

Careers and enterprise provision in England's colleges in 2019:

Detailed Gatsby Benchmark results



Publication information

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About this report

State of the Nation 2019 described careers provision in England's schools and colleges at the end of the academic year 2018/19. This report describes the detailed results for colleges.

State of the Nation 2019¹ set out the progress that England's schools and colleges have made towards meeting the eight Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance. The report drew on data collected through the Compass self-assessment tool from 3,826 state-funded schools and colleges.

This report builds on the national results with additional analysis of the Compass data for colleges specifically, to provide Careers Leaders, college

leaders and their external partners with the insights needed to make further progress. The report presents overall benchmark results for different types of post-16 provision and then focuses on Further Education colleges and Sixth form colleges and 16-19 schools for the detailed insights into career guidance across the benchmarks. The report considers the next steps for colleges and the wider sector for continuing to improve career guidance for post-16 learners.

The eight Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance

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

Foreword

I am pleased to contribute a foreword to this important piece of research.

As a College Principal and Local Enterprise Board Member, I know very well the impact good support has in the raising of aspiration and local workforce development. Accurate and timely intervention is vital to ensure all young people have the opportunity to thrive and contribute to a successful economy.

The introduction of Gatsby Benchmarks has been a welcome addition to focus both young and old minds on the best ways to enable effective Careers and Enterprise education. I welcome their inclusion in the Ofsted portfolio of measures for schools and colleges. For my own college, it has enabled our Careers Leader to specifically target both the student cohort and activities in the most effective and efficient way.

This report clearly shows how colleges are engaging with the process in a systematic way. Colleges have always been providers of skills and employer engagement of course, but this additional focus to support a post-EU landscape has never been more appropriate or timely. Most colleges now have designated Careers Leaders, and a renewed focus on this process by senior managers can only be beneficial.

The new Ofsted framework focus on 'intent' of curriculum is also a developing and worthwhile theme; data here show a clear increase in the percentage of colleges that have Careers Leaders, a written careers programme and backing of senior leadership team. This supports provision that students wish to study alongside the strategic goal of ensuring this meets local employers' needs.

My own organisation has taken this to its heart, with increased engagement with employers, and new opportunities for students to discover and empower their future. A recent event attracted well over 50 local and national employers and a range of providers for our students' next step.

Sitting at the heart of Dorset the perception of our area might be one of bucolic ease, but deprivation exists in many areas and social mobility can be very limited - so this widened horizon really matters.

It is for this reason that I not only sit on the National Advisory panel for The Careers & Enterprise Company, but also act as Chair for local Careers Hub Advisory Board. This brings together partners from The Careers & Enterprise Company, schools, colleges, Cornerstone Employers and the local authorities. This drive, enabled by the work of The Careers & Enterprise Company, will undoubtedly act as a catalyst and bring real benefits to both aspirational outcomes for young people, but also the industries and enterprises for whom we provide the next generation of workforce.

I have seen first-hand the impact this can make, and these partnerships will be critical to the success of our country. It will also, of course, be critical to our youngest generation as they enter, and then thrive within, the world of work. I commend this report to you.

Luke Rake
Principal and Chief Executive, Kingston Maurward College

Executive summary

State of the Nation 2019 set out the progress that England's schools and colleges have made towards meeting the eight Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance. Over the past year, progress has been made on every dimension of careers provision and over 3,800 state-funded schools and colleges have now completed Compass. Detailed Compass results for colleges are reported for the first time this year.

Increasing numbers of colleges are using Compass

- Compass for Colleges was launched in September 2018.
- In 2017/18, 135 colleges completed Compass. In 2018/19, 262 post-16 providers completed the new version including 154 Further Education colleges², 51 Sixth form colleges and 34 16-19 Academy converters and Free schools.
- The level of engagement suggests that the Gatsby Benchmarks are a useful self-improvement tool for colleges as well as schools.

Careers provision in colleges is improving

- Over half of Further Education (FE) colleges are fully achieving Benchmark 4 (Linking curriculum learning to careers) and Benchmark 6 (Experiences of workplaces).
- Over half of Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools are fully achieving Benchmark 2 (Learning from career and labour market information).
- 81% of FE colleges are providing an encounter for all or most learners every year (Benchmark 5), compared to 67% in 2017/18.
- 58% of FE colleges are providing all or most learners with experiences of the workplaces (Benchmark 6), compared to 52% in 2017/18.
- Progress across all colleges is stronger in areas covered by the Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs where networks between colleges and with other education providers and employers are growing³.

2. In this report Further Education colleges include General Further Education colleges, land-based colleges and arts-based colleges.

3. Hutchinson, J., Morris, M., Percy, C., Tanner, E. and Williams, H. (2019). *Careers Hubs: One Year On*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

There is some strong performance on aspects of careers provision

- Most colleges have a Careers Leader (96% of FE and 99% of Sixth form) and a careers programme (91% of FE and 94% of Sixth form).
- Colleges perform well on tracking the destinations of learners after they leave college (90% FE, 97% Sixth form).
- The majority of FE colleges (81%) ensure that curriculum learning in the main subject is linked to careers.
- Over 90% of colleges offer interviews with a qualified careers adviser when study or career choices are being made.

Support needs to be tailored to different types of post-16 provision

- FE colleges have challenges linked to size and resources. Only 17% of FE colleges are currently providing interviews with qualified careers advisers to the majority of their learners.
- Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academy and Free schools are least likely to provide workplace experiences for the majority of their learners.
- Special post-16 institutions need support on tailoring labour market information and embedding career learning within the curriculum.



Chart 1: Achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks by Further Education colleges (N=154)

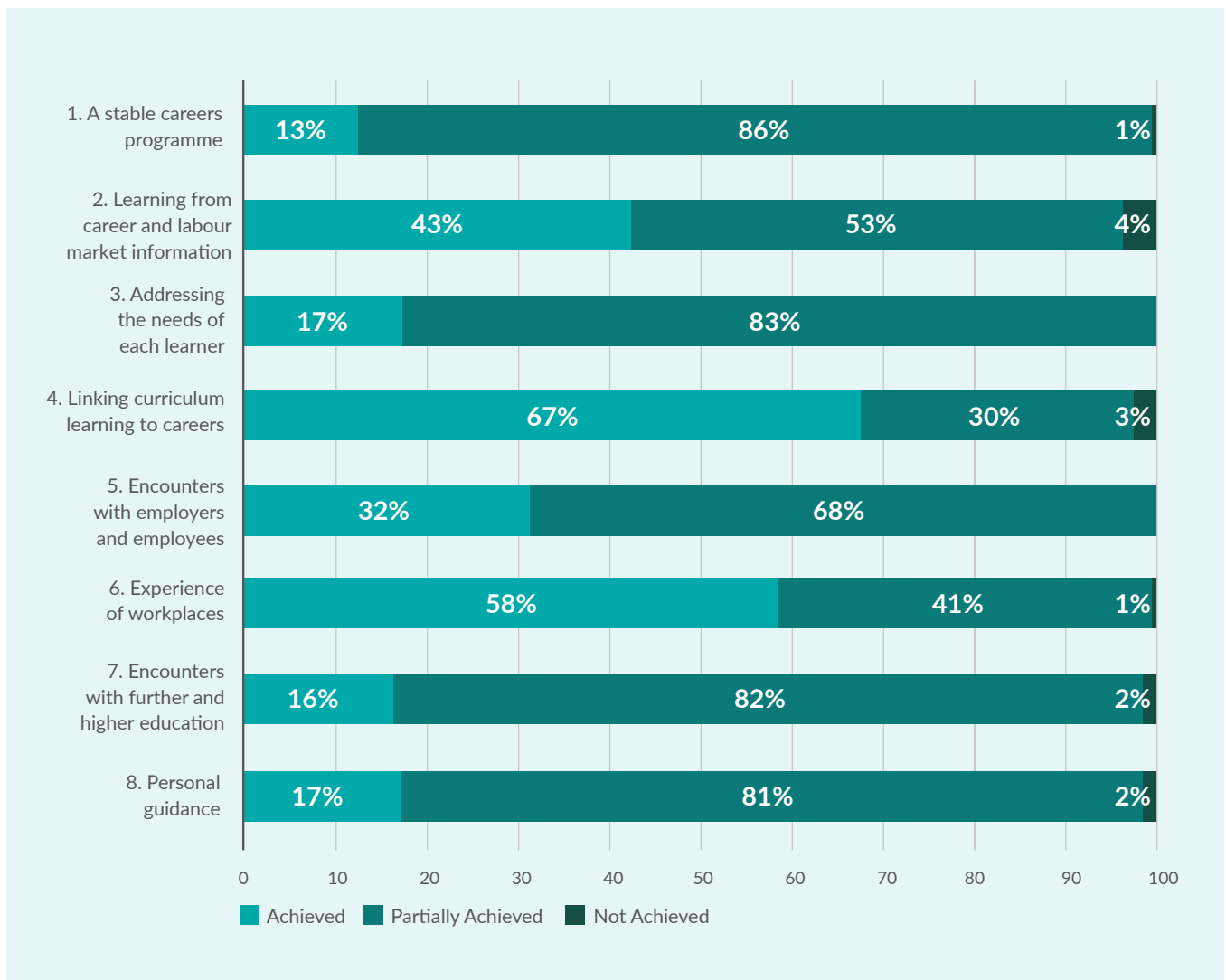
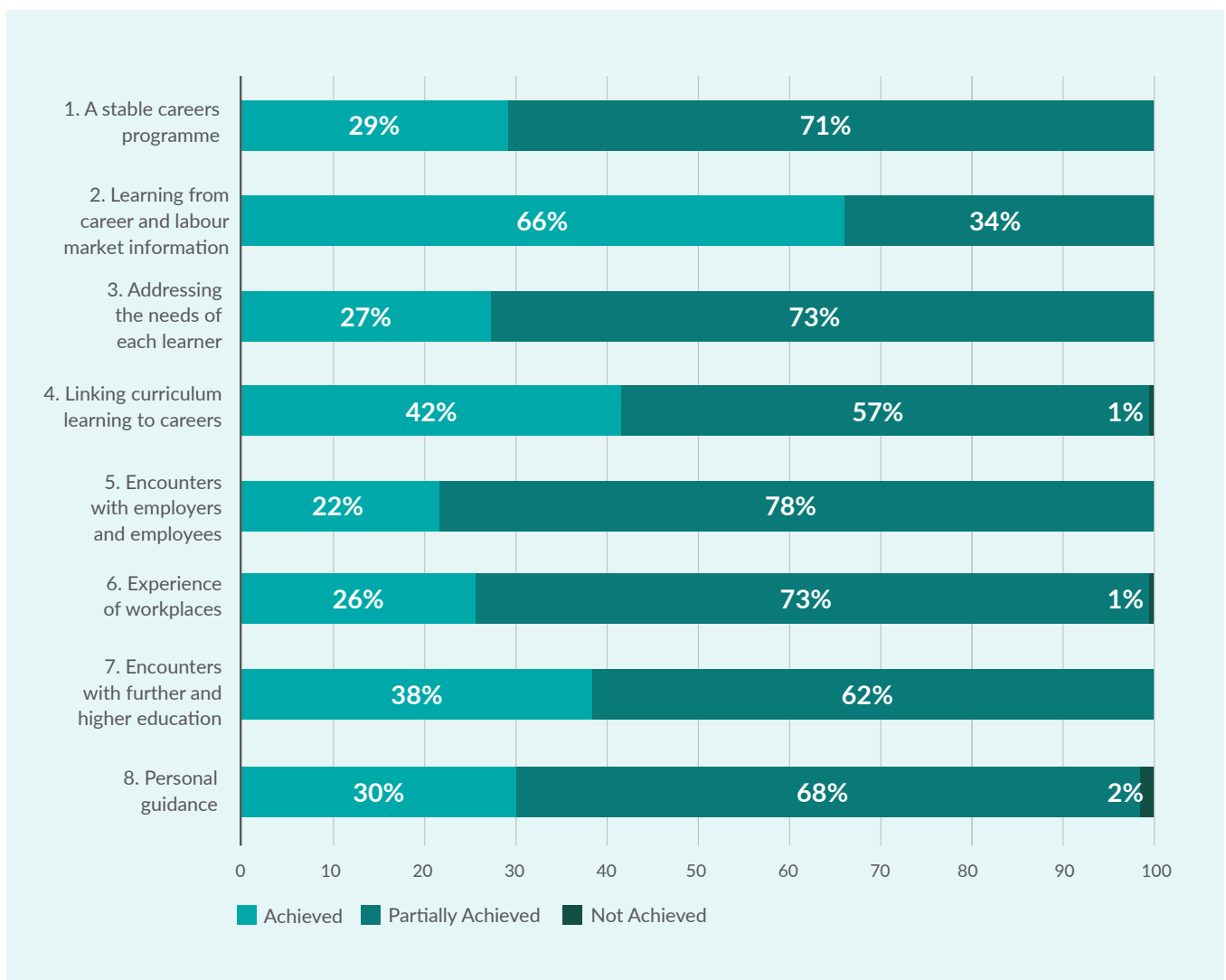


