

What Works in Careers and Enterprise?



Introduction

The Careers & Enterprise Company believes that young people should be given the best support available to develop their careers and to make choices about education and employment.

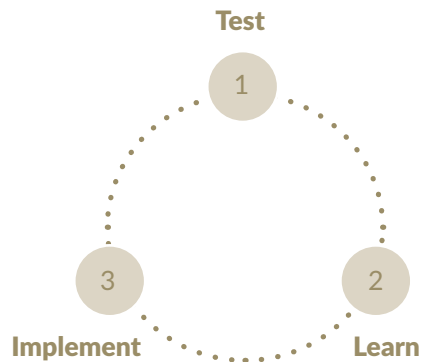
At the heart of our ability to do this is our commitment to listening to and developing the evidence base. It is only by being clear about what works in careers and enterprise that we are able to ensure that what we do will make a difference to young people.

This paper sets out the framework that we are using to develop the evidence base. We hope that it will be useful to schools and careers and enterprise providers in shaping what they provide for young people and how they think about using evidence.

How we think about evidence

The Careers & Enterprise Company is evidence-based. We believe in building on what works. When we develop new things we always try to test them, learn from what happens and adapt them to ensure that they work as well as possible.

This cycle of evidence-based continuous improvement is at the heart of the way that we think about careers and enterprise work with young people.





We draw on a wide range of evidence to inform our conclusions about what works. We are particularly interested in interventions that have been examined a number of times using a range of robust evaluation methods and where there is agreement amongst researchers about these findings. However, we also believe that some evidence is better than none and so we try and use the best evidence available and work to improve the quality of the evidence base.

The Early Intervention Foundation has developed a useful scale to judge the quality of the evidence that supports any intervention.¹ The Company uses this scale to help to judge the quality of the evidence and decide how it could best be improved.

| EIF rating | Description of program | Description of evidence | Evidence or rationale for programme |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 4 | Consistently effective | Established | Multiple high quality evaluations with consistently positive impact across population and environments |
| 3 | Effective | Initial | Single high quality evaluation with positive impact |
| 2 | Potential effective | Formative | Lower-quality evaluation showing better outcomes for programme participants |
| 1 | Theory-based / Innovative | Non-existent | Logic model and testable features, but no current evidence of outcomes or impact |
| 0 | Unspecified / Unfounded | Non-existent | No logic model, testable features, or current evidence of outcomes or impact |
| -1 | Ineffective / Harmful | Negative | Evidence from at least one high quality evaluation indicating null or negative impact |

Do careers and enterprise activities work?

There is good evidence which suggests that providing young people with opportunities to learn about the world of work and reflect on their place within it can make a real difference.



Research studies have found that careers and enterprise programmes can make a difference to economic, social and educational outcomes.^{2,3,4} Key findings about careers and enterprise programmes suggest that they can:

- improve young people's ability to make career decisions and their optimism about the future;^{5,6}
- help young people to increase their attainment and be more likely to enrol in post-secondary education;^{7,8}
- reduce young people's likelihood of becoming unemployed; and^{9,10}
- increase young people's earnings after they complete their schooling.^{11,12}

What can schools do about this?

The evidence provides us with confidence that careers and enterprise activities are effective. However, it also suggests that...

- there are different effects for different kinds of activities;
- how these activities are sequenced together matters; and
- how well they are implemented makes a difference.

Schools therefore need to proceed carefully and ensure that their careers and enterprise provision builds on the best evidence available.

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation has drawn together the evidence on schoolbased careers and enterprise activities to develop its eight benchmarks of 'good career guidance'¹³. These benchmarks provide both a guide as to what activities work and advice on how schools should organise and sequence these activities.



In The Careers & Enterprise Company we summarise these benchmarks as being about schools having a stable careers programme which is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers. This should ensure that young people have access to encounters, information and opportunity to develop a plan about their future.

