
GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE

REACHING THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS



GATSBY

CONTENTS

FOREWORD
SIR JOHN HOLMAN
02

FOREWORD
RYAN GIBSON
03

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK
04

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF
CAREER GUIDANCE
06

2. THE GATSBY CAREER
BENCHMARKS
08

3. ACHIEVING THE
BENCHMARKS

EXPERIENCES FROM THE NORTH
EAST PILOT AND PRACTICAL
TIPS TO HELP YOUR SCHOOL
10

4. FURTHER
CONSIDERATIONS
RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND
TACKLING STEREOTYPES
26

5. FURTHER
CONSIDERATIONS
CAREERS LEADERS
30

6. FURTHER
CONSIDERATIONS
UNDERSTANDING THE
CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF
TECHNICAL EDUCATION
32

7. FURTHER SUPPORT ON
YOUR JOURNEY TO GOOD
CAREER GUIDANCE
36

ANNEX A:
THE NORTH EAST PILOT
38

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FOREWORD



I first realised the importance of career guidance when I was a headteacher. Many young people rely on their parents and families to guide them through school and beyond, towards a fruitful career. But even the best-informed families may give incomplete or even stereotyped advice. School is the place where all students, whatever their family background, can get unbiased information, advice and guidance on the whole range of career pathways.

I am pleased that the Department for Education has used the *Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance* as the core framework for the *Careers Strategy, Making the Most of Everyone's Skills and Talents*, launched in December 2017, and the *Statutory Guidance, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*, published in January 2018. The eight Gatsby Benchmarks define an ambitious framework for career guidance that works for schools, employers and, most importantly, young people and their families. The Benchmarks are based on international best practice, but they have been tested in a pilot in schools and colleges in North East England. The pilot showed that with good leadership and a clear sense of purpose, the Benchmarks are achievable by each and every school.

The landscape is changing for career guidance. Not only has the Government given clear backing with its new strategy; *The Careers & Enterprise Company* is making fundamental changes to the support available for schools and colleges across all eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Rapid changes in online information and 'big data' mean that up-to-date labour market information is readily available to schools, students and parents, wherever they are. Changes to technical education mean the options open to young people to follow apprentice and technical routes are clearer and wider than ever.

I hope that this handbook helps your school understand how to be part of a step change in career guidance across England, supporting every young person to make decisions that lead to a positive and fulfilling life.

John Holman

Sir John Holman,
Senior Advisor to the Gatsby Foundation
April 2018



It has been a humbling experience to see how the hard work and dedication of the schools and colleges involved has directly resulted in such a positive change to the lives of the young people they serve



Over the last few years it has been my pleasure to lead Gatsby's career guidance pilot, testing the implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks in schools and colleges across the North East. Before joining the *North East Local Enterprise Partnership* to lead this work, I was an assistant headteacher at a secondary school in South Tyneside, where I saw first-hand the positive impact that good career guidance can have on students. I have always believed that careers guidance is important for each and every young person, whatever their ambitions or background – a value that sits firmly at the heart of the Benchmarks.

It is important to understand that the experience of each school and college in the pilot was different. They all had different starting points and a different set of strengths and challenges (and you can learn more about these schools and colleges in Annex A). As a result, their solutions and approaches to achieving the Benchmarks were varied. However, every school and college found that the Benchmarks created a clear framework that helped coordinate activity across the whole school, from subject teachers to governors and administration staff. The Benchmarks also helped external stakeholders, such as employers, clearly see where they could fit into a school's careers programme.

Throughout this pilot, the North East LEP supported these schools and colleges in forging new relationships and creating new systems and structures both within and between institutions. I would encourage you to seek out the equivalent local support on offer to your school or college. The Careers & Enterprise Company Enterprise Coordinators, hosted across the country, are a great place to start. In the North East we are now rolling out our support for the Benchmarks across the region.

It has been a humbling experience to see how the hard work and dedication of the schools and colleges involved has directly resulted in such a positive change to the lives of the young people they serve. This handbook shares some of the stories and experiences from the pilot, and I hope this information can help inspire you on your journey to implementing the Benchmarks.

R. Gibson

Ryan Gibson,
Facilitator of the Gatsby career pilot,
North East LEP
April 2018

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

THIS HANDBOOK IS DESIGNED TO HELP SECONDARY SCHOOLS CREATE A CAREER GUIDANCE PROGRAMME FRAMED BY THE GATSBY CAREER BENCHMARKS. WE HOPE IT WILL BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL FOR HEADTEACHERS AND CAREERS LEADERS WHO HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERSEEING THEIR SCHOOL'S CAREERS PROGRAMME.

The handbook introduces the Benchmarks, which describe all the elements of good career guidance in schools. However, we recognise that every school is different, and context is critical to designing a careers programme. This handbook is therefore not a prescriptive 'step-by-step' guide. Instead we present a series of case studies and suggested approaches developed by the broad range of schools and colleges involved in the successful pilot of the Benchmarks.

Several themes run through the Benchmarks, such as the use of data, providing advice on all progression routes, the need to focus on *each and every* student, and the need for strong school leadership. We explore some of these themes in the 'further considerations' sections towards the end of the handbook.

We hope this handbook can act as a starting point for your journey, and we have included a list of key organisations to help you further. We have also put together a more extensive list of recommended organisations on our website, where you can also find an online version of this handbook (which includes direct weblinks to organisations or documents when they are mentioned in the text).

The website address is:
www.goodcareguidance.org.uk

THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

The Careers Strategy, published in December 2017, identifies a broader role for The Careers & Enterprise Company across all eight of the Gatsby Benchmarks. At the heart of its mission to inspire young people about the world of work is a highly successful national network, connecting schools and colleges, employers and career programme providers. The impact of their work can be seen in many of the stories in this handbook, and we encourage all schools to make use of the extensive support it provides.

Right: Students at Kenton School





THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREER GUIDANCE

GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE IS THE KEY TO SOCIAL MOBILITY: IT IS ABOUT SHOWING YOUNG PEOPLE – WHATEVER THEIR SOCIAL AND FAMILY BACKGROUND – THE OPTIONS OPEN TO THEM, AND HELPING THEM MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES TO SET THEM ON THE PATH TO REWARDING FUTURE CAREERS.

This is particularly important for young people who come from families without experience of higher education, or who live in areas of deprivation, or whose ethnicity or gender is underrepresented in certain occupations. Good career guidance is about raising aspirations, aiming high and avoiding making any assumptions about the limits on a young person's options. It's about accepting that while some subjects – for example science and mathematics – may seem harder than others, they may open more doors.

Only through schools can we be sure that every young person gets the advice they need, and that this advice is in their best interest, and theirs alone. Ofsted recognise the importance of career guidance and reference its importance throughout their inspection framework.

For some young people, university may offer the best route after school. For others, technical routes or apprenticeships may be better. Many schools and teachers find it easier to advise on the university route, because that is the route that many teachers took themselves. However, good career guidance means showing all students all the options open to them, whichever route they eventually take.

Right: Year 12 students from Churchill Community College on placement at Printed.com as part of their school's innovative new approach to experiences of workplaces



We see careers education as a driving force behind the social mobility of our students. With 45 per cent of our students qualifying as Pupil Premium, many do not have access to the role models and social networks required to develop their employability skills; we hope to open their eyes to careers they perhaps won't have ever considered. As a result, careers education is a key focus of our Academy and an integral part of our Academy development plan. The Benchmarks have provided a clear framework to help us to develop our careers provision across all areas of the curriculum



JANET BRIDGES OBE, PRINCIPAL, CASTLE VIEW ENTERPRISE ACADEMY

THE GATSBY CAREER BENCHMARKS

THE GATSBY CAREER BENCHMARKS ARE THE RESULT OF AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY TO FIND THE BEST PRACTICE IN CAREER GUIDANCE WORLDWIDE. WORKING WITH EXPERTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF DERBY, THE GATSBY TEAM VISITED SIX PLACES – GERMANY, FINLAND, THE NETHERLANDS, IRELAND, HONG KONG AND ONTARIO – WHERE CAREER GUIDANCE IS KNOWN TO BE GOOD.

From these visits, from reviewing good practice in UK schools and from a close study of the research literature, the team drafted eight Benchmarks to define the essentials of good career guidance. The draft Benchmarks were tested hard: through consultation, through a survey of 10% of English schools and through a costing exercise by PwC. After publication in 2014, they were tested further in a pilot in North East England in 2015–17, involving a wide range of schools in terms of size, location and Ofsted rating.

From all this research and testing, we are confident that the Benchmarks are a robust but realistic framework for developing career guidance that is world class.



Effective careers guidance is the driving force behind improving social mobility – so businesses want young people to fully understand the world of possibilities out there, make the most of their talents and create lasting careers.

Many firms already provide inspiration and advice – with real progress being made in many areas, including the North East. But it's crucial more get involved across England and showcase the range of exciting careers available to all young people across all sectors



SARAH GLENDINNING, NORTH EAST DIRECTOR,
CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY

Benchmark	Summary	Criteria
1 A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME	Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers and employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it. – The careers programme should be published on the school's website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers and employers to access and understand it. The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process.
2 LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION	Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options. – Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children.
3 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH PUPIL	Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations. – Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil, and subsequent agreed decisions. All pupils should have access to these records to support their career development. – Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school.
4 LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS	All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.
5 ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES	Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter* with an employer. <p>*A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.</p>
6 EXPERIENCE OF WORKPLACES	Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have. – By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.
7 ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter* with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and pupils. – By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and pupils. <p>*A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to explore what it is like to learn in that environment.</p>
8 PERSONAL GUIDANCE	Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Every pupil should have at least one such interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18.

ACHIEVING THE BENCHMARKS: EXPERIENCES FROM THE NORTH EAST PILOT AND PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP YOUR SCHOOL

THE VALUE OF THE BENCHMARKS HAS BEEN RIGOROUSLY TESTED THROUGH A PILOT INVOLVING SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES IN THE NORTH EAST. FROM THIS PILOT WE HAVE SEEN THAT, WHEN EMBRACED, THE BENCHMARKS CAN BE TRULY TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR A SCHOOL OR COLLEGE.