Chart 2: Achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks by Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free Schools (N=85)



Introduction

This chapter introduces the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Compass tool and describes the colleges in this report.

Careers education in colleges

The Government's Careers Strategy, published in December 2017, set out a long-term plan to enable all young people to make good career choices. The strategy and subsequent guidance encouraged colleges to structure their provision around the Gatsby Benchmarks to ensure that they meet the requirements of their funding agreements and to provide high quality career guidance to learners. The statutory requirements are that colleges have a named Careers Leader to lead the careers programme and publish information about the careers programme on the college website, to provide independent careers guidance to learners and ensure that learners have encounters with employers during their programme of study⁴.

The college sector is hugely diverse, encompassing General Further Education colleges which may be multi-site, Sixth form colleges, land-based colleges, arts colleges and SEN specialist colleges. Reflecting this diversity, the delivery of careers education is shaped by the curriculum and vocational focus, college size and dispersal of sites and departments, the profile of the student population and the local labour market⁵. The Gatsby Benchmarks provide a self-improvement framework and set of principles that apply across the sector, but it is recognised that the challenges and work needed to meet the benchmarks will vary considerably according to context.

The Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks were developed in 2014 to provide an evidence informed and practical definition of what constitutes good careers provision in schools and colleges⁶. Gatsby codified this as eight benchmarks which schools and colleges could follow relating to a stable careers programme, use of career and labour market information, addressing the needs of all their learners, linking career learning to the curriculum, providing encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace, offering the opportunity to find out about all educational routes and finally providing access to personal career guidance.

The eight Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance

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

4. Department for Education (2018). *Careers Guidance for Further Education Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges*. London: Department for Education.

5. Williams, J., Buzzeo, J., Spiegelhalter, K. and Dawson, A. (2018). *Careers Provision in Colleges: What Works?* London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

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

The Compass tool

To support schools and colleges to improve their careers provision and help them to engage with the Gatsby Benchmarks, The Careers & Enterprise Company worked with the Gatsby Charitable Foundation to develop Compass, a self-assessment tool which allows schools and colleges to track their provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks and to make comparisons with other providers. There are now over 4,000 schools and colleges nationally who have self-assessed themselves against the Gatsby Benchmarks using the Compass tool, of which 3,826 are state-funded⁷.

As well as driving the improvement of practice in schools and colleges, Compass also provides us with the clearest picture that we have ever had of the strengths and weaknesses of careers provision. The Careers & Enterprise Company uses this data to track progress and to work with the sector to develop the support provided to schools and colleges⁸.

Following the publication of the Gatsby Benchmarks tailored for colleges in early 2018⁹, The Careers & Enterprise Company launched a new version of Compass for Colleges in September 2018. The Compass tool for colleges follows the eight benchmarks but has a slightly different set of questions to align to the college context. During the 2018/19 academic year, 286 institutions completed this version meaning that we are able to present a clearer picture of provision for further education students for the first time this year¹⁰.

The colleges completing Compass

The majority of providers completing Compass for Colleges in 2018/19 were Further Education Colleges (n=154), reflecting the profile of colleges nationally. 81% of all Further Education colleges have now completed Compass either for the whole college, a site or department. A high proportion of Sixth form colleges (n=51, 74% of all Sixth form colleges) also completed Compass for Colleges in 2018/19. Other types of post-16 provider completing the tool were 16-19 Academy converters or Free schools (n=34, 65% of the sector) and Special post-16 institutions (n=23, 20% of the sector). There were also 24 schools that completed Compass for Colleges which are not reported because the focus is on colleges. type and that a high proportion of the sector has completed Compass, the report focuses on these colleges.

Given the marked differences in career guidance between the different types of provider, the results are reported separately rather than grouped. Sub-benchmark results are provided for FE colleges and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools.

7. These are the schools and colleges that are in scope for the Enterprise Adviser Network in that they are in England, state-funded and catering for students aged 11 and upwards. There are a further 288 independent schools who have completed Compass.

8. Compass data is confidential to the school or college concerned, and the data in this report has been aggregated, with no individual college identifiable.

9. Gatsby Charitable Foundation. (2018). *Benchmarks for young people in colleges*. London: The Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

10. Since the State of the Nation 2018 reported on Compass completions up to 31 July 2018, this year's report takes Compass completions from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019.

Table 1: Type of provider completing Compass for Colleges

| Provider type | Number completing Compass for Colleges |
|--|--|
| General Further Education college | 154 |
| Sixth form college | 51 |
| Academy 16-19 converter and Free schools 16-19 | 34 |
| Special post-16 institution | 23 |
| Other type (schools, UTCs) | 24 |

A note on scoring and presenting results against the Gatsby Benchmarks

There are eight Gatsby Benchmarks which all colleges who use Compass are potentially able to achieve. Each benchmark is made up of a set of indicators (sub-benchmarks). In the Compass tool, respondents receive a percentage score against each benchmark to show them how close they are to achieving it. In order to fully achieve a benchmark, colleges must meet all sub-benchmarks. In this report, results are referred to in the following ways:

- Fully achieving a benchmark: colleges must meet all sub-benchmarks (a score of 100%) to fully achieve a benchmark.
- Partially achieving a benchmark: colleges must meet at least one sub-benchmark (a score of between 1-99%) to partially achieve a benchmark.

- Not achieving a benchmark: colleges which do not meet any sub-benchmarks (a score of 0%) are categorised as not achieving the benchmark.

A further point to note on Compass scoring is that it is a self-completion tool. Self-completion is a key aspect of the self-improving system that the Careers Strategy is looking to create. Guidance is provided on how to complete the tool to promote consistency¹¹. Although some variation in interpretation may be possible, the evidence does not suggest that colleges (or schools) are unduly generous in their scoring.

11. The Careers & Enterprise Company (2019). *The Gatsby Benchmark Toolkit: Practical information and guidance for colleges*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

State of the Nation 2019 headlines¹

This year's State of the Nation shows that careers education is improving everywhere, as young people are benefitting from a new world-class approach to careers guidance.

- 1** | Over 2,800 schools and colleges have completed Compass twice. They show improvements on every dimension of careers support.
- 2** | At least 2 million young people are now receiving an encounter with an employer every year.
- 3** | Progress can be seen across the country. Schools and colleges serving disadvantaged communities are among the highest performers.
- 4** | In total, over 3,800 schools and colleges have now completed Compass.
- 5** | Over the next year, the impact of the Careers Strategy looks set to continue.

