Department in charge of co-ordinating careers provision for all ages;
- That all Government-funded careers initiatives, including the Jobcentre Plus support for schools scheme, be brought under the umbrella of the Careers and Enterprise Company, and that that the Government consult on transferring responsibility for the National Careers Service from the Skills Funding Agency to the Careers & Enterprise Company;

⁸⁵ Public Accounts Committee, [The Higher Education Market](#), HC 693 (2018), p. 5.

⁸⁶ [Treasury Minutes: Government Response to the Committee of Public Accounts](#), Cm 9702 (October 2018), p. 18.

⁸⁷ Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, [Careers Education, Information and Guidance](#), HC 205 (2016), p. 29

- That the Government work with employers and schools to produce a plan to ensure that all students at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to take part in meaningful work experience.⁸⁸

Government Response

The [Government response to the Sub-Committee's report](#) was published on 1 November 2016.

In its response, the Government stated:

- That it would not introduce a separate Ofsted judgment for careers guidance, or to attach careers guidance to ratings as the Committee had recommended;
- Careers guidance had come within the remit of a single Minister at the Department for Education, which offered new opportunities for a coherent approach (this followed changes to the structure of government following Theresa May's appointment as Prime Minister, shortly after the Committee's report was published);
- That the Government would not bring all of its careers initiatives within the remit of the Careers and Enterprise Company, and would retain the distinct status of other careers bodies;
- That while a traditional 'work experience' placement may be of greatest benefit to many pupils at Key Stage 4, it may not be appropriate for meeting the individual needs of all pupils, and that schools choose what is most appropriate.⁸⁹

The then-Committee Co-Chairs, Neil Carmichael and Iain Wright, [expressed their disappointment at the response](#), and said Ministers were "burying their heads in the sand" about the quality of careers provision.⁹⁰

The Sub-Committee expressed particular concern about the Government's decisions not to adopt their recommendations about Ofsted judgments and bringing all careers provision within the remit of the Careers and Enterprise Company, and also "that the careers strategy long-promised by Government has still not been produced."⁹¹

⁸⁸ [Ibid](#), pp. 29-32

⁸⁹ Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, [Careers Education, Information, Advice And Guidance: Government Response To The First Joint Report of The Business, Innovation And Skills And Education Committees Of Session 2016-17](#), HC 757 (2016).

⁹⁰ Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, [Government Inaction on Careers Provision Failings is Unacceptable](#), 1 November 2016.

⁹¹ [Ibid](#)

6.4

Education Select Committee: Follow-up (January 2015)

The Committee [announced](#) a follow-up inquiry into careers guidance to its 2013 report in 2014. The DfE submitted [written evidence](#) to the Committee in advance.⁹² The Committee took [oral evidence](#) from the then Secretary of State, Baroness Morgan, on 7 January 2015.

In its [report](#) on the work of the Committee during the 2010-15 Parliament, the Education Committee stated:

39. When we returned to this issue a year after the publication of our report, it was clear to us that careers advice in schools was not improving, so we followed up our inquiry with a one-off session with the Secretary of State in January 2015. Drawing on this session, we recommended in our report on apprenticeships that the Government urgently review the incentives for schools to provide good quality careers advice and recognise that the mantra of “trusting schools” does not work when the interests of schools and young people are not aligned. This remains a work in progress and should be high up the agenda in the next Parliament.⁹³

6.5

Education Select Committee Report (January 2013)

The Education Select Committee published [Careers Guidance For Young People: The Impact Of The New Duty On Schools](#) in January 2013. The Committee concluded that the decision to transfer the statutory duty to schools from the national Connexions model was “regrettable” and that it had “concerns about the consistency, quality, independence and impartiality of careers guidance now being offered to young people”.⁹⁴

The Committee raised specific concerns and recommendations:

We heard evidence that there is already a worrying deterioration in the overall level of provision for young people. Urgent steps need to be taken by the Government to ensure that young people’s needs are met.

[...]

⁹² DfE, [Careers Guidance Follow-Up Inquiry, Written Evidence Submitted By The Department For Education](#), 3 July 2014.