The schools ranged in terms of size, location and Ofsted rating, and many have a higher than average number of students eligible for Pupil Premium.

You can learn more about the pilot and the schools and colleges involved in Annex A. The following section shares some of the practical lessons learned about implementing each Benchmark, and gives top tips and ideas from those that have done so in their own school or college.



We are delighted that the eight Gatsby Benchmarks for good careers guidance are at the heart of the Careers Strategy. This evidence-based approach has the potential to make a significant difference to young people across England. It has been accepted as best practice by schools, colleges and employers across the country. At The Careers & Enterprise Company we consider its adoption by government to be a breakthrough moment for careers in England



CLAUDIA HARRIS, CEO, [THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY](#)

1 BENCHMARK 1: A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME

Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers and employers.

The first rung in building a structured career ladder for all students comes from strong leadership and a committed senior leadership team. The pilot in the North East showcases the importance of every school having a Careers Leader who can drive forward all eight Benchmarks in the school.

A Careers Leader needs to be supported by the school's leadership and have the skills, knowledge, authority and time to deliver a strategy and 'conduct the orchestra' of career guidance across the school and the community of external partners. Embarking on using the Benchmarks with buy-in from all staff will make the process much simpler. [The Careers & Enterprise Company](#) provide support and resources across all eight benchmarks. Their Enterprise Adviser scheme is available to every school and college and links schools to a business volunteer to work closely with the senior leadership team to design and implement a careers strategy.

At Excelsior Academy, the chair of governors is also the governor with responsibility for careers, and one of the Vice Principals acts as a Careers Leader with strategic responsibility for the quality and impact of the careers programme. They are supported by a Careers Activities Coordinator and a Work Experience Coordinator as well as a committed team of 'Careers Champions' – staff who implement and deliver the careers plan across the school. Careers guidance is now embedded across the school, including building the Benchmarks into the appraisal and performance review of staff at all levels, including the headteacher.

Sunderland College used a planned restructure of the senior leadership team (SLT) to introduce a new position: a Careers Leader with strategic responsibility for all careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) activity. Two other members of the SLT were also given the lead on Benchmarks 4 (Careers in the Curriculum) and 5 (Encounters with Employers). Employing the right member of staff to become the Careers Leader is key. If the Careers Leader is not a member of the SLT, they should report to a member of the SLT who has strategic responsibility for careers education. (See section 5 for more on Careers Leaders.)

To meet Benchmark 1, schools need to provide information about their careers offer in a manner accessible to staff, students, parents, carers and employers. To achieve this, The King Edward VI School in Morpeth built a dedicated careers website. Young people particularly appreciate being able to access relevant careers information from home, and it also gives parents and carers the opportunity to get involved. Park View School created a public-facing Careers and Enterprise blog with their Enterprise Adviser: each faculty within the academy has student Careers and Enterprise Champions who regularly blog about their experiences and events happening within the faculty. This has allowed employers, colleges and universities to link to what the academy is doing, and for parents, teachers and students to keep track of available opportunities.

Evaluating their current position against the Benchmarks was a powerful first step for the schools and colleges involved in the pilot. Compass, the free, confidential self-audit web tool created by Gatsby and The Careers & Enterprise Company, can help your school do this. Understanding your school's starting point will help you to reflect on what has worked well in the past, plan your journey and focus on areas of particular need.

For more information visit www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/evaluation-tool

COMPASS
CAREERS BENCHMARK TOOL

TOP TIPS

"As part of writing a careers education policy, carry out an audit: you'll be surprised what you're already doing, and you'll have a focus for what to put in the policy. You will find using the Compass audit tool on The Careers & Enterprise Company website a useful part of this process."

Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator for the Career Benchmarks Pilot at the North East LEP

"In order to ensure that we met Benchmark 1, a large amount of research and cross-referencing took place with external providers, quality awards and the [Career Development Institute](#). This ensured that we created a framework for careers guidance which feels robust and comprehensive."

Marie Jobson, Careers Leader at Churchill Community College

"Benchmark 1 focuses on your policies, how these influence your careers programme, your staffing and the role of the SLT. This ensures you have a strong base for careers within the school and allows you to build a successful careers provision."

Rachel Reay, Careers Leader at The Link School



Above: Parents, carers and students hear about future study and employment options at Harton Academy



Learning about the labour market does not have to be about a mountain of statistics and bar charts; just highlighting key trends about skills requirements of the future, what employers are looking for, and the importance of being employable will give students what they need to start preparing for the world of work



MARK FOX, CAREERS LEADER, NORTHUMBERLAND CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

2 BENCHMARK 2: LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

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

Finding reliable information about the local and national labour market is vital to deliver good-quality intelligence about jobs and career paths. Access to up-to-date career and labour market information (LMI) is also important for social mobility. If students and their parents know what people in different occupations get paid, and where and how numerous the vacancies are, they are in a better position to make informed choices about future study and training. The government-funded 'LMI for All' website brings together multiple sources of robust LMI which is used by several careers guidance websites – this data can also be accessed through a widget which can be put directly on to a school website.

Interpreting LMI can be overwhelming, so one approach is to ask students for areas of interest and initially concentrate on these industries. At Northumberland Church of England Academy, trips were organised to local industries that the students picked. In this case, the automotive industry was of interest. The school presented LMI in a way that was engaging for students, giving them the opportunity to find out about the state of the industry today and in the future. This left students better equipped to understand the potential challenges within the industry, ask more relevant questions of employers, and come to an informed decision about their future career choices. The Academy also designed an interactive, practical lesson where students learnt how jobs are divided into sectors, were shown the National Careers Service website, and worked on individual projects which they presented to the class. This broadened their horizons beyond the narrow options they had previously considered. The lesson was designed to be adapted to suit any year group from Year 7 upwards.

At Bishop Auckland College, the careers team ensured all students engaged with LMI by organising large-scale sessions for up to 50 students at a time. They researched high-growth industries in the North East and disseminated information to the students on different vacancies, specific roles and what different sectors might look like in the future. For example, the energy sector is going to be a key source of jobs in the future – something many students had not considered before the LMI was presented to them.

LMI should also be integrated into normal curriculum lessons. Park View School built a central database of people who could be brought in by staff to provide LMI for the curriculum. The database contained details of school alumni, parents and carers, contacts made through [Future First](#) and [Inspiring the Future](#), and individuals from industry who had worked with the school in the past. The database gives them easy access to lesson resources from real people who are currently in that industry.

TOP TIPS

"Learning about the labour market does not have to be about a mountain of statistics and bar charts; just highlighting key trends about skills requirements of the future, what employers are looking for, and the importance of being employable will give students what they need to start preparing for the world of work. Self-awareness is a key component of the careers education programme and should go hand in hand with learning about the labour market."
Mark Fox, Careers Leader at Northumberland Church of England Academy

"Organisations such as the local authority, Chambers of Commerce and Local Enterprise Partnerships can be particularly useful as they are skilled at accessing and interpreting local LMI. They can help you identify industries that are growing or sectors that have good prospects that your students may not have considered. The [National Careers Service](#) will also be using LMI alongside job profiles."
Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator for the Career Benchmarks Pilot at the North East LEP

"You can track whether your students are going to college or university, securing apprenticeships or progressing into employment. You can also analyse whether students are progressing into growing or declining industries and whether they feel prepared for the world of work."
Leanne Johnston, Careers Leader and Assistant Headteacher at The King Edward VI School, Morpeth

"Read your local economic plan documents produced by your Local Enterprise Partnership or the local authority to understand the local area yourself. At Bishop Auckland College, students, lecturers and impartial Careers Advisers felt better equipped to ask useful and relevant questions of employers when they met them at future events such as career fairs."
Kevin Burns, Careers Leader at Bishop Auckland College

3 BENCHMARK 3: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH PUPIL

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

To address the needs of each young person, schools can first look at the destinations achieved by former students. By gathering accurate data for each student on their education, training and employment destinations for around three years, you will gain a better understanding of the needs of current students and what has and hasn't worked in the past.

Berwick Academy brought in a former student as an intern to map where alumni had gone on to. Berwick created a map which was hung in a newly created careers area within the school. The map showed the destinations of former students. The school also created 'alumni boards', highlighting former students in each department. The development of an alumni database ensures the Academy can keep in touch with former students in the years to come.

Destination data can help shape the careers advice given. At Castle View Enterprise Academy, they realised that lots of former students had taken up apprenticeships but they weren't providing much information about this pathway to current students. In response to this, they organised an event specifically looking at apprenticeships and the routes into them.

It is also important to guarantee that each and every student has career guidance that meets their own needs. This means that in some cases students may take part in different activities or receive different amounts and types of support. At Castle View Enterprise Academy, Year 7 students eligible for Pupil Premium were selected to take part in a five-week business mentoring programme. Activities that require students to self-select can sometimes miss those who might benefit most from a programme.

To ensure that students' progress was being accurately tracked, Bishop Auckland College undertook an extensive IT project culminating in the creation of an online portal that tracks a student's academic, welfare and careers progress. It brought together all of the college's careers activities and interventions in one place, ensuring that resource management, tracking and impact were all enhanced. It can be accessed by both teachers and students, with sensitive information accessible for staff only. The system provides each student with a record of their careers education and a focused career ladder. Although a large task, the impact of integrating all of the tracking systems together has been invaluable to the college.

“

By implementing all eight Benchmarks, the school has seen a dramatic fall in the number of NEET students from 60 per cent to 9 per cent in two years

”

THE LINK SCHOOL, SUNDERLAND

Harton Academy undertook a similar exercise. It equipped each student from Year 7 to Year 11 with a skills audit book. The book is a record of the skills they've learned each year, how these skills could be applied to industry, and what further skills they need to develop. As well as providing a record, the book also encourages students to critically analyse their development and the labour market. The skills booklet was so useful at Harton Academy that they're now looking at developing it into an app so that parents and carers can also access it.