This report

The sections that follow present the results for each benchmark separated for the different types of post-16 providers. The responses to each of the detailed sub-benchmark questions are presented just for

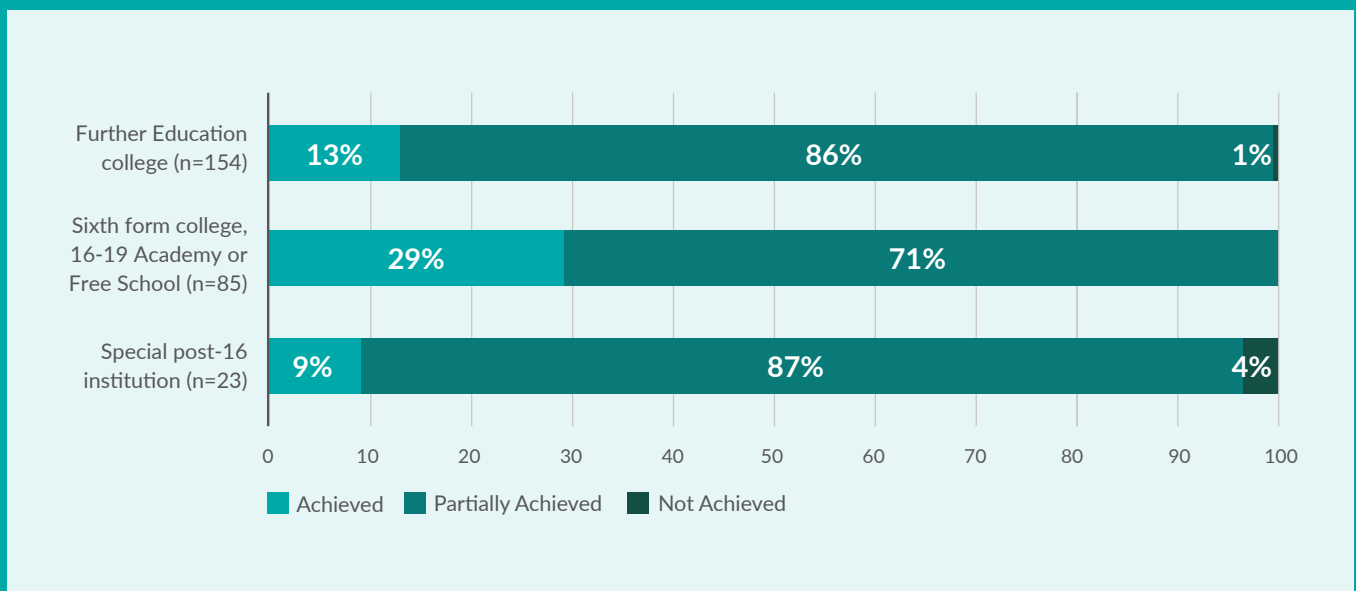
Further Education colleges and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools. The report then summarises the key findings and highlights next steps for colleges and the wider sector.

1 | Benchmark 1 – A stable careers programme

Colleges should have an established programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by learners, parents, college staff, governors, employers and other agencies.

Benchmark 1 is important because it provides the foundation for the other benchmarks, ensuring that careers activities are coordinated within a coherent programme that follows the learner through college. To fully achieve the benchmark, colleges must meet 18 sub-benchmark requirements which is more than for any other benchmark. Chart 3 shows considerable variation between college types. Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools were most likely to fully achieve Benchmark 1 in 2018/19. Special post-16 institutions were the least likely to fully achieve Benchmark 1.

Chart 3: Achievement of Benchmark 1 in 2018/19 by post-16 providers (n=262)



The Department for Education's statutory guidance set out an expectation that from September 2018 colleges would have a named Careers Leader to lead the careers programme. The data show that by the end of the same academic year, 96% of the FE colleges and 99% of Sixth form colleges and schools completing Compass have a Careers Leader in place. There were also positive results for the establishment of careers programmes. Over 90% of colleges reported that they have a careers programme that is written down and that has the explicit backing of senior leadership. The programme was approved by governors in 63% of colleges and 77% of Sixth form colleges and schools highlighting this as an area for focus in the coming year.

The careers programme was published on the website in 75% of colleges and the extent to which the website was targeted at different audiences varied from 75% of colleges targeting information at learners to 39% aiming information at other agencies.

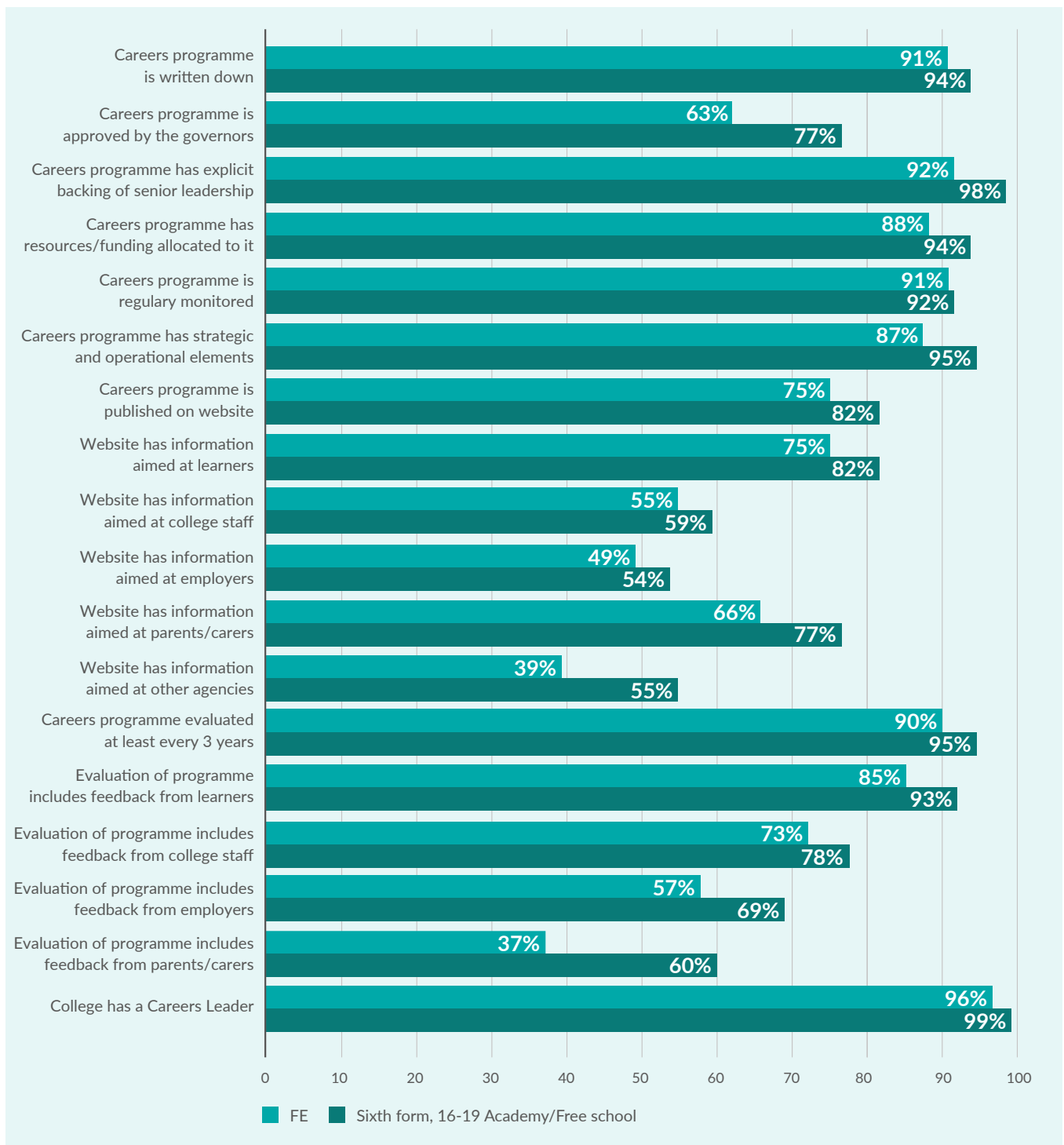
The vast majority of colleges (90%) evaluate their programmes at least once every three years. Feedback was more likely to be sought from learners (85%) than college staff (73%), employers (57%) or parents/carers (37%).

The main tasks holding colleges back from achieving Benchmark 1 are related to engaging with college staff, employers and parents/carers on feedback and the website. These are relatively straightforward tasks to carry out and could be enabled through sharing practice across colleges.

Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools were more likely to target website information at different stakeholders and to seek feedback from parents/carers, staff and employers.



Chart 4: Full achievement of Benchmark 1 sub-benchmarks by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)



Case Study

East Durham College

East Durham College is one of the 11 colleges and Sixth Form Centres that comprise the only national College Careers Hub in the country. Careers Hubs are a central part of the Government's Careers Strategy, which aims to improve careers education and help prepare young people for the world of work. The College Careers Hub is facilitated by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership.

East Durham College operates across three campuses and serves a wide and varied group of students studying academic and vocational courses at different levels including GCSE, BTEC, NVQ, A Level and Higher Education. Because of this variety, East Durham College was keen to explore a new approach to career guidance, to ensure that it meets the needs of each and every student.

The college chose to establish a Careers Leadership Committee that could work effectively across all three of the college's sites and better represent its students by offering a diverse range of views and experience. To establish the committee, East Durham College used its learning as part of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership's Gatsby Career Benchmarks pilot to map out how each department engaged with careers. The exercise highlighted some excellent careers provision across the curriculum and some areas in need of improvement.

Based on this research, and following recommendations from The Careers & Enterprise Company, East Durham College established a Careers Leadership Committee that comprised a Board member, two members of the College Leadership Group, the Vice Principal of Curriculum and Performance and the following staff:

- Director of Student Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing
- Director of Inclusive Learning
- Programme Leader for Progression Coaches
- Curriculum Manager 14-16
- Curriculum Directors from across all campuses
- Careers Coordinator
- North East Collaborative Outreach Programme Coordinator
- Quality Coordinator

Since forming, the Careers Leadership Committee has helped ensure that career guidance is at the heart of East Durham College. It is now a regular agenda item at all curriculum meetings where it is planned, reviewed and assessed as part of each curriculum area's Self-Assessment Review (SAR) & Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Student Service department has increased its personal guidance provision and more cross-college events are taking place to support students and parents. The Careers Leadership Committee has also begun to record and capture careers activity across the college's three campuses to identify which teams are performing well, and which teams may need additional support.