Encounters*



- Encounters with employers and employees
 - Every student 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 activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.
- 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.
- Encounters with further higher education
 - All students 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.

The Careers & Enterprise Company endorses the Gatsby Benchmarks and encourages schools to consider using them as a framework for their provision.

Information



- Learning from career and labour market information
 - Every student, 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 best use of available information.
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
 - All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.

Planning



- Addressing the needs of each pupil
 - Students have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.
- Personal guidance
 - Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career 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 students but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

Compass

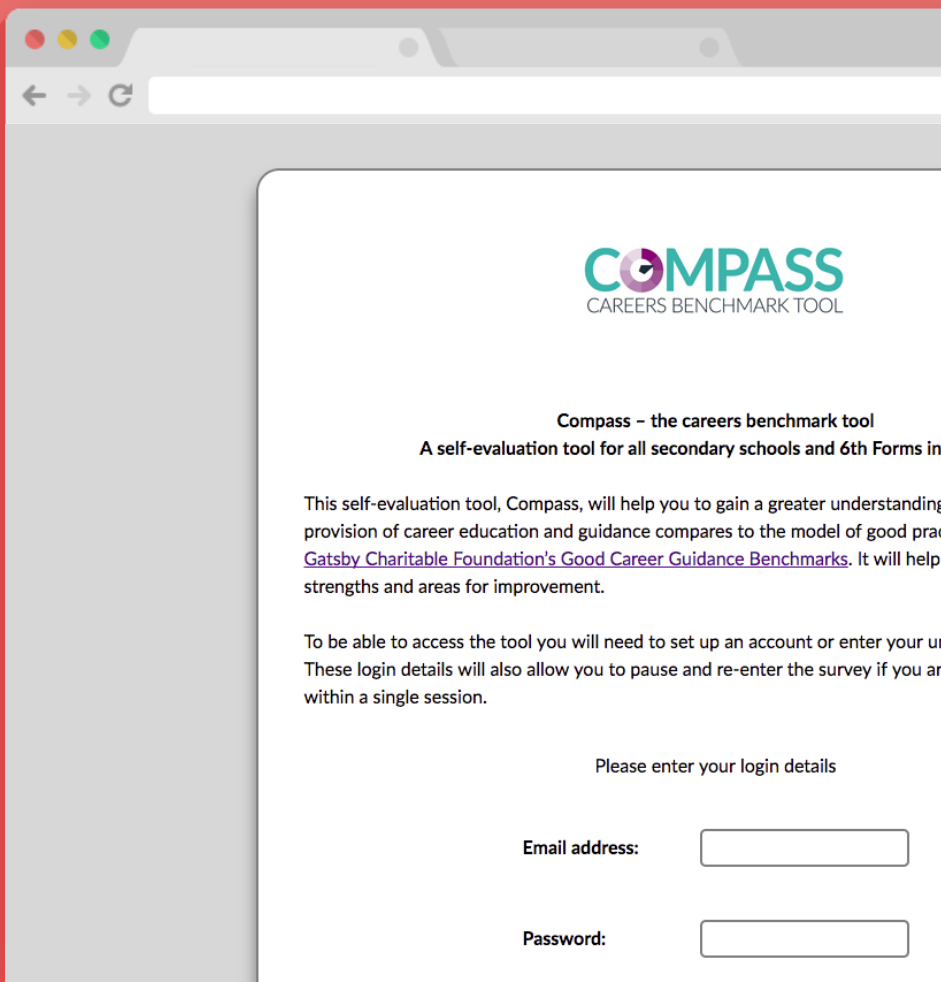
We have worked with Gatsby to build the Compass tool which allows schools to self-assess their provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Compass is a self-evaluation tool for schools and sixth forms in England to use to gain a greater understanding of their careers education and guidance provision and to compare their provision to the Gatsby Benchmarks and to the national average.

Compass works by asking schools to answer a series of questions about what careers and enterprise provision they offer.