Above: Students from Harton Academy attend a careers event

🔍 CASE STUDY

THE LINK SCHOOL, A PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT IN SUNDERLAND

Before implementing the Benchmarks, The Link School did not focus on careers as part of their work with young people, and were initially reluctant to engage with a [Careers & Enterprise Company Enterprise Adviser](#), preferring to work with a youth worker who would understand the more challenging nature of their students.

Through using the Benchmarks, the school gained the confidence to begin to work with employers, both strategically and operationally. The school are now matched with Unipres (a global automotive engineering company), work with the Department for Work and Pensions one morning a week, and have hosted their first ever careers fairs. The school also now commissions external guidance to ensure that all students have access to an independent and impartial careers guidance professional. By implementing all eight Benchmarks, the school has seen a dramatic fall in the number of NEET students from 60 per cent to 9 per cent in two years, and a much greater progression to college and apprenticeships.

“I am one very proud mother. Today [my son] completed a week of work experience at Unipres. I have not witnessed this sparkle in him for such a long time. I've listened, intently each evening, to the day's news and loved it almost as much as my son. His self-esteem and just the way his outlook has changed is astounding. His self-confidence has rocketed! ... Thank you for helping me to allow my son to grow. For giving him these opportunities and believing in him. I am in awe of the changes I see before me.”

**Mother of Year 10 student
(The Link School)**

“I have to say, the impact that the [introduction of the Benchmarks] has had on our school has been absolutely transformative. Learners are so engaged with their future steps – and the range of what they have been successful in applying for is just unbelievable. [Our Assistant Head] said that she has never known learners be so engaged with GCSE maths, and she specifically credited the work that had been done on careers for that. I really believe that what has been achieved within our school could be a blueprint for other schools throughout the country in breaking the cycle of low expectations and aspirations.”

**Headteacher, The Link School,
Sunderland**

TOP TIPS

“Destinations data is an important measure and will be looked at by Ofsted during inspections. Ensure governors, leaders, staff and students are aware of destination data and are able to talk confidently about how the school appropriately prepares young people for the next stage.”

**Matt Joyce, Careers Leader
at Harton Academy**

“Use the destination data of alumni combined with LMI to better understand whether the curriculum is producing positive destinations for your students.”

**Louise Gulliver and Charlotte Reynolds,
Careers Leaders at Park View School**

“Manage time effectively. Use September to complete destinations work in a focused way, and do not start on the cycle of current students until October. I work with the Education Welfare Officer and the Local Authority Link Adviser to identify and support the Y11–13 summer leavers and encourage them to attend local drop-ins. This has helped reduce the academy's NEET figure to between 0–1 per cent every year.”

**Mark Fox, Careers Leader at
Northumberland Church of
England Academy**

“Taking into account Excelsior's context (more than 50 per cent of students with English as a second language, high proportion of Pupil Premium and high SEN figures), it has been our relentless focus to ensure that the needs of each and every student are met. In order to do that, significant changes had to be made to align our curriculum to what the Benchmarks were telling us to do. A new robust curriculum was designed for Key Stage 3.”

**Deon Krishnan, Careers Leader
at Excelsior Academy**

4 BENCHMARK 4: LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.

Some schools in the pilot have explored ways to embed careers into the curriculum. Promising initiatives include: subject teachers visiting relevant industries; building links between subject heads and employers; bringing employers into class to deliver (or co-deliver) lessons; developing careers activities linked to subject schemes of work; identifying 'Careers Ambassadors' from each department; and including a careers prompt on planning documents for schemes of work.

One of the key barriers faced in bringing careers into the curriculum is a worry from teachers that they're not trained to do this. Building relationships with employers is key here. Some pilot schools brought employers in to give talks to their teachers, but others sent their staff out to work with local businesses and learn about the skills they were looking for when recruiting. At Churchill Community College, a teacher undertook an 'insight into industry' week organised by [STEM Learning](#), where she spent a day with five STEM businesses. On returning to school she used her experiences to update staff on routes into relevant STEM occupations. It also built closer relationships between the school and industry.



Left: Students taking part in activities at Bishop Auckland College



I was looking for fresh ideas around textures, tones and sharp lines. The project far exceeded my expectations... I would be delighted to repeat this experience again



HOUSING ASSOCIATION STAFF
WORKING WITH KENTON SCHOOL

Churchill also matched curriculum leaders with a relevant employer who could help to deliver aspects of the GCSE syllabus. Industry professionals provided real-life case studies to integrate into lessons and set projects around real industry developments. This programme was tested across three subject areas and has now been rolled out across the entire syllabus.

At Kenton School, Year 8 art & design students took part in an interior design challenge set for them by a local housing association. Working in small groups, they were tasked with redesigning the interior of a block of flats being built near the school, based on information about the different prospective residents. At the end of the project, the students presented their ideas to a representative of the housing association. Other similar projects linking specific subjects to employers were run in history and mathematics.

🔍 CASE STUDY

TECHNICIANS MAKE IT HAPPEN

Technicians apply knowledge of science, technology, engineering and maths with hands-on skills, to facilitate innovation and procedures in almost every industry. However, because their work tends to be 'behind the scenes', these rewarding career opportunities may be relatively invisible to young people. The campaign, *Technicians Make it Happen*, provides schools, parents and students with information about technician roles in a variety of sectors, from healthcare and aeronautics to theatre and broadcast. More information can be found on their [website](#).



Creating industry-focused workstreams for students is another way of embedding industry into the curriculum. At Excelsior Academy, students were invited to design an eco hotel. The project ran over ten weeks and is now a yearly event. The students who took part this year are ambassadors for the programme, and will encourage and inspire subsequent year groups. The project brought to life numerous subjects, including maths, English and science. It highlighted their practical purpose within the workplace and illustrated how the subjects prepare students for working life.

Great ideas don't have to require a lot of extra resource. At Northumberland Church of England Academy, students were asked to think of all the jobs that were needed to make household objects. This introduced them to roles they might not have thought about, developed the idea of supply chains, and helped them think about the variety of routes into specific industries. By simply using a model airplane as a stimulus, groups of students came up with all manner of jobs and sectors, from pilots and engineers to catering, tourism and emergency services.

TOP TIPS

"Ensure all staff are aware and agree on the time needed to design and deliver a careers programme before it starts. Encourage training and professional development so that staff feel invested in and supported. We have seen teachers' confidence in incorporating careers information into the curriculum increase notably. This confidence was also seen in the way teachers built new relationships with local employers."

Marie Jobson, Careers Leader at Churchill Community College

"There are lots of services you can buy in to support a career education programme, and it is worth talking to colleagues in other schools for recommendations, but also carrying out your own research. There may be discounts or free services in your area. You can also minimise cost by sharing resources with other schools, working with employers, and applying for bursaries. Some of the most creative ideas cost very little, for example ensuring you have employer representation on the governing body, directing young people to the National Careers Service, or making use of the labour market plugin available on the [LMI for All](#) website. The key is understanding what support you need, based on an audit of practice."

Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator for the Career Benchmarks Pilot at the North East LEP

"Encourage curriculum areas to map their overview schemes of work to specific careers – at Berwick Academy, we invested in CEIAG boards for each faculty to showcase curriculum learning with a link to specific sectors."

Sarah Flanagan, Careers Leader at Berwick Academy

"Try to collect departmental schemes of work to share with employers. It will help employers to think about how they can support your curriculum and ensure their limited time is maximised."

Emma McDermott, Careers Leader at Castle View Enterprise Academy

5 BENCHMARK 5: ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.

To ensure they met Benchmark 5, many schools and colleges in the pilot had to bolster their existing relationships with employers. Many started from the point of already having a regular careers fair or talks with employers, so their challenges revolved around ensuring high-quality and comprehensive student engagement. They began by enhancing their existing events to reach students in all year groups. They also looked at ways to personalise employer interactions so that students found these discussions relevant for their future, and not just generic careers advice. The schools who really embraced the Benchmark worked with [The Careers & Enterprise Company Enterprise Advisers](#) and created innovative opportunities for students to meet local employers. One school organised for employers to judge a “Dragons’ Den-style” event in which students had to pitch their business ideas. This scheme had an amazing impact on some students.

Those looking to enhance an existing careers fair started by tackling the major problem of attendance from both employers and students. Schools contacted employers by mining alumni, parents and contacts from teachers across the school. Some schools wanted to put on sector-specific events. To make this worthwhile, they teamed up with other local schools, ensuring a good turnout of students and employers. Others wanted to tailor their careers fair to what they knew their students wanted. King Edward VI School analysed their student destination data and post-18 choices, grouping them into sectors. This gave them target institutions and businesses that they then brought in to careers fairs. Looking for who you can collaborate with is key to enhancing a careers fair.

The most successful careers fairs also focused on ensuring parent attendance. The King Edward VI School engaged parents right from the very beginning, opening up the careers fair to them as well as to students. The school sent text messages and tweets to parents reminding them of the event, and also updated them when new employers were added.

Smaller scale events can also work well. Castle View Enterprise Academy organised “Business Breakfasts” where two employers came in and spoke to students over breakfast. Prior to starting this programme, the careers team surveyed students to see which employers they’d be interested in hearing from. They then matched these responses with the employers invited, and made sure students were sent personal invitations to events that would interest them. Employers who attended included Nike, Gentoo, Pets as Therapy, Northumbrian Water and the Army. These smaller events helped gauge student interest, feeding back information that then focused future activity. For example, after a visit from a scientist based at Sunderland University, female students who were particularly interested were invited to the university to take part in a science taster day designed specifically for them.