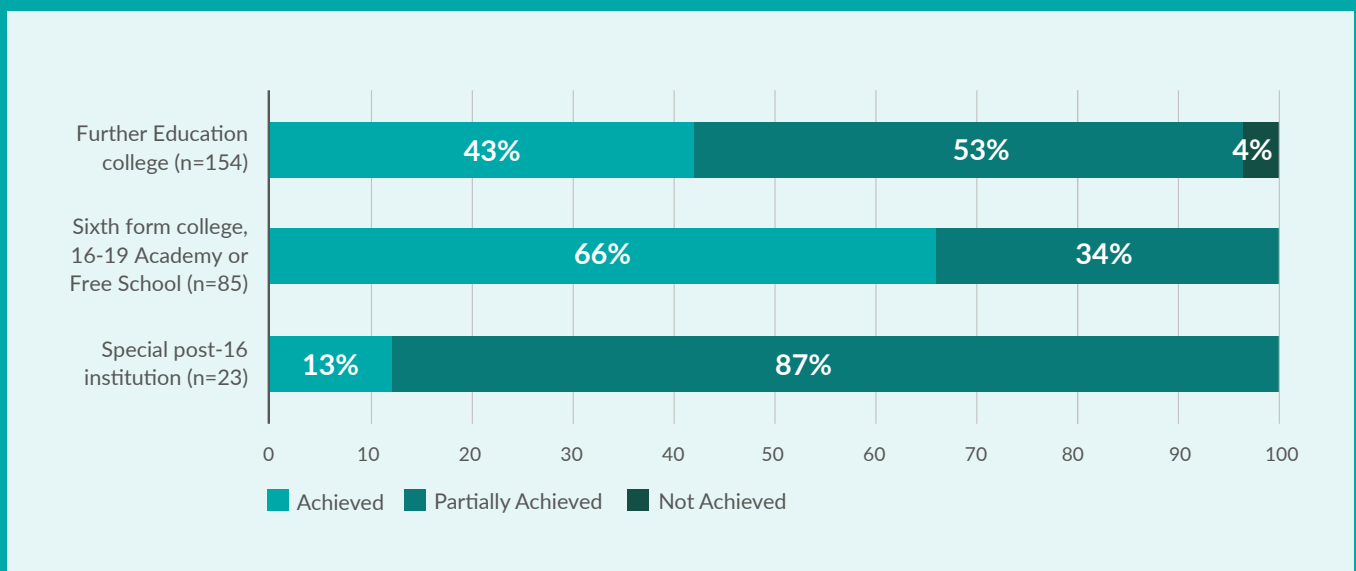
The only cost associated with the new Careers Leadership Committee is staff time, meaning it is a sustainable and long-term way of delivering effective and impactful career guidance that will benefit all students at the college.

2 | Benchmark 2 – Learning from career and labour market information

Every learner, and their parents (where appropriate), 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 best use of available information.

Benchmark 2 ensures that young people are making career choices based on up-to-date information about career pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. The benchmark also states that, where appropriate, parents and carers are encouraged to access labour market information (LMI), study options and career paths to support the decision-making of their sons and daughters. Making use of this information can help to challenge stereotypes, raise aspirations and improve the alignment between career choices and the employment opportunities available.

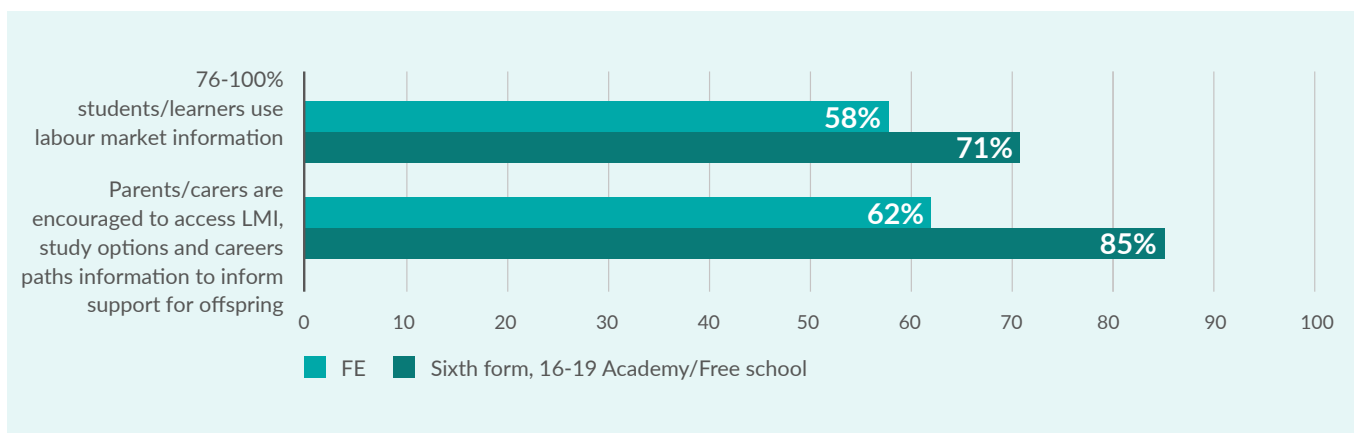
Chart 5: Achievement of Benchmark 2 in 2018/19 by post-16 providers (n=262)



The achievement of Benchmark 2 was highest among Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools whose learners are more likely to have positive destination outcomes than those of other college types¹². Compared to 66% of Sixth form colleges and schools fully achieving Benchmark 2, considerably fewer FE colleges achieved the benchmark (43%) and a minority (5%) did not achieve either of the sub-benchmarks. Special post-16 institutions were the least likely to provide access to labour market information and study options. Bearing in mind the destination outcomes of learners from different post-16 providers, there is potential for improvements in Benchmark 2 to make a substantial difference to outcomes for young people.

In 58% of colleges and 71% of Sixth form colleges and schools, over three-quarters of learners use up-to-date LMI and information about career paths during their programme of study. In most of the remaining colleges, a lower proportion of learners access this information. 62% of colleges and 85% of Sixth form colleges reported that they encourage parents and carers to access information to support their sons and daughters. FE colleges may benefit from sharing good practice and resources to improve on these areas.

Chart 6: Full achievement of Benchmark 2 sub-benchmarks by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)



12. Department for Education (2019). *Progression to higher education or training, England, 2015-16 cohort*. Department for Education.



It is encouraging to see that careers provision in colleges is improving. Half of all Gatsby Benchmarks are being at least partially achieved by sixth form colleges.

The report shows aspects of strong career provision in sixth form colleges - 99% of sixth form colleges have a careers leader and careers programme in place and 97% of colleges track the destination of learners for three years post-college.

Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools are performing particularly well on career programmes (Benchmark 1), learning from labour market and career pathway information (Benchmark 2) and encounters with further and higher education (Benchmark 7).

In 2018/19, 51 sixth form colleges and 34 16-19 Academy converters and Free schools used the Compass tool. The level of engagement suggests that the Gatsby Benchmarks are a useful self-improvement tool for colleges.

Jonathan Isaacs
Careers Leader, Sixth Form Colleges Association

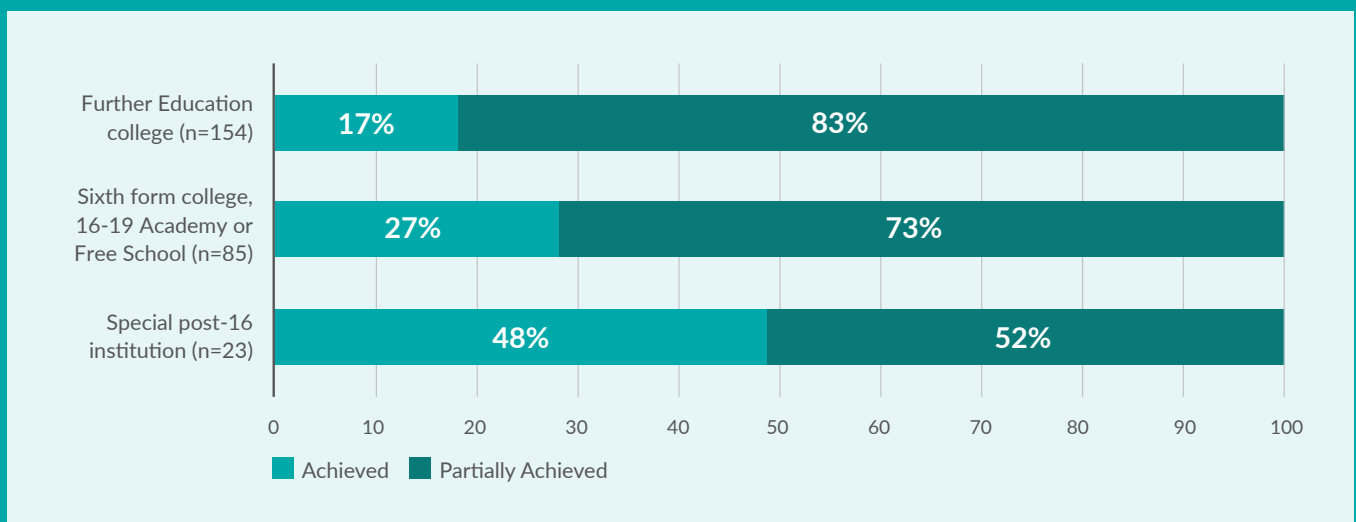
3 | Benchmark 3 – Addressing the needs of each learner

Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each learner. A college’s careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.

In addressing the needs of each learner, Benchmark 3 is about maintaining high aspirations for all learners, maintaining records that support progression to positive destinations and collaborative working to address the needs of vulnerable learners including those with SEND. Benchmark 3 is one of the most challenging for colleges to meet as it comprises a number of sub-benchmarks and requires infrastructure and resources to implement.

Special post-16 institutions are the highest performers on this benchmark, reflecting their focus on supporting the additional needs of learners with SEND and tailoring provision. 27% of Sixth form colleges also achieved this benchmark. FE colleges were least likely to fully achieve Benchmark 3.

Chart 7: Achievement of Benchmark 3 in 2018/19 by post-16 providers (n=262)



Across most areas, including most aspects of record keeping, the majority of FE colleges achieve the sub-benchmarks.

A high proportion of colleges (92%) have a careers programme that actively seeks to raise the aspirations of all learners and the majority report that their careers programme challenges stereotypes. The purpose of these sub-benchmarks is to encourage all learners to consider the full range of options.