On completing the questions, the school will receive a confidential report showing how they compare to the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance.

Data gathered through the tool will also be used by The Careers & Enterprise Company to gain an overview of careers provision in schools across the country. This will help us to understand how best to support schools in the future.



Effective employer encounters

At The Careers & Enterprise Company we are working to deepen our understanding of what works. The Gatsby Benchmarks provide us with a strong framework for action, but there are still lots of choices about what is the best thing to do.

We are particularly interested in ways in which we can bring the worlds of education and employment closer together. So last year we commissioned Deloitte to examine the range of activities that schools could use to support these encounters with the world of work.¹⁴



Encounters with employers and employees



Experiences of the workplace

Many of the stakeholders interviewed as part of this research believed that all of these activities were valuable and that they should form part of school's careers and enterprise programmes.

The research investigated the relative strength of evidence about each of these activities and then grouped them into three groups.

- 1) Those activities which had a strong evidence base.
- 2) Those activities which had some evidence usually based on less robust studies.
- 3) Those activities which had a limited or non-existent evidence base. It should be stressed that insufficient evidence does not mean these activities are not effective, but that in the available time no publicly available research was found to reach a clear conclusion.

STRONG EVIDENCE

High quality evaluations showing positive impact

- employer mentoring
- enterprise competitions
- work related learning provided in cooperation with employers

SOME EVIDENCE

Lower-quality evaluations showing positive impact

- 1-2 week work experiences
- career learning co-delivered by teachers and employers
- careers talks
- careers websites
- curriculum learning co-delivered by teachers and employers
- cv workshops
- employer delivered employability skills workshops
- enterprise activities
- mock interviews
- work place visits

LIMITED EVIDENCE

Insufficient evaluation evidence at present

- careers fairs
- e-mentoring
- job shadowing
- part time working
- teacher CPD delivered by employers
- volunteering

Schools may find this summary of the evidence base useful in guiding the employer engagement activities that they decide to organise. The Careers & Enterprise Company will be working to increase our understanding of the evidence base on each of these activities and seeking to move more activities into the 'strong evidence' column.

We will also be seeking to deepen our understanding about how each of these activities should be done in order to ensure that they maximise their impact.

Developing the evidence base

The Careers & Enterprise Company will be working to clarify and develop the evidence. As we move forwards our research will have four main strands.

| Research strand | Description | Example |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Shaping the debate | We will undertake research looking at some of the fundamental issues and assumptions that underpin discussions about careers and enterprise work. | Moments of Choice  |
| Understanding the environment | We will examine how young people build their careers and explore the world in which they are doing this. | Mapping disengagement  |
| What works? | We will examine what careers and enterprise activities are most effective and what the lessons are for practice. | Effective Employer Mentoring  |
| Evaluating our programmes | We will commission independent evaluations of all of our programmes as part of our commitment to test, learn and adapt. | We have commissioned evaluations of the Enterprise Adviser Network and the Investment Fund. |

Our Commitment



The Careers & Enterprise Company has already done a lot of work to draw together evidence and to use data to underpin our programmes and activities. This commitment to the evidence base lies at the heart of everything that we do.

As we move forwards we will be seeking to continue to deepen our understanding of the evidence base and work to enhance it. We seek to work with all stakeholders to build the evidence base and realise the potential of England's young people.

Visit our website

If you would like more detail about any of our work, all of our research publications are available on the Careers & Enterprise Company website.

www.careersandenterprise.co.uk



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14. Deloitte conducted a rapid evidence review for The Careers and Enterprise Company. Further findings from this review are available in The Careers and Enterprise Company (2015). *The Careers and Enterprise Company Activity Toolkit*. London: The Careers and Enterprise Company.

**This paper is published by
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About The Careers & Enterprise Company

The Careers & Enterprise Company exists to help young people transition from education to employment by assisting them to develop the insights, understanding and skills that will lead to them building a career.

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