Many employers run short-term programmes for students aimed at teaching them about a specific industry. Nissan ran a Cadet programme with Excelsior Academy and St Joseph’s Catholic Academy aimed at students who might be looking for apprenticeships in the future. The programme ran over five days during term-time, which initially seemed like a large amount of time away from lessons. To help gain buy-in from staff and students, Excelsior had representatives from Nissan come into the school and give a presentation about the programme and the work that students would be doing. At St Joseph’s, Nissan began by running evening workshops; the most engaged students were then chosen to take part in the full programme.

Right: A careers fair at Park View School



Schools focusing on the Gatsby Benchmarks are more open to connecting to employers, and it is easier for employers to work with them to develop projects, to support delivery in the classroom, and to develop relationships with the teachers. Schools using the Benchmarks are open to a wider range of interactions, making it easier for employers to demonstrate what our workplaces are like, how we recruit, the key skills we are looking for and the diversity of job opportunities we have (including apprenticeships). This helps pupils to gain a real understanding of how their learning will support future careers choices



KAREN MARSHALL, APPRENTICE EDUCATION
AND ENGAGEMENT LEAD, [ACCENTURE](#)



TOP TIPS

“To make sure these encounters with employers are memorable, it can be useful to poll students to identify areas of interest and where any gaps in knowledge might lie. At our school, the Careers Adviser found that there was a great deal of interest from students in midwifery, so they arranged for current medical students and a midwife to visit the school. To ensure the most was made of this visit, students were asked to prepare questions in advance and to analyse what they had learned after. Evaluation of impact is key.”
Sarah Rice, Careers Leader at Kenton School

“Tap into your networks and try to expand them to find employer contacts. The Cadet programmes at Nissan came from alumni and family contacts who helped build the relationship.”
Deon Krishnan, Careers Leader at Excelsior Academy

“Overbook a careers fair with more employers than you’ll think you need as this allows for any dropouts and cancellations. Always have a back-up plan so that students are not missing out.”
Christine Jones, Careers Leader at St Joseph’s Catholic Academy



The number of students successfully matched to a work experience place increased by 127 per cent



SUNDERLAND COLLEGE



As the lifeblood of our communities and economy, small businesses are integral to raising young people’s awareness of future opportunities in local areas across England. With entrepreneurship becoming increasingly attractive to the next generation, small business owners are ideally placed to share their passion and experience of working for yourself. What’s more, small businesses benefit too – the chance to develop employees of the future, build personal skills and give something back



JANE WALTON, EDUCATION CHAIR, [FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES](#)

6 BENCHMARK 6: EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES

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

By taking a strategic approach, pilot schools have seen a huge increase in the number of the students carrying out high-quality work experience. They have focused on encouraging students to take up opportunities to experience a wide variety of workplaces and to plan for, reflect upon and learn from these experiences.

To ensure work experience was positive for both the student and employer, Sunderland College worked with an external recruitment agency to prepare students and match them with employers. Students were encouraged to think about what they wanted from an experience of work and what skills they would need to demonstrate during their time with an employer. The college also worked with employers to encourage them to let students participate in real work in addition to shadowing employees. After their time with employers, students were encouraged to reflect on and record what they had learnt in booklets, and to update their CVs with new skills. At Sunderland College, the number of students successfully matched to a work experience place increased by 127 per cent. There are now over 200 employers engaged in the programme.

The Academy at Shotton Hall had found that its students were not thinking deeply about their experiences in the workplace, and consequently the impact of these experiences was limited. To tackle this issue, they are experimenting with "career investigations". Career investigations encourage students to look holistically at a business; studying its role in the local area. Students who took part in the investigations learnt about hidden aspects of the business, often overlooked by students in previous work placements.

At East Durham College, students produced and ran two days of events as part of the "Why Art Man?" festival. They were responsible for creating the event, working with the Local Authority, marketing it and selling tickets. This real-life experience gave students a snapshot of the responsibilities associated with work, and gave them a chance to work with a wide range of businesses, charities and public sector bodies.

Securing a valuable workplace experience for every young person can be a big task. Churchill Community College reduced the burden on the employers by carefully structuring their work experience programme. Students were put into small groups based on skills and aspirations and paired with employers. Students were then given two tasks: to present an overview of the company to employers, and complete a challenge or project set by the employer. Over the week, the group carried out an employer visit to understand the breadth of the business, and each student spent a day shadowing an employee. At the end of the week, groups made a formal presentation to the employer.

Berwick Academy has worked with the Multidisciplinary Innovation Team at Northumbria University to design a 'road-map' of meaningful and diverse workplace experiences across Years 9 to 11. The road-map helps to plan activity across key stages and has resulted in students undertaking work experience, extended projects and workshops within and outside school. The programme has engaged with employers across over 20 sectors. It also integrates elements of Benchmark 5 such as 'employer speed dating'.

TOP TIPS

"The Gatsby Benchmarks have introduced a way of thinking as to how students can gain meaningful experience of the workplace and links with employers as alternatives to a traditional two-week work experience placement. Through the North East Local Enterprise Partnership 'Enterprise Project' we are now working with an Enterprise Adviser at the international company Caterpillar, and already have had two small groups of students visit the local establishment."
Rodger Davies, Careers Leader at The Academy at Shotton Hall

"To us, [a meaningful experience of workplaces] is the culmination of our CEIAG provision and really allows students to gain experiential learning and confidence of seeing what they have learned put into practice."
Marie Jobson, Careers Leader at Churchill Community College

"Think less about work experience and more about experiences of the workplace. How can you help students to really investigate the industry and truly understand what working in it would be like?"
Vikkie Morton, Careers Leader at Sunderland College

"Try to encourage students to take up weekend and holiday work experience too. These can help to develop technical and transferable skills for students and widen their networks."
Gillian Hales, Careers Leader at East Durham College

Right: Students from Greenfield Community College working with employers at Bishop Auckland College



The Benchmarks allow both organisations and schools to work on a clear plan to deliver their part in good career guidance for students. Organisations need to get their heads around supporting local students in career advice and work experiences. This is the workforce of the future. It is not a long-term game: in reality, we are seeing the benefits of fast tracking outstanding pupils in only six months. This is not a tick in the box exercise: it is about adding real value to the schools, students and our business



GREG ROBSON, LEARNING MANAGER, [CATERPILLAR](#)



7 BENCHMARK 7: ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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

Schools within the pilot have fully embraced the concept of 'meaningful encounters' with higher and further education, ensuring that students are made aware of the full range of learning opportunities. With large-scale reforms to technical education on the horizon – including the introduction of T levels from 2020 – making sure young people understand the full range of options available has never been more important. The Government's Statutory Guidance, *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*, published in January 2018, recognises the importance of these encounters. Schools are now required to give providers of technical education and apprenticeships the opportunity to talk to all their students, including publishing their 'provider access' statement on their website.

By making use of all the organisations who can provide support through established outreach and awareness programmes, you can ensure that technical education routes are explained alongside academic routes within the school. Every student, whatever their ambitions, should have the opportunity to explore what it is like to learn at the full range of learning providers, including University Technical Colleges (UTCs), FE colleges, universities and apprenticeship and training providers.

Harton Academy organised an evening event exploring future education options. Local higher education institutions shared information on learning styles and financing options, and a range of professionals talked about their career pathways. The professionals had taken many different routes and qualifications to get to their positions, including apprenticeships and higher technical qualifications. Students could have individual meetings with any of the speakers, and parents and carers also attended the event.

Greenfield Community College looked at this a different way, inviting local further education and apprenticeship providers to a Year 11 parent evening. A designated space was given to the providers so that they were able to engage with students and parents as they waited to speak to teachers.

To ensure students understood the breadth of pathways available, Sunderland College focused on creating a 'Routes into STEM' event, which brought together employers, higher education providers and professionals to talk about careers and the routes into them. By inviting high-profile speakers, they increased attendance at the event.

You can reduce the potential for students to receive conflicting messages about pathways into employment by understanding where parents and carers get their information from, challenging preconceptions of further and higher education, and sharing information throughout the school year.

TOP TIPS

"Map out your destinations from previous years and look for gaps and trends. Are students clustering around particular universities or colleges? Did students pursue 'fallback' routes due to a lack of information about opportunities? Use this data to inform planning of opportunities and potential interventions for the next cycle."

Leanne Johnston, Careers Leader at The King Edward VI School, Morpeth

"It can sometimes be difficult to convince senior leadership to provide broad and balanced information about post-16 options when a school is invested in recruiting students for their own sixth form, but you should focus on the student, and what is best for them. They are entitled to all the information about how they can succeed. A school sixth form should be promoted alongside other routes."

Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator for the Careers Benchmarks Pilot at the North East LEP

"Look at what your local college does in local schools. Staff from our college offer sessions to Year 8 students, linking careers and labour market information to growth sectors in the local area, often taking in employers drawn from the college's own contacts. We also work with Year 11 students and sixth form students applying to college, raising the profile of careers linked to opportunities in our specific region."

Kevin Burns, Careers Leader at Bishop Auckland College

"Our work with Bishop Auckland is an example of how partnership can have an impact on a range of Benchmarks across several institutions through one coordinated and collaborative activity."

Simon Tait, Careers Leader at Greenfield Community College

"Collect bulk copies of local FE college and sixth form prospectuses and training provider guides to use in lessons; the students love to see the real thing."

Emma McDermott, Careers Leader at Castle View Enterprise Academy



We moved Russell Group admissions from 5 per cent to 25–35 per cent annually



BERWICK ACADEMY

CASE STUDY

EXPLORING SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING THROUGH THE CURRICULUM

A student in Berwick Academy became increasingly interested in STEM subjects in Year 11 and decided to take forward maths and physics to A level. She was accepted onto natural sciences courses at all five institutions she applied for.

"Part of [the decision to take maths and physics A level] was thanks to the teachers – they were really inspiring and related the skills I was learning to different kinds of workplace. Attending the summer schools, as well as school visits from science businesses, helped me to decide which direction I'd like to go in."