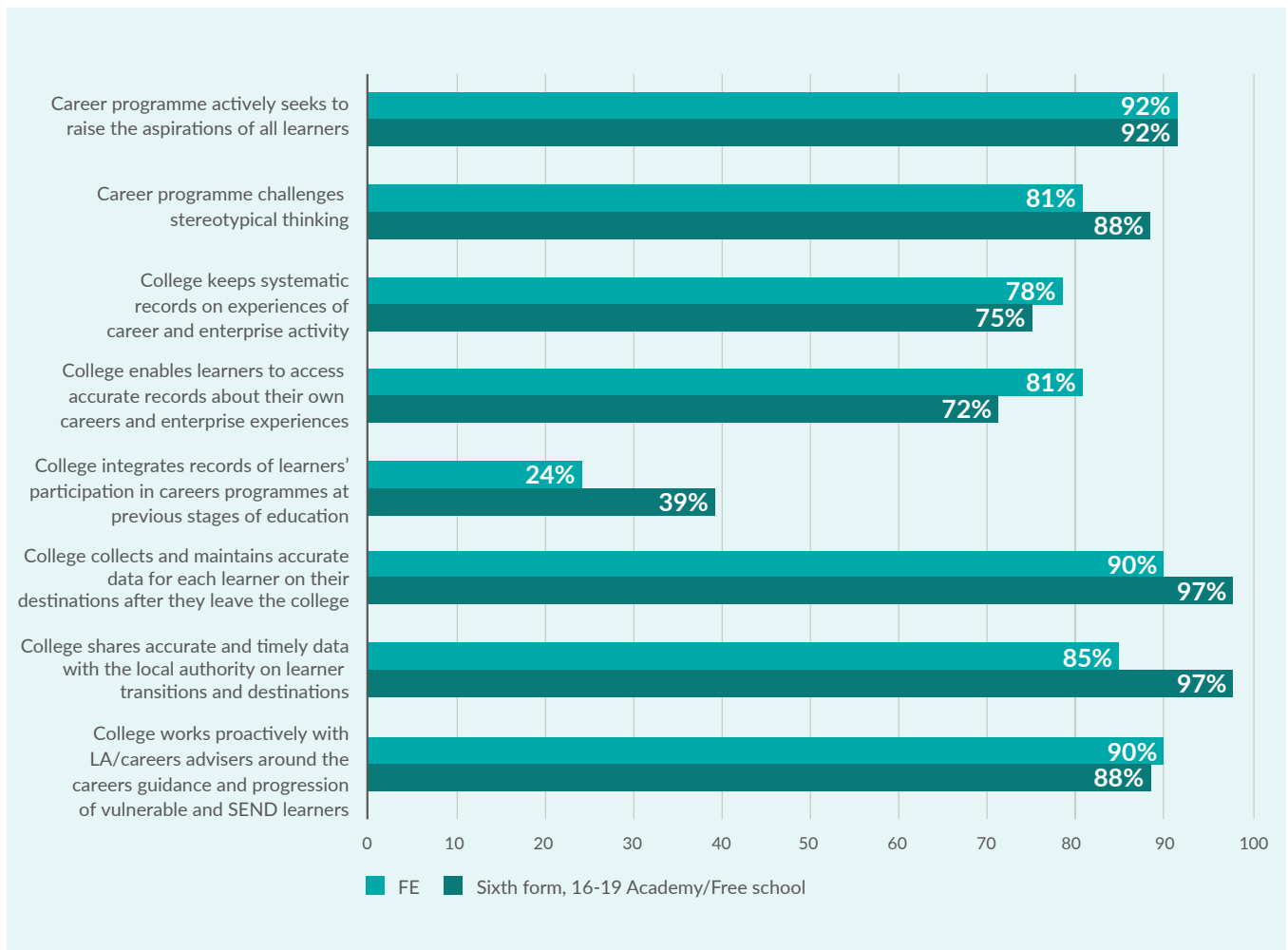
The majority of colleges have processes in place to track learner destinations. 90% of FE colleges and 97% of Sixth form colleges report that they maintain accurate data on learner destinations after they leave college. This is an area that secondary schools struggle with but is more established in colleges. The majority of colleges also report that they share accurate and timely data with the local authority on learner destinations. Approximately three-quarters of colleges keep records on careers and enterprise activities while learners are at college and enable learners to access these records.

By contrast, only one-quarter of FE colleges reported that they integrate records on learners' participation in careers programmes during previous stages of their education. This requires information sharing between institutions and for large colleges is a substantial exercise. Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools were stronger on this sub-benchmark.

The majority of colleges work proactively to support vulnerable and SEND learners. This includes young people in care and care leavers, those moving into college from Alternative Provision and those in financial hardship. This sub-benchmark involves collaboration with the other professionals engaged with young person such as careers advisers.



Chart 8: Full achievement of Benchmark 3 sub-benchmarks by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)



Case Study

The Manchester College

With over 5,000 post 16 learners across multiple campuses, The Manchester College is one of the largest Further Education colleges in the UK. Despite its size, the college's Careers Plan focuses on ensuring that every student has meaningful encounters with employers and develops career management skills. The Careers, Employability and Welfare Department leads the careers programme and in 2019, the college achieved all eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

The college achieved its success in career guidance by setting out the long-term goals, identifying the changes needed to achieve them and creating a whole college approach to careers. The college is highly collaborative, working closely with two other colleges to create a Further Education trio within the Manchester Careers Hub. It regularly reviews progress through termly Compass completions and is continuously developing.

Achieving Benchmark 3 involved numerous strands of development. To raise aspirations and challenge stereotypes, there was a revived focus on targeting specific groups and individuals with bespoke careers activities and informing them about progression to further study, training, including apprenticeships or employment. Careers advisers, curriculum staff and achievement tutors provide tailored personal guidance at significant points which is aspirational and motivational in theme and delivery. The college offers tutorials and activities to actively challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations, such as Women and Girls into Engineering and STEM subjects.

Records are kept from the first point of contact, or from the point of transition, on an Action Planning System (APS) which was developed in-house. The system is used to record student participation in career interventions such as labour market information workshops, employer talks and careers fairs by using electronic scanning equipment linked to students' ID badges. Students have access to their records and action plans to support their career development.

The Careers Department works proactively with the Local Authority on the progression of SEND and vulnerable students, including learners in Pupil Referral Units, Princes Trust projects, supported internships and Go Learn courses. 220 students with additional learning support needs were recorded on APS during the last academic year.

The Department monitors and analyses student progression data on education, training and employment destinations via a contracted company and also UCAS destination reports. Management information systems within the college also track student retention and attendance and are linked with APS.

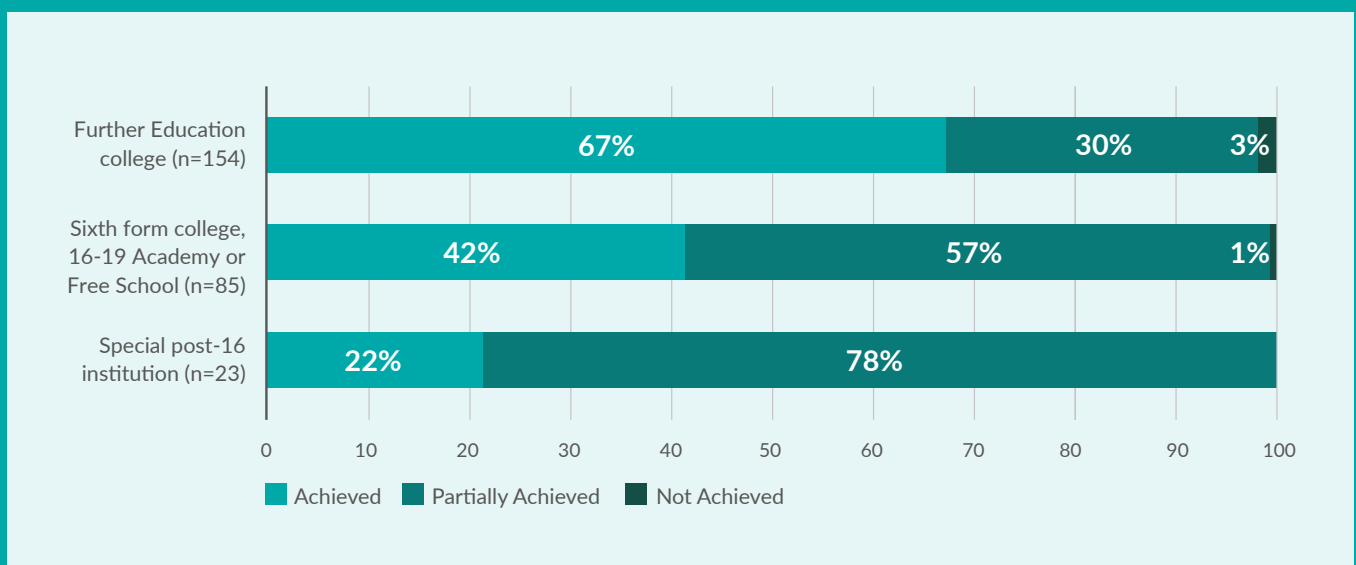
Over half of 16-18 year olds at Level 1 (54%) and Level 2 (53%) progress to a higher level of study at the college. 46% of 16-18 year olds studying at Level 3 leave the college to an external destination. Feedback from students is gathered on a regular basis, and students comment on the effectiveness of the career guidance they have received; and how the careers programme has influenced their career decisions.

4 | Benchmark 4 – Linking curriculum learning to careers

All subject staff should link curriculum learning with careers, even on courses that are not specifically occupation-led. For example, STEM subject staff should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths. Programmes of study should also reflect the importance of Maths and English as a key expectation from employers.

The embedding of career learning within the curriculum varies considerably across colleges types. This is an area where FE colleges are the strongest, reflecting the emphasis within 16-19 study programmes on linking learning with careers both within vocationally-oriented programmes and on courses that are less focused on specific occupations. Colleges often have employer engagement teams to support these activities. Special post-16 institutions were least likely to achieve Benchmark 4 which may reflect different curriculum approaches depending on the needs of learners.