⁹³ Education Committee, [Closing The Gap: The Work Of The Education Committee In The 2010-15 Parliament](#), HC 1120 (2015), para 39. The full report on apprenticeships is [Apprenticeships and Traineeships for 16 to 19 year-olds](#), HC 597 (2015).

⁹⁴ Education Committee, [Careers Guidance For Young People: The Impact Of The New Duty On Schools](#), HC 632-1 (2013), p. 3.

The quality, independence and impartiality of careers guidance offered to young people was a central concern. To help ensure quality, we recommend that schools are required to work towards the Quality in Careers Standard, and to procure guidance services only from qualified providers and individuals.

[...]

There must be accountability measures to ensure that schools provide a good quality careers guidance service for their pupils.⁹⁵

The Government's [response](#) was published on the Committee's website. On the transference to responsibility to schools, the DfE defended the decision:

The decision to devolve responsibility for careers to schools was a response to mounting evidence from a range of respected sources that the national Connexions model was hugely expensive and of questionable value. While there was no explicit transfer of resources, when we made the decision to stop the Connexions service, by making savings on that and other centrally driven budgets we were able to prioritise and protect expenditure devolved to schools during this Spending Review period.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Education Committee, [Careers Guidance For Young People: The Impact Of The New Duty On Schools](#), HC 632-1 (2013), pp. 3-4.

⁹⁶ Education Committee, [Careers Guidance For Young People: The Impact Of The New Duty On Schools: Government Response To The Committee's Seventh Report Of Session 2012-13](#), HC 1078 (2013), p. 3.

7 Extra-parliamentary recommendations and comments

7.1 Careers England, NAHT & WorthLess? Campaign Survey (2019)

A [survey](#) by [Careers England](#) (the association for organisations providing Careers information and guidance to schools in England), the [National Association of Head Teachers](#) and the Headteachers' campaign group WorthLess? stated that schools were unable to deliver adequate careers provision due to a lack of funding. Based on a [survey](#) of 191 school leaders and career professionals, the group suggested that:

- Only 10% [of schools] have adequate funding;
- 75% [of schools] have insufficient, limited or no funding;
- Around a 5% of secondary schools receive less than £2,000 in funding per annum. Given [the] average size of secondary school is 1,000 this equates to circa £2 per student [...];
- About a third of secondary schools receive less than £5,000 per annum - £5 per student;
- 84% of schools “strongly agree” or “agree” that careers provision in their schools is now a high priority.

7.2 CBI People and Skills: Getting Young People “Work Ready” (2019)

In June 2019, the CBI published its [People and Skills: Getting Young People “Work Ready” Report](#). It cited the CBI 2018 Report on Education and Skills that said 44% of employers surveyed by the CBI felt that young people leaving school, college or university were not work ready, and that changes should be made to widen the curriculum and better nurture character traits such as resilience.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ CBI, [People and Skills: Getting Young People “Work Ready” Report](#) (2019), p. 6.

On the direction of careers advice, the CBI recommended that:

Alongside a broad and balanced school curriculum and qualifications for getting young people work ready, it is also vital that young people are informed of all their options post-16. This means schools and colleges are supported to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks [...] and deliver up-to-date careers advice on A-Levels, Apprenticeships and the upcoming T-Level pathways.⁹⁸

The report also highlighted the geographic variation in engagement between employers and schools and college, stating that students in rural and coastal areas often struggle to engage with a range of employers. The report recommended that:

[...] The government's Youth Charter⁹⁹ and Careers Strategy [should] be integrated, recognising the contributions employers make to young people and making it easier for them to support the education system.¹⁰⁰

Through integrating the Youth Charter and Careers Strategy, the CBI hoped that the Government would create joined up support structure for both businesses and young people.