When I did the engineering summer school, I enjoyed it, but it really highlighted that I'm more interested in science than engineering. It proved to me that, while it's important to focus on what you think you'd like to do, you need to rule out the careers you're not keen on too. My advice to other students, in terms of careers guidance, would be to take advantage of as many opportunities you can. If you're not sure exactly what you want to do, just do something! The skills and learning you get at the end are what count."

Year 13 student, Berwick Academy

Below: Students from Harton Academy attending an evening event exploring education options



8 BENCHMARK 8: PERSONAL GUIDANCE

Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

There are many different models of one-to-one guidance, so start by researching the right one for your school. Whether you are using internal or external provision, make sure a robust quality assurance system is in place to monitor the guidance given to students and ensure those providing guidance are trained to the appropriate level. The Career Development Institute (CDI) holds the [UK Register of Career Development Professionals](#) to help identify qualified practitioners. Those on the register have recognised qualifications, abide by a code of ethics, and undertake regular professional development.

If you're considering using someone from within the school team, think about how you can ensure the guidance interview is independent and impartial. To solve this problem, some of the schools and colleges in the North East pilot swapped appropriately trained staff so students received an impartial interview. This ensured staff had no preconceptions based on relationships built in the classroom.

Greenfield Community College worked with an external organisation to provide 30-minute interviews with each Year 11 student. During these interviews, the Careers Adviser discussed the students' ambitions and helped them explore the progress they had made, or would have to make, to achieve these goals. The Adviser also fed back to staff if there were any students with unrealistic expectations or no plan; this allowed staff to intervene and provide these students with more focussed guidance. For the students of Greenfield Community College, having a one-to-one guidance interview with an external provider was positive, as it reassured them about a lack of bias. The majority now have an intended destination and those that do not have been identified and given extra support.

The Northumberland Church of England Academy looked to draw out recurring themes from Year 11 personal guidance interviews to help improve their wider careers programme. With the consent of the students, 30-minute interviews were audio-recorded and analysed by the Careers Adviser. As a result, the school's PSHE curriculum was changed to address recurring themes, including finance and travel barriers to further education.

When bringing in external providers, think about the sort of information you can give them in advance – providing a record of students' academic and career learning in one place allows them to provide more tailored advice. It also helps them to judge when a student's plans are unrealistic or not ambitious enough. To make sure you are investing in something that is high-quality, ask external providers how they quality assure their service and request to see evidence.



Above: Excelsior Academy

TOP TIPS

"The personal guidance meeting is not about telling a student what qualifications they need for a specific job – they can find that out for themselves. It is an opportunity for a student to have time and space to reflect on what being at school means to them and where it is all leading. The personal guidance interview works best when a comprehensive careers education programme is in place and the Adviser does not have to spend the whole session introducing concepts the student should already know about."

Mark Fox, Careers Leader at Northumberland Church of England Academy

"Conducting guidance interviews was much improved when we could contextualise them with the information about students' academic performance and career education."

Judith McChesney and Rachel Duff, Career Advisers at Bishop Auckland College

"We liaise with services that currently have responsibility for targeted guidance services – for example the Local Authority and Jobcentre. This really helped."

Rachel Reay, Careers Leader at The Link School in Sunderland

"To assure the quality of an external provider, the Career Development Institute's (CDI) '[A guide to best practice and commissioning careers guidance services](#)' recommends you check the external organisation you are employing has the [Matrix Standard](#). If the organisation doesn't, the CDI also provides a checklist."

Marie Jobson, Careers Leader at Churchill Community College

"Become a member of the CDI and contact them with any questions about professionally qualified Advisers."

Mark Fox, Careers Leader at Northumberland Church of England Academy



The Career Development Institute welcomes the new careers strategy and the focus that the Gatsby Benchmarks provide. Professional careers guidance is at the core of the Gatsby Benchmarks. At the CDI we continue to support Careers Advisers and Careers Leaders to improve outcomes for young people by developing and strengthening their skills through ongoing CPD and recognised qualifications, raising standards throughout the profession



JAN ELLIS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, [CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE](#)

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS: RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND TACKLING STEREOTYPES

DELIVERING GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE FOR EACH AND EVERY STUDENT MEANS PROVIDING DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES TO EACH INDIVIDUAL, AND MAY REQUIRE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS TO TACKLE SYSTEMIC ISSUES AROUND GENDER, ETHNICITY, LOCATION OR FINANCIAL SITUATION.



It is essential that all young people can access the most competitive courses and occupations, regardless of their circumstances.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Following an academic pathway can provide access to many skilled professions, and in 2017 record numbers of 18-year-olds in the UK accessed full-time higher education. However, as the Government's social mobility action plan, *Unlocking talent, fulfilling potential*, highlights, young people from advantaged backgrounds are two and a half times more likely to enter higher education compared with those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, and six times more likely to go to the most selective institutions. The Social Mobility Commission have found that local residents are also not always benefiting from high-quality provision in their area.



Everyone is different, and their hopes and dreams need to be respected and encouraged. We are not here to be an 'exam factory' but to produce accomplished young people who can flourish beyond school and be active within society and the economy



LEANNE JOHNSTON,
CAREERS LEADER,
KING EDWARD VI SCHOOL

The UK has some of the most highly regarded universities in the world, and there are many widening participation initiatives led by universities, including outreach activities and summer schools. Some universities also offer financial support and bursaries for students, and some may take in to consideration the applicant's background as part of the admissions process.

But these universities can only make offers to those who apply, so it is critical to provide timely, good quality advice to young people and encourage them to aim high. The Russell Group provide information about making informed choices leading up to entering higher education – this includes a list of 'facilitating subjects' that are most frequently required for entry to degree courses.

These facilitating subjects are: biology, chemistry, English literature, geography, history, modern and classical languages, maths and further maths, and physics.

Supporting students to produce high-quality personal statements can also have a significant impact on whether a student is accepted on to a university course. There is a lot of advice on producing a good personal statement, but it is important to begin thinking about applications early. [The Sutton Trust](#) have successfully piloted activity to help students from low-income backgrounds with their personal statements by engaging them in wider reading and tailored academic activity in advance.

Some school and college leavers may prefer to continue their education as part of an apprenticeship, gaining wages and experience as well as a pathway into a respected occupation. There are increasing opportunities for young people to gain a higher level qualification – including degrees – in this way. There is also evidence to show higher apprenticeships can lead to greater lifetime earnings than many degree courses.



Our school is in a POLAR 1 postcode, with historically low rates of progression to higher education. We analysed our post-18 destinations data and then planned interventions and built new partnerships. We moved Russell Group admissions from 5 per cent to 25–35 per cent annually. Through working with the [Social Mobility Foundation](#) and [Teach First: Futures](#), we recently sent our first student to Oxford University, and have a cohort of students aspiring to Oxbridge/Medicine



SARAH FLANAGAN, CAREERS LEADER, BERWICK ACADEMY

GENDER DISPARITIES IN STEM SUBJECTS

Across all those who started apprenticeships in 2015/16, a stark gender gap emerges. Only 8 per cent of engineering and manufacturing apprentices, and only 16 per cent of ICT apprentices, were female. A recent [report from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers \(IMechE\)](#) found that girls feel particularly poorly informed about engineering and do not see it as relevant to their own lives. The lower application rate by females to apprenticeships in high-demand industries such as engineering is contributing to a significant gender gap in what apprentices are earning: male apprentices get paid 21 per cent more per hour, leaving women potentially over £2,000 worse off per year.

Schools can play an important role in addressing these issues at an early age. The Sutton Trust has identified that guidance about different post-18 courses is particularly needed at age 14. At GCSE, STEM subjects are relatively well balanced in terms of gender (with the exceptions of computing which is 80 per cent male, and design and technology which is 61 per cent male).

However, post-GCSE there are significant variations in uptake of academic subjects by gender. Girls account for 50 per cent of the entries to physics GCSE but only 22 per cent of entries to physics A level. The total cohort size for physics A level has increased by almost 30 per cent in the last decade, but the proportion of girls has remained almost static. Computing continues to be an unpopular subject at A level among girls, who make up only 10 per cent of entries.

A 2017 [report from the Institute of Physics](#) makes a number of whole-school recommendations to help address the gender balance in physics, including appointing someone senior in the leadership team to act as a gender champion and drive change within the school, and reviewing the options process for any unconscious gender bias.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Although there are specific barriers to overcome when developing a careers programme for students with special educational needs and disabilities, the

benefits can be significant, helping them develop life skills, gain independence and achieve sustained employment.

Relationships with employers will need to be stronger, as they may have negative perceptions of students with SEND. Work experience may therefore need more organisation. MENCAP research revealed that 62 per cent of people have never worked with a colleague with a learning disability, but that, positively, more than half said they would prefer to work for a company that employs people with a learning disability. Parents may also need support to understand the potential for their child to develop independence.

The Careers & Enterprise Company has produced a [report](#), as part of its 'what works' series, which provides some guidance on transition programmes for students described as having SEND.

🔍 CASE STUDY

DELIVERING CAREER GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS WITH SEND

Southlands School in North Tyneside is a senior school for children with moderate learning difficulties. It is one of several schools in the North East which have been influenced by the pilot, although not formally part of it. A number of Southlands students have additional social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or other more complex needs. Leon Buffham, a Year 11 student at Southlands, readily admits that he often struggles at school and finds it difficult dealing with his emotions. He was given the opportunity to undertake a retail placement at Café Ora in North Tyneside as part of the school's 'Moving On' vocational programme.

The aim of the retail placement is to give students real life valuable work experience over a sustained period. This can help them to develop more advanced skills and greater confidence, hopefully leading to employment in the sector if they wish. During Leon's placement, he arrived independently and undertook a variety of roles from stocktaking to learning the menu. The impact has been huge, and Leon has really noticed the difference. He has been offered a job on weekends following the placement, and Café Ora is continuing to train him for recruitment into future jobs.

"I just love being there. It has been the best thing ever."