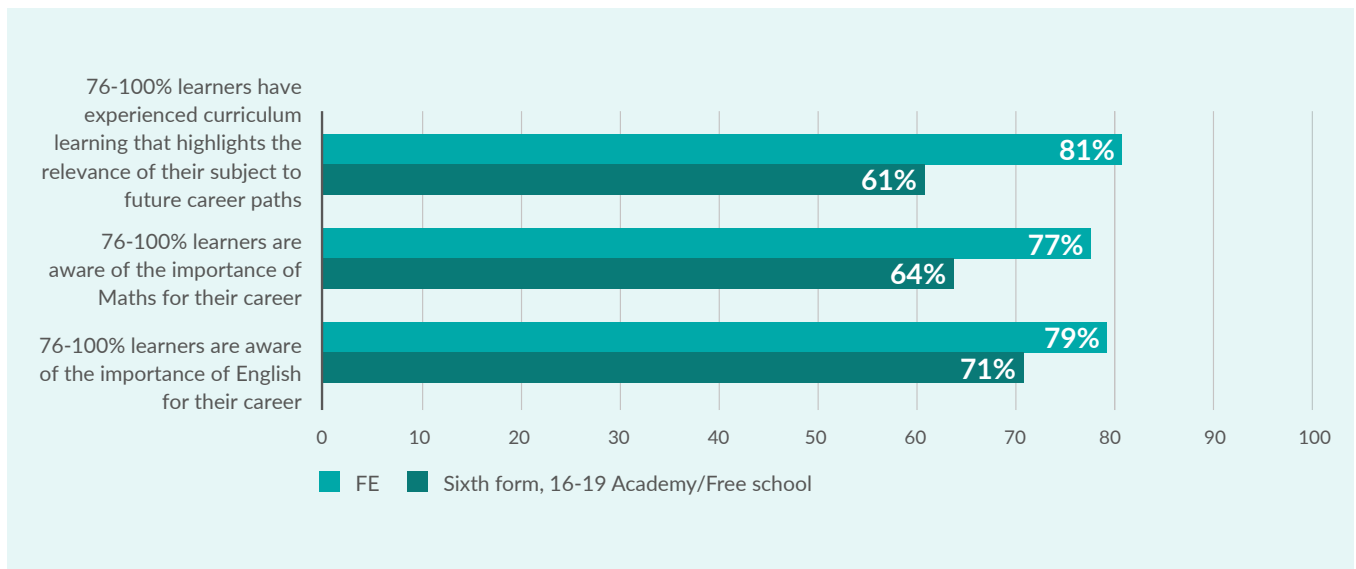
Chart 9: Achievement of Benchmark 4 in 2018/19 by post-16 providers (n=262)



81% of colleges report that the majority of their learners learn about the relevance of their subject to future career paths through the curriculum and a similar proportion offer the same experience for Maths and English.

FE colleges outperformed Sixth form colleges and schools on these sub-benchmarks.

Chart 10: Full achievement of Benchmark 4 sub-benchmarks by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)

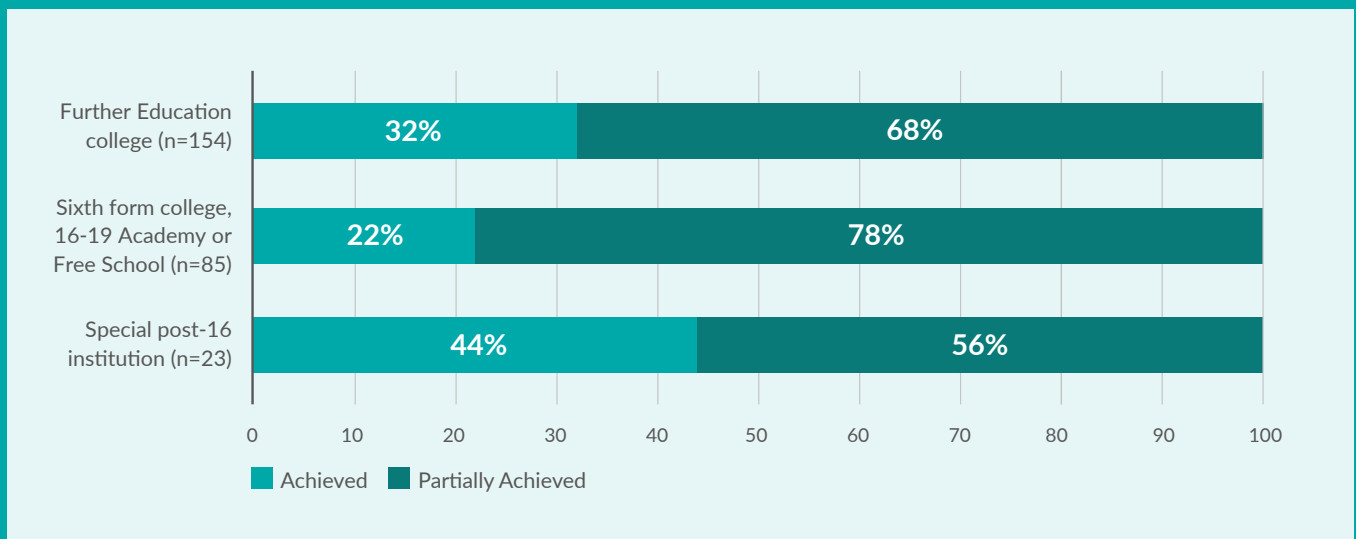


5 | Benchmark 5 – Encounters with employers and employees

Every learner should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and should include learners' own part-time employment where it exists.

Benchmark 5 requires that learners have regular encounters with employers and employees, experiences which research shows are associated with better labour market outcomes¹³. Activities may include careers fairs, careers talks, enterprise competitions, employer mentoring and mock assessment centres. Special post-16 institutions performed the strongest on this benchmark, followed by FE colleges.

Chart 11: Achievement of Benchmark 5 in 2018/19 by post-16 providers (n=262)



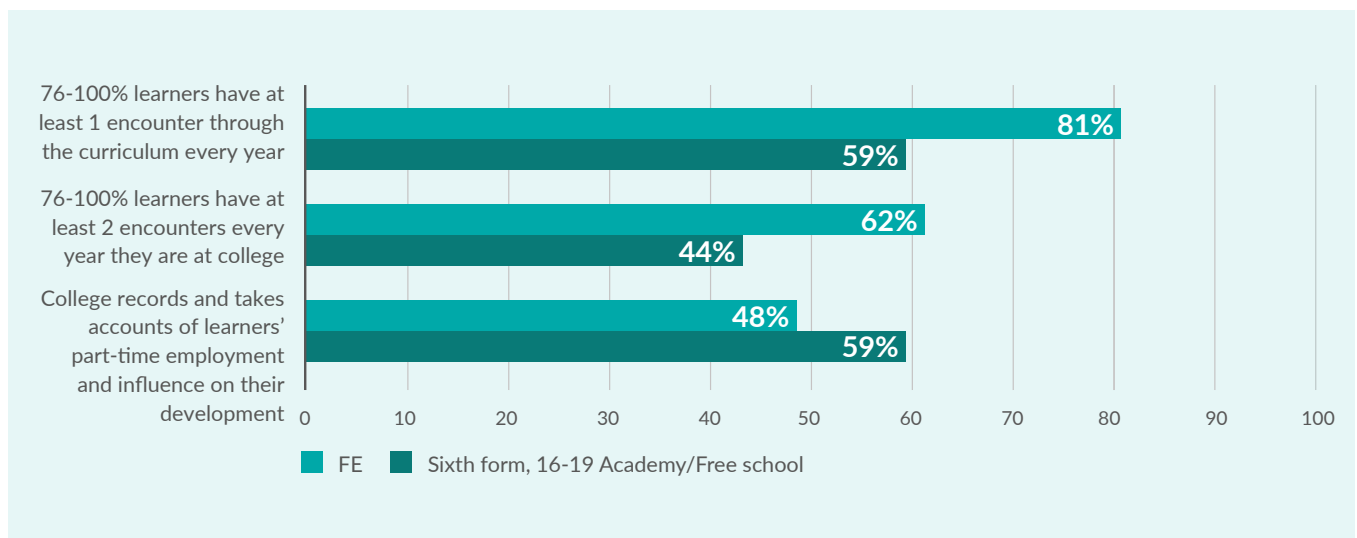
13. Mann, A. et al. (2017). *Contemporary Transitions: Young people reflect on life after secondary school and college.*

In 2018/19, 81% of colleges ensured that all or most learners have at least one encounter every year through the curriculum. This compares to 67% of FE colleges reporting in 2017/18 that all or most learners have an encounter every year¹⁴. They are also required to ensure an additional encounter for every learner during their time at college and 62% manage to achieve this.

Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools were substantially less likely to offer employer encounters.

Just under half of FE colleges record and take into account learners' part-time employment and the influence this has on their development. Sixth form colleges were more likely to take account of learners' part-time employment.

Chart 12: Full achievement of Benchmark 5 sub-benchmarks by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)



14. This figure was not reported in State of the Nation 2018 as there were too few colleges to split between different types. The figure was calculated through new analysis.

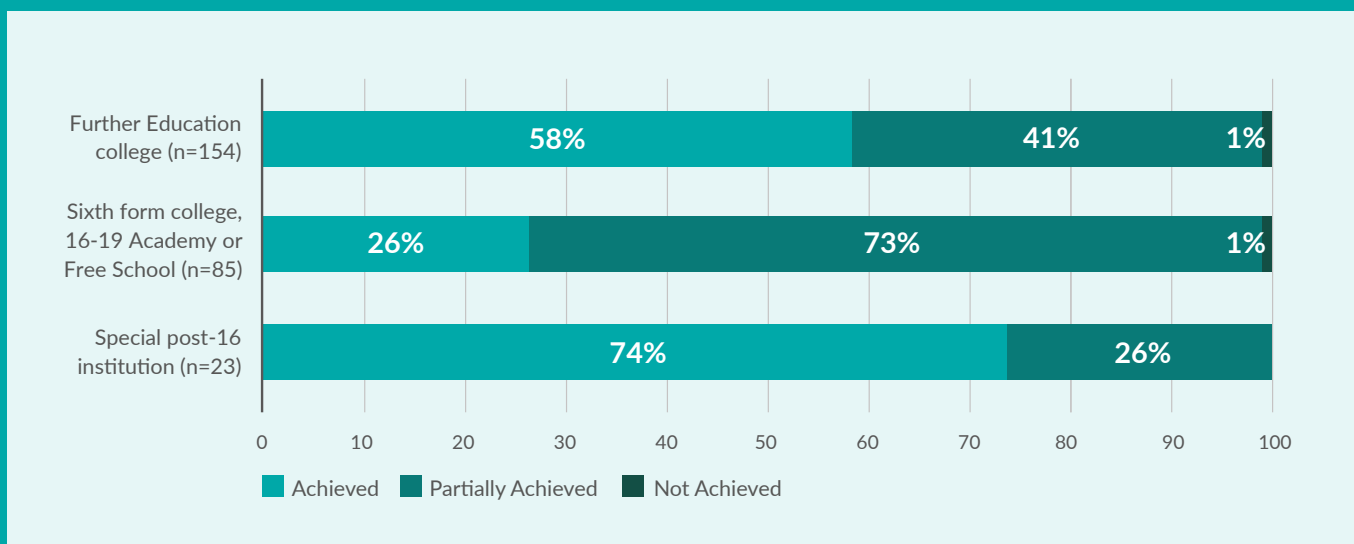
6 | Benchmark 6 – Experiences of workplaces

Every learner 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.

Benchmark 6 is concerned with giving students experiences of workplaces. This could be a one or two-week block of work experience but also encompasses a wide range of other opportunities to interact with workplaces such as job shadowing, workplace visits or inspiration days. The approach taken by colleges depends on the work readiness of learners and the requirements of the study programme.