7.3 CBI/Pearson Education and Learning for the Modern World (2019)

The CBI in partnership with Pearson published its [Education and Learning for the Modern World](#) in 2019. It emphasised that links between employers, schools and universities were extensive, with a larger proportion of the surveyed business reporting an increase in their presence in secondary schools and further education colleges.¹⁰¹

The report recommended on careers advice for the Government, schools and employers, that:

- All employers should consider how they play their part in making sure every young person has an experience of the workplace and world of work while they're in education.
- The Gatsby Benchmarks of high-quality careers advice, currently established in secondary schools and colleges, should be adapted so age appropriate careers advice can be given in primary schools. In addition, a greater effort must be made to adapt the Gatsby Benchmarks when necessary, such as for those with special educational needs or a disability.

⁹⁸ [Ibid.](#), p. 35.

⁹⁹ The development of a new [Youth Charter](#), was announced by the UK Government in April 2019.

¹⁰⁰ CBI, [People and Skills: Getting Young People "Work Ready" Report](#) (2019), p. 38.

¹⁰¹ CBI and Pearson, [Education and Learning for the Modern World](#) (2019), p. 9.

- The Government should expand the number of careers hubs from 40 in order to ensure full coverage. This is estimated to require 140 careers hubs in total.
- To support stronger partnerships the CBI must also play its part. This will be done through a new digital platform that provides best practice and signposts CBI members to the best way for them to make a difference. This is in partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company.
- Schools and colleges should be supported to free up timetabling space and capacity that allows businesses to engage with them in the delivery of careers activities.¹⁰²

7.4 Sutton Trust Access to Advantage (2018)

The Sutton Trust [Report Access to Advantage](#) (2018), examining university acceptance rates according to school type and area, found that state school pupils were less likely to attend Russell Group Universities compared to independent and grammar school pupils. The report recommended that discussion of higher education and A-level choices should occur before the age of 16:

All pupils should receive a guaranteed level of careers advice from professional impartial advisers. For those facing disadvantage – or who are at risk of failing to reach their potential – there should be further support available, including being supported to undertake and reflect upon academic enrichment activities for the personal statement. The ‘Careers Leaders’ in schools, established by the government’s Careers Strategy, should ensure that key messages are consistent across staff and based on up to date guidelines.

Advice should happen earlier and include guidance on subject options at A level. Many young people are not getting the right advice when it comes to A level options. Students need more support at an earlier age, that can help them to make an informed choice on their A-level choices. This should include advice on ‘facilitating subjects’, favoured by Russell Group universities.¹⁰³

7.5 Working it Out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement (2018)

The OECD published a working paper, [Working it Out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement](#), authored by Pauline Musset and Lucia Mýtna Kureková in 2018. The paper cited common issues with career guidance in schools in OECD countries, including under-resourcing, inadequate knowledge of labour market opportunities, a bias towards academic

¹⁰² [Ibid.](#), p. 10.

¹⁰³ Sutton Trust, [Access to Advantage](#) (2018), p. 5.

opportunities being recommended for pupils following completion of secondary education, less guidance to girls and disadvantaged students, and the existence of competing career guidance providers.¹⁰⁴

As a summary of research on careers guidance, the paper suggested core principles of a good careers education:

- Start early, and continue into later stages in different shapes and intervene at key transition points, with pro-active delivery;
- Ensure that students can talk to career counsellors who are well-trained, independent and impartial;
- Integrate teachers into the provision of career guidance in school-wide approaches;
- Complete these approaches with the opportunities given by ICT technologies and labour market information;
- Ensure that the approaches used are personalised;
- Focus on certain groups, those who need the most assistance.¹⁰⁵

7.6

Gatsby Foundation report: international comparisons

Some comparative information is available through a 2014 report published by the Gatsby Foundation, [Good Career Guidance](#), which discussed best practice in careers guidance and included visits to six foreign states or countries – Netherlands, Germany, Hong Kong, Ontario, Finland, and Ireland.

[Appendix 1](#) (pages 3-44) to the report sets out the results of these visits, and the relevant systems in place.

¹⁰⁴ Pauline Musset and Lucia Mýtna Kureková, [Working it Out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement](#) (2018), pp. 48-49.

¹⁰⁵ [Ibid.](#), pp. 53-64.

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