Leon Buffham, Year 11 student, Southlands School

"Having Leon as part of the team has not only been a great help, but also he is an eager young man, who has been appropriately selected for this type of business and has gelled really well with members of the team. Working with Leon one morning a week has given us an opportunity to develop our own training techniques to a person who has little knowledge of the industry, and we aim to develop his confidence in a new and unfamiliar working environment, to hopefully give him the skills to gain work in the industry in future."

Charlotte, Leon's workplace supervisor at Café Ora



Engineering is really about how people use their creativity to improve lives. The best way to communicate this to young people is through a high-quality careers programme that is an ever-present thread running through the entirety of their educational experience. An effective programme must include the real voices of engineers, and present academic and technical career routes as equally valued, fulfilling options



PETER FINEGOLD, HEAD OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS POLICY,
[INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS](#)



Right: Students from The Academy at Shotton Hall working with employees from Caterpillar

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS: CAREERS LEADERS

DELIVERING GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT INDIVIDUAL NEEDS REQUIRES STRONG, EMPOWERED LEADERSHIP. EVERY SCHOOL SHOULD THEREFORE HAVE A DEDICATED CAREERS LEADER.

A Careers Leader needs to be a:

LEADER

– a good leader who takes responsibility for conceiving, running and reporting on the school's careers programme;

MANAGER

– a skilful manager who is able both to run projects and, in some cases, line manage more junior staff;

COORDINATOR

– a careful coordinator of staff from across the school and from outside; and

NETWORKER

– a skilled networker who is able to develop a range of links beyond the school with employers and education and training providers.

It is important to note that the Careers Leader is a distinct but complementary role to that of the Careers Adviser.

The Careers Leader takes responsibility for the school's whole careers programme. They lead, manage, coordinate and build the networks that support careers provision in a school, but do not necessarily deliver all this careers support themselves. A Careers Adviser will be seeing students, providing information, advice and guidance, and offering specific expertise on the labour market, educational pathways and career decision-making.

The Careers Leader has an important and demanding job which can also be very satisfying. The background of the Careers Leader is less important than ensuring that they have the time, authority, knowledge, skills and, critically, the clear backing of senior school leaders to do the job.

The Government's Statutory Guidance, Careers guidance and access for education and training providers, published in January 2018, recognises the importance of every school having a Careers Leader, and from September 2018 every school will be expected to publish the name and contact details of their Careers Leader on their website.

Above right: Northumberland Church of England Academy



At Teach First we welcome the commitment in the government's careers strategy for the training and support of Careers Leaders. We have seen first-hand the benefits to schools in having a whole-school careers strategy, led by a confident and skilled Careers Leader, through the delivery of our Careers and Employability Leadership Programme. This pilot programme identified and supported middle leaders on their journey to becoming a Careers Leader. All of the schools involved are now on track to deliver their strategies and are already reporting an improvement in their careers provision. Their success has been down to the support of the school senior leadership team and the Careers Leaders being given the time and space to take part in training



RUSSELL HOBBY, CEO, TEACH FIRST

6

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

GOOD TECHNICAL EDUCATION
ENABLES INDIVIDUALS TO
DEVELOP THE KNOWLEDGE AND
SKILLS THEY NEED TO ENTER
SKILLED EMPLOYMENT.

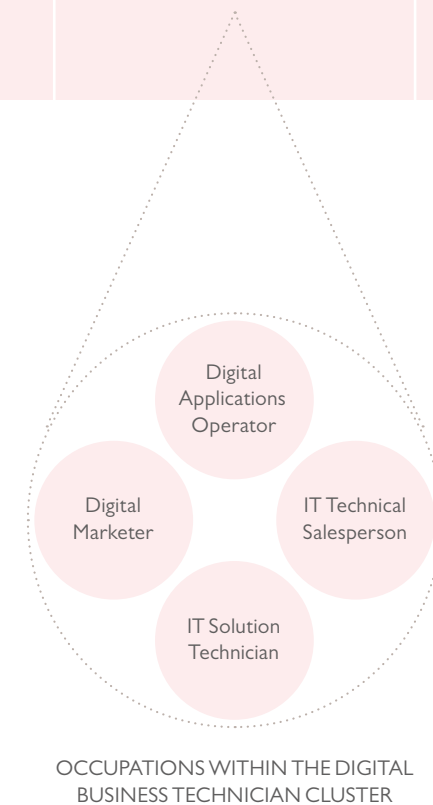
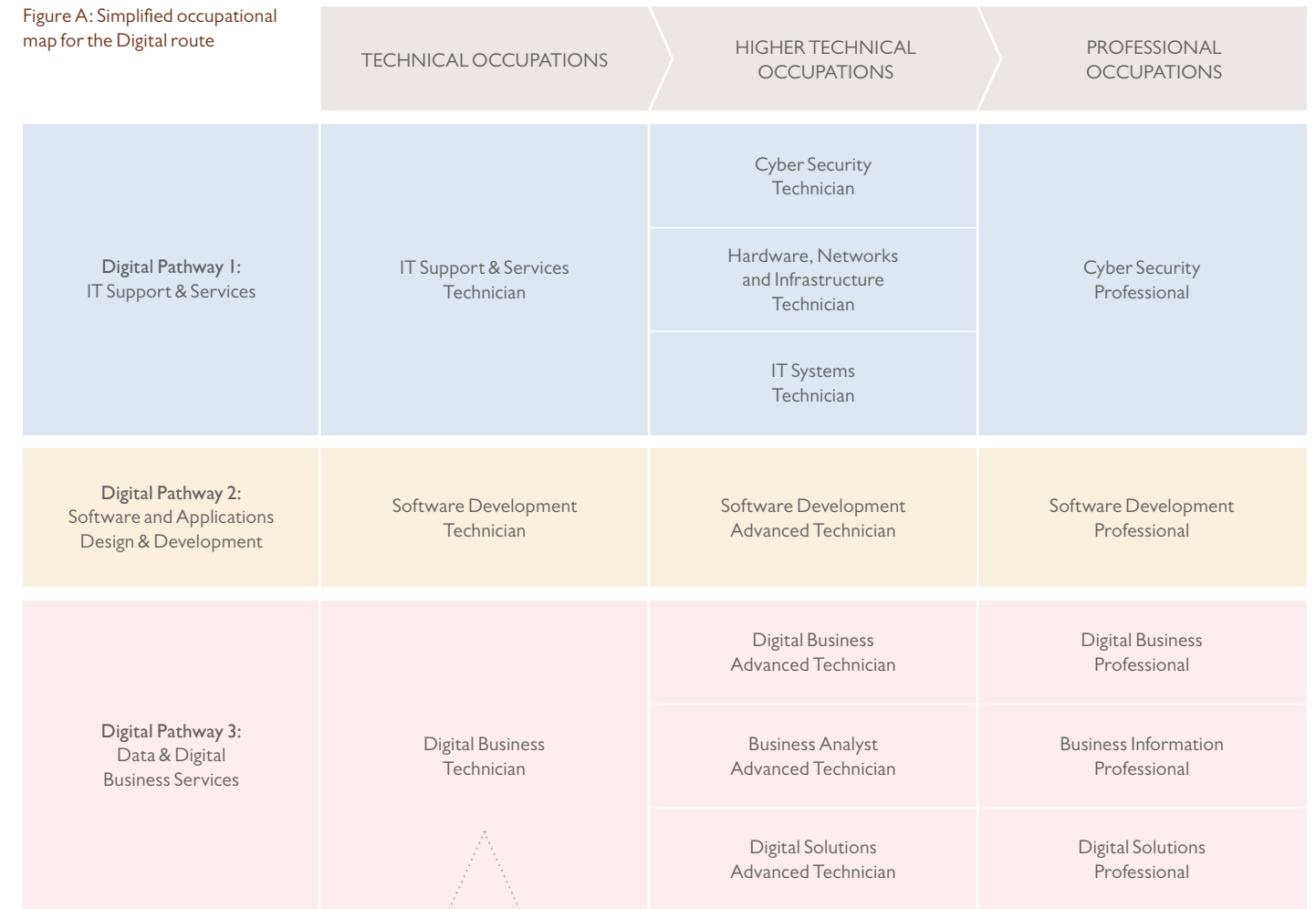
Young people often have a good understanding of how they might progress from post-16 academic study such as A levels – typically to an undergraduate degree programme. In contrast, our current technical education system can seem complex, with unclear paths for progression and limited information about which qualifications employers value. The technical option – encompassing apprenticeships and classroom-based technical qualifications – is also often unfamiliar to those working in schools, many of whom have themselves only followed the academic option.

However, good technical education enables individuals to develop the knowledge and skills they need to enter skilled employment. It also supports individuals to continue their learning through higher or degree apprenticeships, or higher education courses including higher technical qualifications and technical degrees.

In 2016, the Government's *Post-16 Skills Plan* set out the most significant reforms to technical education in England for a generation, having accepted all of the recommendations of the *Independent Panel on Technical Education*, chaired by David Sainsbury. Both documents can be found on the Department for Education [website](#).

Technical education in England will now be built around 15 clear routes to skilled employment. These 15 routes – for example 'Construction', 'Engineering & Manufacturing', or 'Catering and Hospitality' – will encompass apprenticeships and classroom-based technical education, and will be based on a national framework of standards being developed by employers working in partnership with government. The standards describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to perform successfully in different occupations. For more information on occupational maps please see the [website](#) of the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Figure A: Simplified occupational map for the Digital route



AN OCCUPATIONAL MAP

Technical education in England will be built around 15 routes to skilled employment. For each route there is an occupational map which brings together occupations with similar requirements into pathways and occupation clusters. The maps also show typical progression pathways.

For the Digital route, shown in Figure A, the occupation clusters have names such as 'IT Support & Services Technician', 'Software Development Technician' and 'Digital Business Professional'. Within these clusters there can be any number of occupations; for example the Digital Business Technician cluster contains 4 individual occupations. Pathways on the occupational maps are split into technical occupations (those at levels 2 and 3), higher technical occupations (at levels 5 and 6), and professional occupations (at level 6 and above).