Some colleges with strong vocational focus may have a work experience team responsible for identifying opportunities, health and safety checks, matching learners with placements and preparation. Other colleges may engage external agencies or deliver as part of the in-house careers service.

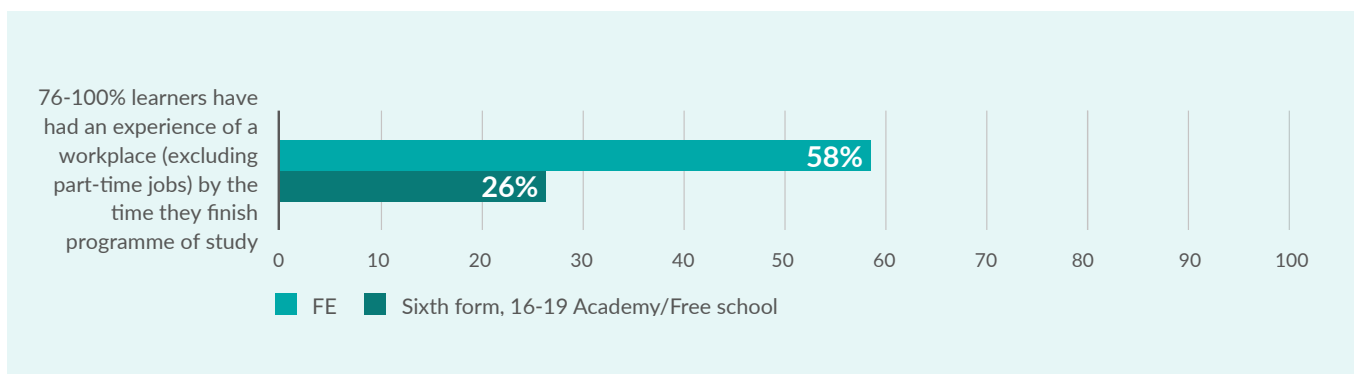
Chart 13: Achievement of Benchmark 6 in 2018/19 by post-16 providers (n=262)



There was marked variation in workplace experiences between college types. Three-quarters of Special post-16 providers (74%) enabled the majority of learners to have experiences of workplaces. The majority of FE colleges (58%) also met the benchmark, compared to 52% in 2018¹⁵. Learners in Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools were least likely to have workplace experiences.

Over half of FE colleges report that the overwhelming majority of their learners experience a workplace by the time they finish their programme of study. A further 40% of colleges report that between one-quarter and three-quarters of learners have a workplace experience. This proportion seems low given the requirement for 16-19 study programmes to include work experience¹⁶. Feedback from the sector has highlighted the challenge of delivering workplace experiences for all learners in larger colleges and where Level 1 and 2 learners constitute a higher proportion. Among Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools, 26% offer the majority of learners a workplace experience.

Chart 14: Full achievement of Benchmark 6 sub-benchmark by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)



15. Based on new analysis of 2018 State of the Nation data.

16. Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency (2019). *16-19 study programmes: guidance (2019-2020 academic year)*.

Case Study

Westminster Kingsway College

Westminster Kingsway College is one of the largest Further Education colleges in London, operating across four centres. In 2017, the college introduced a new careers strategy which embedded careers across the curriculum and increased the involvement of employers. Two new Careers Leaders were appointed to deliver the programme. As a result, the college has made significant strides and won the Careers Excellence Award 2019 for the 'Progress from a school or college'.

First-hand experiences of workplaces are an integral part of the college's offer, reflecting the emphasis on motivating students to 'learn for tomorrow'. Work experience was brought into the central Careers & Employability Service and a careers qualified lead manages the team of in-house work experience coordinators. This enabled the college to reduce its reliance on external work experience providers and ensured greater integration of workplace experiences with other aspects of the careers programme. For example, in one-to-one personal guidance interviews, students are encouraged to reflect on their learning from workplace experiences and discuss how this links to their programme of study and their career aims. Students take part in a programme to prepare for work experience.

The college has built strong relationships with employers. Each area of the curriculum is aligned to employer partners which has helped to stabilise the delivery of careers within the classroom. Employers are involved in shaping the curriculum and have invested in technology and systems to track and monitor impact. There are also many employer-led events such as promoting apprenticeship options.

Impact is measured via feedback surveys and measurement of employability skills. Early feedback shows that 90% of students who took part in an employability workshop on networking developed their understanding of what employers are looking for. 92% of students reported being more confident about their career planning after their one-to-one personal guidance interview.

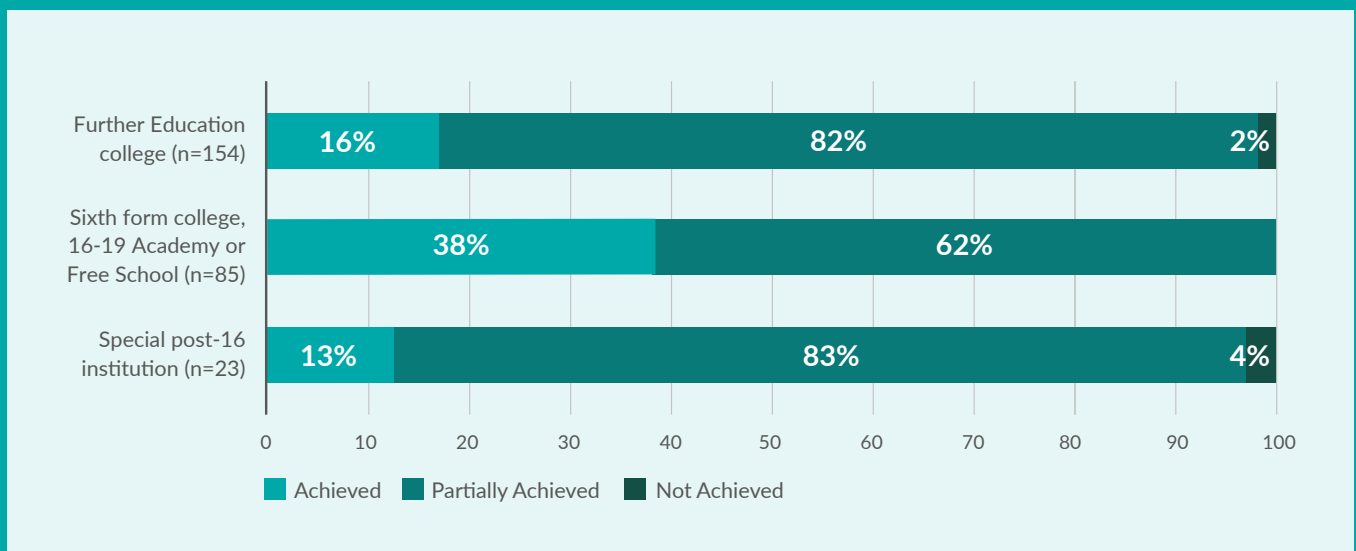
The long-term impact of Westminster Kingsway's provision has been measured through the National Student Survey. 100% of students know what to do after their course (+27% above national benchmark) and 87% say they know where to get advice on their next step (+5% above national benchmark).

7 | Benchmark 7 – Encounters with further and higher education

All learners should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning.

Benchmark 7 requires colleges to provide a broad range of information and experiences with providers of apprenticeships, further education and higher education. While the overwhelming majority of colleges are providing some of these opportunities (as shown by the partial achievement in Chart 15), full achievement was variable across provider types. Sixth form colleges, and 16-19 schools were most likely to report encounters with apprenticeship providers, FE providers and universities (38%). Full achievement of the benchmark was considerably lower in FE colleges (16%).

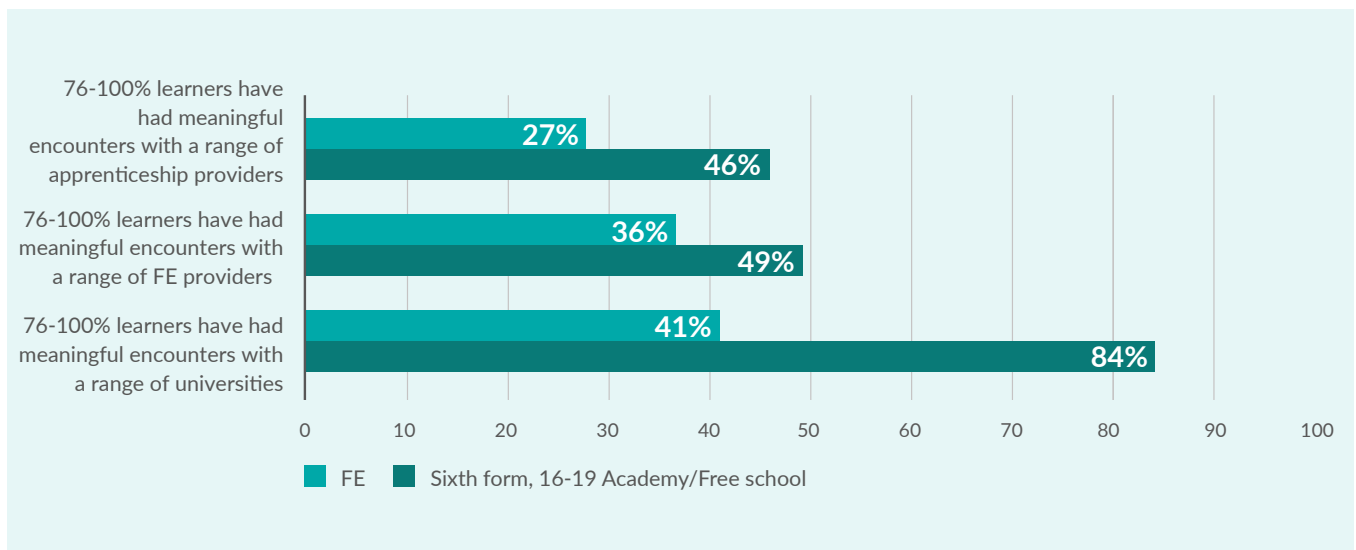
Chart 15: Achievement of Benchmark 7 in 2018/19 by post-16 providers (n=262)



FE colleges reported that learners were more likely to have meaningful encounters with a range of universities (41%) than FE providers (36%) and apprenticeship providers (27%). This does not necessarily mean that learners have no access to these providers in the colleges that do not meet the sub-benchmarks but that they do not have the multiple opportunities implied by the requirement for 'a range' of encounters.

