

Careers Education 2022/23: Now and next

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

An analysis of careers education in secondary schools and colleges in England and what this means for students, educators, employers, parents and society.

Executive summary

A national careers system is now in place, having been scaled significantly over the past five years. The system has been overseen – with a full range of partners – by the Careers & Enterprise Company, the national body for careers education.

- 92% of schools and colleges are part of a local Careers Hub.
- More than 3,000 Careers Leaders have been trained and all of them are supported by digital tools and resources.
- The eight Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance are well embedded and guide the work of educators and employers across the system.
- Current levels of activity are saving the Treasury an estimated £150m per year in England in reduction of levels of young people who are NEET alone.

The report will establish how schools and colleges are embracing careers education and what this system is delivering for young people – the progress, the gaps and where we need to go in the future. Careers Education now and next.



At a glance: 5 years of progress

1. **Progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks has doubled in the last five years:** average number of Gatsby Benchmarks achieved rose from 2.1 to 5.5 (out of 8).
2. **Young people are having more touchpoints with employers than before – inside school, outside school and through the curriculum:** 96% of young people in secondary education had at least one employer encounter last year.
3. **Young people are twice as likely to report awareness of apprenticeships** by the time they take their GCSEs.
4. **Benchmarks are driving positive outcomes for young people:** the highest quality careers provision reduces the likelihood of young people being by NEET by 8% (post-16 and post-18); it also increases reported student career readiness.
5. **Employers are seeing direct benefits from engaging in careers education:** 91% of the most engaged employers say it is helping them develop new talent pipelines and is supporting young people to take up careers in their industry.

AP: Alternative Provision

Careers Hub: Groups of schools, colleges, employers and providers working together locally to improve practice

Careers Leader: The lead coordinator of careers provision in schools and colleges

Career readiness: A measure of a young person's career knowledge, skills and confidence

Gatsby Benchmarks: Nationally recognised standards of world class careers education

NEET: Not in education, employment or training

SEND/SENCo: Special educational needs and disabilities; Special educational needs co-ordinator

What's happening on the ground

Insight 1

Young people



Now

Young people are becoming more career ready



Next

Including teachers and parents more closely in the system will accelerate this

Insight 2

Business and the economy



Now

Careers education improves employment outcomes for young people and recruitment prospects for business



Next

Employer engagement needs to start early and focus on skills

Insight 3

Closing the gap



Now

Careers education helps tackle disadvantage



Next

Remaining barriers to equity should be addressed

High quality careers education is helping young people become more career ready and achieve positive destinations

As students progress through secondary school, their career readiness grows (21%pts increase between Year 7 and Year 11). Empowered Careers Leaders and engaged employers are making a difference.

Sustained engagement with Careers Hubs, training and resources improves careers education provision in schools and colleges

Institutions in Careers Hubs the longest achieve the highest number of benchmarks (an average of 6 benchmarks, compared to 4.8 for those who have just joined and 3.2 for those yet to join).

Parents and teachers play an important role in developing students' career readiness and should be supported to make a greater contribution. Emerging evidence suggests there are effective ways of achieving this.

The current model positively benefits business and the economy, reducing NEET rates and improving talent pipelines for employers

Young people in institutions with the highest quality provision are 8% less likely to be NEET than students in other institutions. 83% of employers report that their engagement with education helps them to develop new talent pipelines.

Good careers education helps young people effectively navigate career choices – balancing personal wants with labour market needs

The most career ready students are more likely to have ideas about industries they want to work in and less likely to be influenced by perceived gender bias in sectors.

Our data, gathered directly from employers and young people allows us to pinpoint the impact of specific activities. The analysis suggests that employer outreach should focus on skill development, particularly helping young people through application processes, and starting as early as possible. There is an opportunity to pull this together by reinventing work experiences to focus on measurable outcomes for young people and ongoing engagement.

There is a gap in career readiness between the most and least economically disadvantaged young people

The gap between students in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) remains consistent across year groups, ranging from 2-5%pts lower than their more 'advantaged' peers. This gap is highest for Year 11 students.

Good careers provision outweighs the starting disadvantage gap by meeting young people's individual needs

Students in schools with the highest quality careers provision typically have a career readiness score 3.5%pts higher than those with poorer provision. This is higher than the average disadvantage associated with receiving Free School Meals.

The central mission of improving careers provision everywhere is key to closing the gap. Tailored support for young people facing additional barriers is also important and there is much to learn from SEND institutions. The maturing system has more tools to make this happen including pupil level data, more sophisticated training and more engaged employers.

The five best next steps for careers education in England



1. Coverage to quality

A more unified careers system, overseen by a national body, has delivered careers experiences for young people no matter where they live.

Next we need to deliver quality for everyone, everywhere. Our evidence-based Careers Impact System – a peer and expert review process – will help schools and colleges improve quality and will allow policy makers to be confident that this improvement is continuing.



2. Outreach to intake

As a result of investment and focus, there is more employer engagement in schools and colleges.

Next we need to focus on the activities that are most likely to get young people into jobs. For all businesses, our Employer Standards helps raise the quality of interactions. Data from the tool is particularly useful for helping small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to target scarce resources effectively.



3. Interest to uptake

Appetite for apprenticeships and technical routes is growing but increased awareness does not always lead to uptake.

Next we should extend our work with partners to tackle barriers to young people's progression onto apprenticeships and other technical pathways with an emphasis on growth sectors like net zero, life sciences and digital. Our Apprenticeships and Technical Education Transitions Framework helps us do this region by region.



4. Margins to mainstream

When careers education is a day-to-day part of school and college life - starting early, involving teachers, parents and the curriculum - it has the most impact. Our Teacher Encounters programme and work with Pfizer and Pinewood Studios, amongst others, to redesign curriculum content shows what's possible.

Next we are aiming to reinvent work experience, so that it is ongoing (rather than a one off), connected to key skills and has measurable impact for young people and employers. At its most ambitious, careers in the mainstream means making links to enrichment activities and supporting teachers and parents to play a more confident role in careers education. A number of providers of initial teacher training are adding careers awareness modules to their offer.



5. Most to all

Careers education has an important role to play in tackling disadvantage. As the system matures, we need to ensure equity in provision.

Next we need to upskill the careers workforce to be as inclusive as possible, supporting all those who work with disadvantaged young people – SENCos, safeguarding professionals, Pupil Premium leads – to have confident careers conversations. We need to continue to engage with and learn from institutions outside the mainstream (SEND and AP). We also need to develop our digital system to include tools that enable early intervention, including identifying young people at risk of becoming NEET with greater precision.