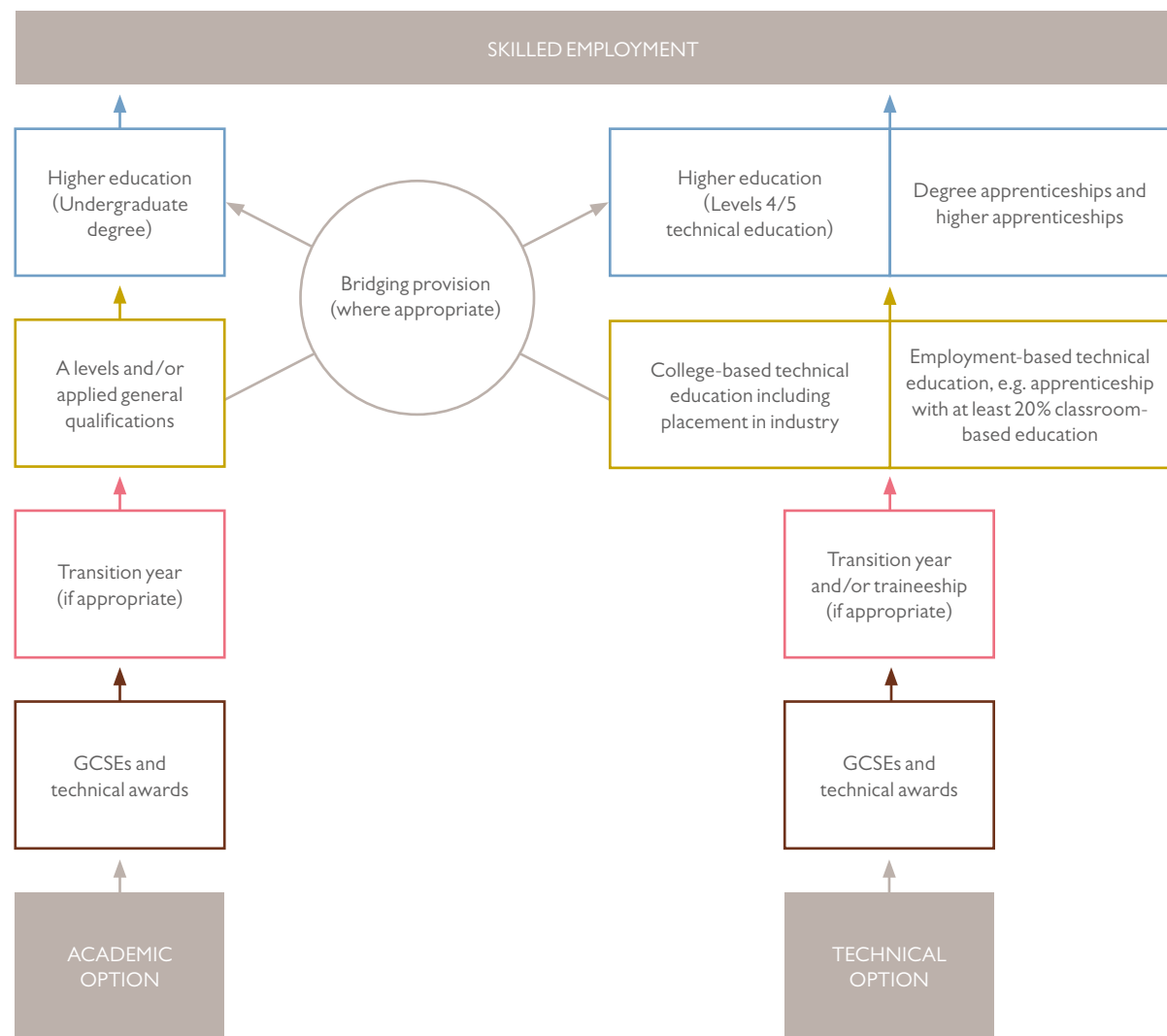


Figure B: Diagram summarising post-16 education and training options for young people in England as set out in the Post-16 Skills Plan

For 16–18 year olds, the new technical option being introduced from 2020 will offer two modes of learning: work-based (apprenticeships), and classroom-based (T levels). As described above, both apprenticeships and T levels will be developed against a common framework of employer-developed standards.

Figure B illustrates how technical education fits within the wider post-16 education system for young people. Transition support will be available for young people not ready to begin a technical education route at age 16. Bridging provision at key points will facilitate movement between the academic and technical options.

The Government will be consulting on and developing plans for the shape of both transition support and necessary bridging provision.

Different types of institution offer post-16 education and training, and it is important to ensure that young people have full, impartial information about the options available to them. The first step is to consider the opportunities offered by both the academic and technical options. Then a young person considering the technical option should explore opportunities for both apprenticeships with employers, and full-time classroom-based programmes. In the student's locality, these full-time programmes may be delivered by schools, UTCs, colleges (including general FE, specialist colleges, sixth-form colleges and National Colleges), and independent training providers.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships offer employment with education and training. The employer of an apprentice ensures that they are given the necessary education and training for them to become competent in the chosen occupation. In exchange, the apprentice accepts a lower wage than they would expect to earn once they have successfully completed their training. An apprentice learns while on-the-job, and spends at least 20 per cent of their time undertaking off-the-job learning (in a college or independent training provider chosen by the apprentice's employer), which equips them with knowledge and skills that they may not be able to gain in their current workplace.

Since 2014, the Government has been reforming apprenticeships, phasing out the previous apprenticeship 'frameworks' and ensuring that all new apprenticeships lead to full competence in the chosen occupation. This is tested through a synoptic, end-point assessment. Apprenticeship standards are overseen by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA), and included in the detailed occupational maps for the 15 technical education routes. In 2018, the IFA will also assume responsibility for T levels and become the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Further information about apprenticeships is available on the [Apprenticeships: Get In Go Far](#) and the IFA website, and information specifically for teachers can be found on the [Amazing Apprenticeships](#) website.

T LEVELS

Between 2020 and 2022, new, full-time Level 3 technical programmes – T levels – will be introduced for post-16 students. T levels will be substantial technical education study programmes including a relevant technical qualification, an extended work placement, any route-specific requirements (for example, a food safety certificate in catering), and appropriate English, mathematics and digital skills. The technical qualification will be designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills which employers have identified as being required to enter relevant occupations within the chosen route.

Work placements are distinct from shorter *work experience* opportunities. High-quality work experience opportunities are extremely valuable – as described by Benchmark 6 – but they tend to provide young people with general experience of the workplace environment. The work placements within T levels, on the other hand, will involve a young person spending between 45 and 60 days in a working environment relevant to their chosen T level programme. The work placement thus gives a student the opportunity to develop industry-specific skills and behaviours that are more difficult for them to obtain in a classroom environment.

Recognising that T levels will be more rigorous, and more challenging to teach, than existing technical qualifications, the Government has committed to providing an additional £500 million each year to T level delivery. This will allow the number of funded hours for T level programmes to average 900 hours every year, compared to 600 hours for other 16–18 study programmes.

Further information on T levels and the current reforms to technical education can be found on the [DFE website](#).



Left: A scenic metal fabrication apprentice at the National Theatre

FURTHER SUPPORT ON YOUR JOURNEY TO GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE

THERE ARE MANY ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL DEVELOP AND DELIVER YOUR CAREERS PROGRAMME, AND WE RECOGNISE THAT SOMETIMES IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO FIND THE RIGHT ONE. BELOW ARE NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS THAT WILL BE IMPORTANT SOURCES OF SUPPORT AS YOU WORK TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS.

THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

The Careers & Enterprise Company was established in 2015 in order to prepare and inspire young people for the fast-changing world of work by focussing on the creation of meaningful career opportunities and connections to employers. To do this, the Company has established a national network, connecting schools and colleges with employers and career programme providers.

It is free to schools and colleges to join this network and receive a range of benefits including support from an Enterprise Coordinator, match with a local Enterprise Adviser and access to a community of employer and careers activity programmes. Signing up to the network also enables full access to career planning tools. Using Compass, schools can evaluate their activity with a confidential self-audit web tool created in partnership with Gatsby. With Tracker, you can build and manage your careers plan to improve your benchmark scores.

NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE

The National Careers Service (NCS) provides information and advice to adults and young people to support decisions on learning, training and work. The website contains job profiles, a 'skills health check', a course finder tool, access to independent Careers Advisers via a phone service, and support to manage the process of finding a job. The Government is committed to continued support of the NCS, and has committed to ensuring comprehensive careers information is hosted on its website.

JOBCENTRE PLUS

Jobcentre Plus Advisers work directly with schools to advise on work experience opportunities, routes into traineeships and apprenticeships, and the local labour market for the whole range of students. You can contact your local Jobcentre to find out how they can help students in your school.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The Careers Development Institute is the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector, including those working in schools. Their website contains lots of useful information on implementing careers, enterprise and employability activity for 7 to 19-year-olds, including the recently updated careers framework document. They hold the UK Register of Career Development Professionals, which you can use to help find and select a qualified career adviser for your school.

STEM LEARNING

STEM Learning is the largest provider of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education support to schools across the UK. Their National STEM Learning Centre provides professional development opportunities for teachers and others working with young people, an online community and curated resources, including information about careers education relating to STEM occupations. They also run the STEM Ambassadors and STEM Clubs programmes. STEM Ambassadors are a network of thousands of employees from STEM industries that can volunteer with your school and share their experiences of work with your students. Any school can set up a STEM Club to give students an opportunity to explore STEM outside the curriculum; this could be working with an ambassador, carrying out a project or thinking about science in the workplace.