The proportion of Sixth form colleges and 16-19 Academies and Free schools offering encounters with a range of providers was much higher. 84% of these providers ensure encounters with a range of universities and close to half provider encounters with apprenticeship providers and FE colleges.

Chart 16: Full achievement of Benchmark 7 sub-benchmark by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)





The Careers & Enterprise Company has a big job to do, helping colleges and schools to offer that support to hundreds of thousands of young people and adults. With a new government set on transforming the technical education offer and raising its profile to match the higher education offer, we need colleges and schools to up their game. And that's what they are doing – this report shows really good progress by colleges which is enormously pleasing.

There are very high levels of engagement and progress amongst colleges, with 96% having a Careers Leader – a pivotal leadership role to drive forward high quality careers provision. On Gatsby Benchmark 3, 90% of colleges track destinations of their students and over half are achieving Benchmark 4 on linking careers to the whole curriculum.

There is clearly more to do across the benchmarks if we are to be certain that every college is able to fully support every student. If we can get the careers system working well, we will see students from all backgrounds making positive choices to undertake all types of learning and all routes, rather than the so-called academic route being viewed as the gold standard.

David Hughes
Chief Executive, Association of Colleges

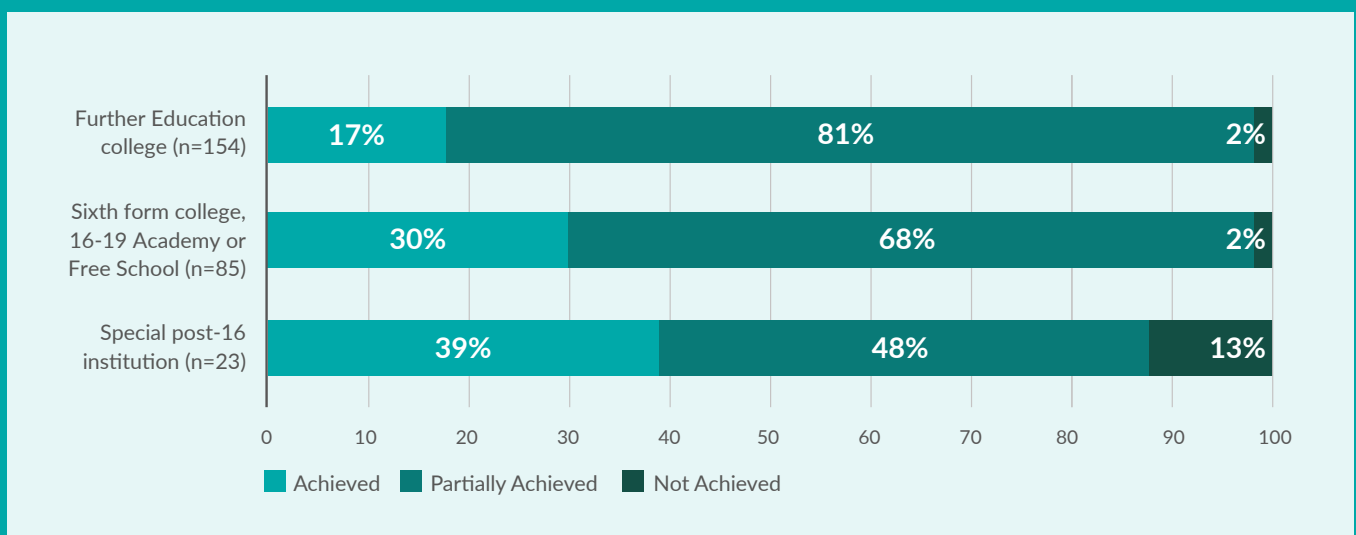
8 | Benchmark 8 – Personal guidance

Every learner should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of college 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 learners but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

According to the Gatsby Benchmarks and Government guidance, all learners starting college at 16 years should have had at least one personal guidance interview with a qualified careers adviser while at school. Benchmark 8 requires that a further interview is made available to learners whenever a significant study or career choice is being made. The sub-benchmarks measure both the offer and the take-up of guidance interviews.

Access to qualified career guidance was highest in Special post-16 institutions and Sixth form colleges and schools and lowest in FE colleges. This may partly reflect the size of these providers with FE colleges typically much larger and many catering for adult learners as well as young people.

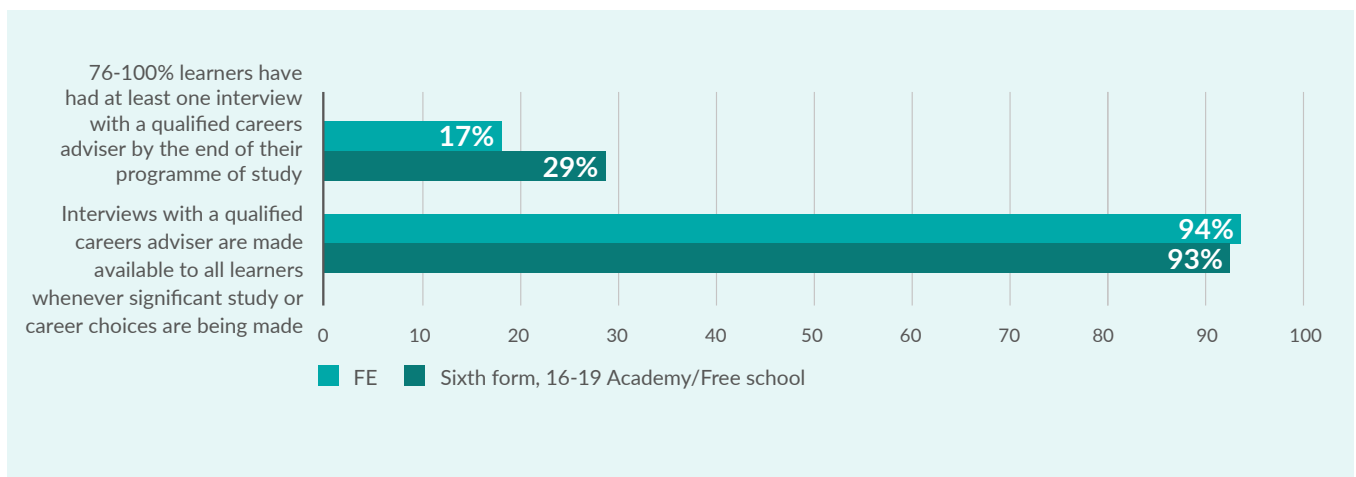
Chart 17: Achievement of Benchmark 8 in 2018/19 by post 16 providers (n=262)



The vast majority of FE colleges (94%) reported that an interview with a qualified careers adviser was made available to learners whenever significant choices were being made. The proportion was similar among Sixth form colleges (93%). By contrast, 17% of these colleges reported that the overwhelming majority of their learners had at least one interview with a qualified careers adviser during their programme of study. A further 60% provided an interview to between one-quarter and three-quarters of students.

It may be the case that not all learners choose to take up the opportunity or that there are not enough careers advisers for all learners to receive an interview. Some large colleges operate a triage system, where information and career conversations are provided by personal tutors or Level 4 careers staff, with learners referred to the more specialist Level 6 or 7 careers staff where needed¹⁷. The proportion of Sixth form colleges ensuring interviews with qualified careers advisers was somewhat higher at 29%.

Chart 18: Full achievement of Benchmark 8 sub-benchmark by Further Education colleges (N=154) and Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools (N=85)



17. The Careers & Enterprise Company is currently testing different approaches to delivering personal guidance through 20 providers.

Summary and next steps

Following the launch of the Compass for Colleges in September 2018 and accompanying guidance, colleges are now better supported to track their progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks. Four-fifths of Further Education colleges have started using the tool, indicating a high level of support for the Gatsby Benchmarks as an improvement framework for career guidance. Detailed college results are shared for the first time in this report to highlight where provision is strong and where more work is needed to ensure that all young people are accessing the experiences associated with positive career outcomes.

Where it is possible to make comparisons with previous years, there are signs of progress. Most notably, 81% of FE colleges are providing an encounter for all or most learners every year (Benchmark 5), compared to 67% the previous year. Progress across all types of colleges is stronger in areas covered by the Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs where networks between colleges and with other education providers and employers are growing⁴.

This report shows that there are marked variations in the career guidance of different types of post-16 provider reflecting learner characteristics, size of institutions and types of study programmes. Further Education colleges, the dominant provider in terms of the number of colleges and learners, are strong on linking curriculum learning to careers (Benchmark 4) and providing workplace experiences to the majority of learners (Benchmark 6), reflecting the emphasis on technical and vocational study programmes. FE colleges are less likely than other types to ensure encounters with further and higher education (Benchmark 7) and personal guidance interviews (Benchmark 8).

Other provider types are less numerous and those completing Compass constituted a smaller proportion of their sector, so the results may not accurately represent their sector. The evidence suggests that Sixth form colleges, 16-19 Academies and Free schools are particularly strong on career programmes (Benchmark 1), learning from labour market and career pathway information (Benchmark 2) and encounters with further and higher education (Benchmark 7) which aligns with the positive destinations typically achieved by these colleges. Special post-16 institutions outperformed other types on addressing the needs each learner (Benchmark 3), engagement with employers (Benchmarks 5 and 6) and personal guidance (Benchmark 8) reflecting the emphasis on tailoring provision.

The diversity of the post-16 college sector and differing strengths and weaknesses in career guidance underlines the need for a collaborative and multi-faceted approach to support. During 2019/20, The Careers & Enterprise Company is developing resources and digital tools to support colleges and is working collaboratively with post-16 providers, the Department for Education and sector bodies to raise the profile of careers education and to develop practical solutions to the challenges.

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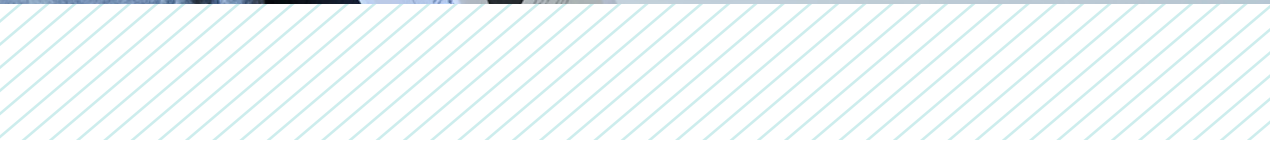
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