LOCAL SUPPORT

In each locality the specific programmes and support available will be different. Try contacting the following organisations in your area to find out what is on offer:

- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Local Authorities
- Chambers of Commerce
- Business in the Community

To help you find even more support, we have put together an online list of organisations recommended to us by schools and colleges who have already been working towards the Benchmarks. We hope it can act as a starting point for your journey. Many of these organisations also act as a gateway to multiple schemes and regional activity.

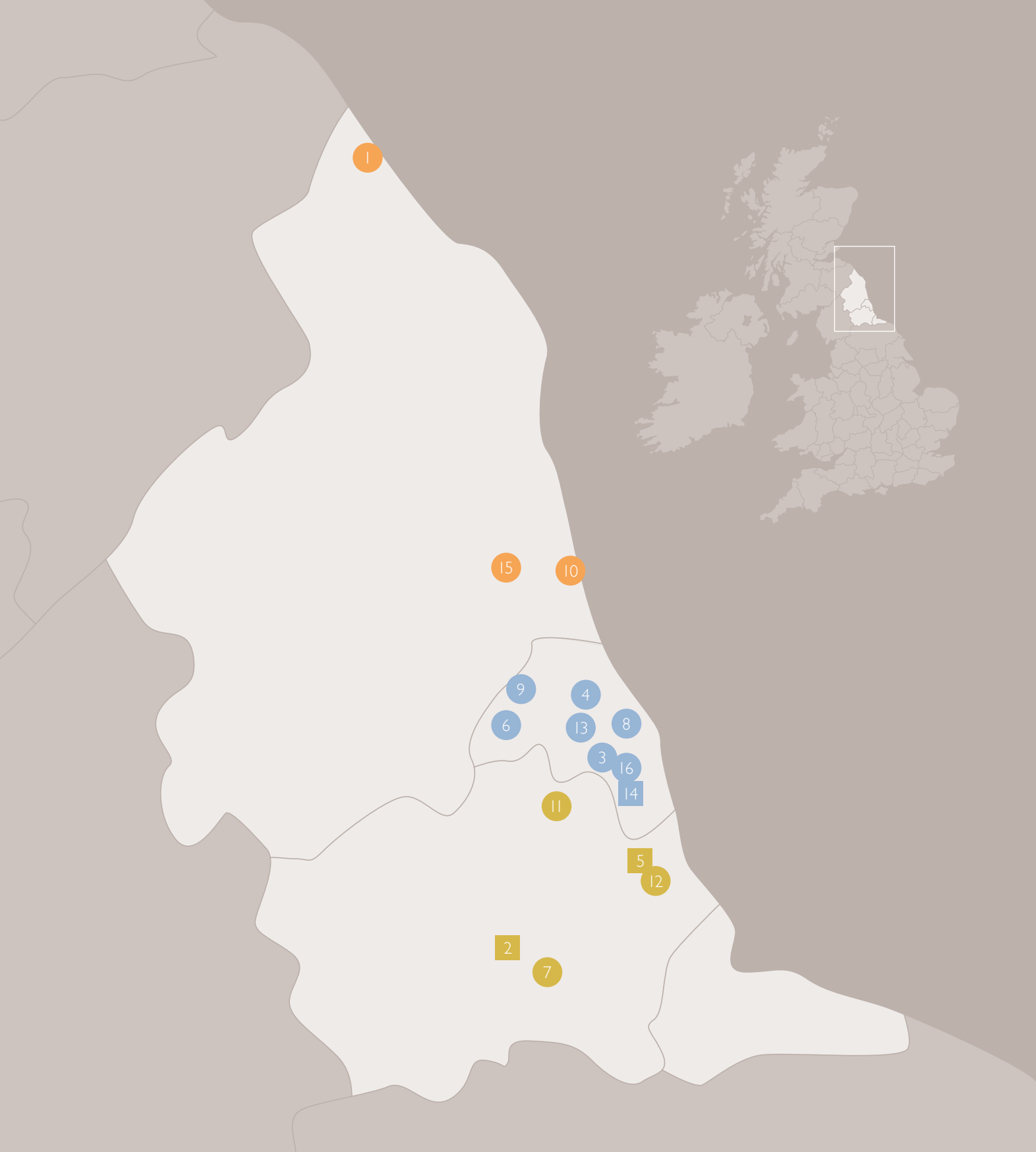
You can find a full list at:
www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/support



Compass enabled us to very quickly identify our strengths and areas for improvement and we have been able to monitor progress as we work towards achieving all the Gatsby Benchmarks. Outcomes for all students have already improved and we are closing the gap with disadvantaged students. The ethos and climate at the college has changed and you can feel the difference!



ANNEX A: THE NORTH EAST PILOT



PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

A number of schools and colleges in the North East of England took part in a pilot programme between 2015 and 2017, coordinated by the [North East Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\)](#), putting the [Gatsby Career Benchmarks](#) into practice.

The schools and colleges in the pilot represented a range of sizes, types, locations and Ofsted ratings. Many of the schools and colleges have a higher than average number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium.

The North East region faces a number of education and skills challenges: it has fewer people with high skill levels compared to the national average; more than a fifth of adults in the region have no qualifications at all; and the region has an ageing skilled workforce in some key areas of economic activity. Stark gender imbalances exist within some sectors, and at the start of the pilot in September 2015, the region had one of the highest rates of youth unemployment and one of the highest proportions of young people recorded as NEET nationally. However, the region has some significant strengths, with a higher proportion of young people entering apprenticeships than the national average and nearly 50,000 students studying STEM in the region. In 2012, Lord Adonis was commissioned by the North East LEP to conduct a review of the North East economy. The report highlighted a lack of cohesion, consistency and coordination within careers guidance as a barrier to the region's economic success.

When the pilot began in 2015, 50 per cent of the schools and colleges involved achieved none of the Gatsby Benchmarks. After two years of work, over 85 per cent fully achieved between six and eight Benchmarks. Indeed, the Social Mobility Commission *State of the Nation: 2017* report, highlighted that "the North East Local Enterprise Partnership has transformed careers support in local schools and colleges from the worst provision in the country to some of the best".

KEY

- ■ Secondary School
- ■ Further Education College

The schools and colleges that took part in the pilot:

- 1 **[Berwick Academy](#)** is located in Berwick upon Tweed, and is one of the smallest secondary schools in England, with 600 students between the ages of 13 and 18. The school serves an isolated, rural community where job density is low.
- 2 **[Bishop Auckland College](#)** is a further education college providing Foundation Degrees and Higher National Diploma programmes in County Durham. It is one of the largest providers of apprenticeships and commercial training in the area.
- 3 **[Castle View Enterprise Academy](#)** is based in the north of the City of Sunderland. It is an urban mixed secondary school for students aged 11 to 16.
- 4 **[Churchill Community College](#)** is a small 11–18 foundation school in the town of Wallsend, Tyne and Wear. In 2017 Churchill achieved Teaching School status.
- 5 **[East Durham College](#)** in County Durham is a medium-sized further education college with three campuses. The college offers A levels and vocational courses between entry level and Level 5. The college has over 1,700 classroom based learners ages 16–18.
- 6 **[Excelsior Academy](#)** is an urban, all-through academy, with a primary school and sixth form, in the west of Newcastle upon Tyne. Approximately 55 per cent of Excelsior students have English as a second language.
- 7 **[Greenfield Community College](#)** was created in 2015 through the merging of two 11–16 community colleges in the small towns of Newton Aycliffe and Shildon, County Durham. The school is in an area of high economic deprivation.
- 8 **[Harton Academy](#)** is a large Teaching School in South Shields, with over 1,600 students between the ages of 11 and 18. The Academy has well above the national average of students with an Education, Health and Care plan or a statement of Special Educational Need (SEN).
- 9 **[Kenton School](#)** is a very large urban secondary school, with over 1,700 students between the ages of 11 and 18. Located in the west of Newcastle upon Tyne, Kenton has additional resource centres for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and SEN students, as well as a personalised learning centre for those at risk of exclusion.
- 10 **[Northumberland Church of England Academy](#)** has over 2,500 students, and is an all-through Anglican Faith Academy, providing education for the coastal towns of Ashington, Newbiggin and Lynemouth.
- 11 **[Park View School](#)** in Chester-le-Street, County Durham, educates children from the age of 11 to 18. Running since 1911, the Academy is an ex-grammar school.
- 12 **[The Academy at Shotton Hall](#)** is a larger than average secondary school located in the small town of Peterlee near Durham. The Academy teaches students between the ages of 11 and 16.
- 13 **[St Joseph's Catholic Academy](#)** is a mixed Catholic faith Academy educating students between the ages of 11 and 18 in South Tyneside. The school has been recognised for their work developing applied learning.
- 14 **[Sunderland College](#)** is one of the largest providers of post-16 education in the North East. It has 14,300 students. Four campuses spread across the City of Sunderland offer vocational and academic courses.
- 15 **[The King Edward VI School](#)** in the small town of Morpeth, Northumberland, serves over 1,400 students from the town and surrounding countryside and has a strong academic record. Students are between the ages of 13 and 18.
- 16 **[The Link School](#)** is a Pupil Referral Unit and alternative learning provider working with families across the City of Sunderland. Their two schools are Tudor Grove (KS3) and The Link School, Pallion (KS4).

FIND OUT MORE

WWW.GOODCAREERGUIDANCE.ORG.UK

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BY DAVID SAINSBURY
TO REALISE HIS CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES.
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NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING EDUCATION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH AND ADVICE
THE ARTS

WE ARE PROACTIVE IN DEVISING PROJECTS
TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS. WE ARE ENTHUSIASTIC
ABOUT SUPPORTING INNOVATION. WE ARE
ANALYTICAL AS WE BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT
TO UNDERSTAND THE OPPORTUNITIES
AND PROBLEMS WE TACKLE. WE TAKE A
LONG-TERM VIEW AS WE DO NOT THINK MUCH
CAN BE ACHIEVED BY SHORT, ONE-OFF
PROJECTS. WE ARE ALWAYS EAGER TO FORM
PARTNERSHIPS WITH ORGANISATIONS WHO
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