

# Education Committee

## Oral evidence: [Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance \(CEIAG\) HC 54](#)

Tuesday 10 January 2023

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Members present: Mr Robin Walker (Chair); Mrs Flick Drummond; Anna Firth; Nick Fletcher; Kim Johnson; Andrew Lewer; Ian Mearns.

Questions 214 - 272

### Witnesses

**I:** Nick Chambers, CEO at Education and Employers; Joe Pardoe, Head of CPD at Big Education Academy Trust; Jo Sykes, Director of CEIAG at Co-op Academies Trust; and Anthony Barnes, Professional Adviser: Quality in Careers Standard at The Quality in Careers Consortium.



## Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Nick Chambers, Joe Pardoe, Jo Sykes and Anthony Barnes.

Q214 **Chair:** A happy new year to all, and welcome to the first session of the Education Select Committee for 2023. Today we are taking evidence as part of our inquiry on careers guidance and advice. I am delighted that we have a very strong hybrid panel, both present and online. I will start with Joe Pardoe and ask you to introduce yourselves briefly.

**Joe Pardoe:** My name is Joe Pardoe. I am head of CPD—continuous professional development—for the Big Education multi-academy trust. Previous to this role I was a teacher, coach and senior leader at School 21 in Stratford, east London. My leadership responsibilities there were for our project base, which had an explicit aim of preparing students for the future.

**Anthony Barnes:** My name is Anthony Barnes. I am an independent careers education consultant. I have worked extensively with schools, Government Departments and agencies in England and Wales. I am here today mainly in my capacity as professional adviser to the Quality in Careers Standard, which is the single national quality award for CEIAG in England.

**Nick Chambers:** I am Nick Chambers. I am the chief executive of a charity, Education and Employers. Our aim is to ensure that all our young people leave school motivated and inspired, starting in primary schools.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. Finally, Jo Sykes, who is online.

**Jo Sykes:** Good morning, everyone, my name is Jo Sykes, director of careers for the Co-op Academies Trust. I have been in role for three years, in and out of schools on a day-to-day basis. Previous to this I was a member of SLT in a secondary school and I was a career leader, so I was on the ground doing the job and I did that for three years as well. I know a lot about careers and how it works in a school.

Q215 **Chair:** Fantastic. It is great to have a panel of expertise in careers experience from both inside and outside the school system. That is greatly appreciated.

I will open with a first question to all of the panel. We have heard that only 12% of schools are meeting the Gatsby benchmarks in full. Would you support measures to enforce schools to meet the benchmarks and, if so, what do you think those should look like?

**Anthony Barnes:** It is very important that we remember that it is about all eight benchmarks. No single benchmark is more important than any other. Enforcement is probably not a helpful word when we do have mechanisms for strongly supporting schools to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks. I highlight the Quality in Careers Standard itself, which is fully aligned to the Gatsby benchmarks. I would also highlight the



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Careers and Enterprise Company's own Compass system for schools to self-report their achievement of the benchmarks. Indeed, in the Quality in Careers Standard we make it part of required evidence that we see the Compass report.

I also would say that the Careers and Enterprise Company's new scheme, called the careers impact review system—which is currently being piloted and which will encourage peer-to-peer as well as expert assessment of the quality of the careers programmes and whether they are meeting the benchmarks—could make a very big difference. I would probably say wait and see and not rush into enforcing meeting the Gatsby benchmarks.

**Chair:** Thank you. Nick, do you agree with that?

**Nick Chambers:** Yes, I am not a fan of enforcement, particularly without funding going to schools. I think it is one of encouragement. Our focus is what young people get from the system. The Gatsby benchmarks are fantastic and they provide a framework for a process for schools, but the ultimate test is: what experience do young people have individually, what experiences in the world of work and what professional careers advice do they get? We need to look at each. We saw at the last Select Committee of young people what it looks like from the point of a young person, to make sure that all young people can get high-quality, independent and impartial advice.

Q216 **Chair:** That is a very sensible point. What we have heard as a Committee when we have questioned young people on the careers advice that they are getting or that they have got is that many are not seeing the careers advice that they would like to in schools. That is the challenge that we are trying to square: how do we work with the Department to encourage the faster take up of that? Jo, you have some frontline experience of delivering it. Do you have anything to add to those arguments?

**Jo Sykes:** I agree. I do not think that it should be enforced but it should be a key part of Ofsted so that it is quality assured. Prior to the Gatsby benchmarks, there was not a framework in schools. My question would be: if schools are not using the framework, what are they using? It is a fantastic framework for good provision. At Co-op we are always looking at raising the bar and making it an outstanding provision.

We have about 45% of our schools with 100% on the benchmarks. Obviously, like any trust, we are working towards 100%. It is about having that progressive programme from year 7 or even prior to year 7, in transition from year 6 to year 7, so that students are starting straightaway on their career journey and building their qualities and skills and having a real understanding of the world of work, whether that is through PSHCE, whether that is through the curriculum, whether that is through enrichment. There are so many different opportunities for building and enriching that curriculum for the students.

Q217 **Chair:** The figure of 45% is interesting. That is a lot higher than the



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average out there of around 12%. It shows significant progress on that front. You mentioned Ofsted. Do you think that schools should be limited from receiving a good or outstanding rating if they do not meet the benchmarks in full, or do you think that that is something that should be brought in over time?

**Jo Sykes:** Absolutely, because we are all about raising aspirations and making a difference. That is the whole point of education, that it is a powerful way of making a difference to students' lives and increasing social mobility. There has to be accountability there. If schools are not offering that to their students, they are doing the students a disservice.

**Chair:** Do you agree with that, Joe?

**Joe Pardoe:** Yes, I agree with what has been said so far. Support and incentives are important, including perhaps training for teachers going into the profession and continuing on their training so that they are aware of the variety of careers options and pathways that are available for students. Without that, enforcing might not be the best tool.

There is a role for Ofsted as well, as it explores and evaluates the wider curriculum offer. Careers and education should be part of that wider, broader curriculum offer that schools offer.

Q218 **Chair:** To all the panel, what reasons would you suggest that some benchmarks are less likely to be met than others? Mr Barnes, you made the point that they are all equally important but it does appear that some are easier for schools currently to achieve than others. Are there any other reasons why you feel that some are being hit more often?

**Anthony Barnes:** Yes. If we take Gatsby benchmark 4, which is about linking curriculum learning to careers, that is proving to be one of the more challenging of the benchmarks to achieve. However, schools are making progress on getting around it and getting their heads around it. What needs to be done to make it easier to achieve that particular benchmark—because it is about curriculum and about teaching and learning—is for us to embed CEIAG. I hate that acronym.

**Chair:** We were discussing that before the meeting started. It is a clumsy acronym.

**Anthony Barnes:** Careers. It is to embed it more in the whole curriculum thinking. In preparation for this session, I went on the curriculum qualifications section of the Government's website and I could find nothing about careers. What we need to do if we want schools to be able to achieve this benchmark—but it is ultimately for the benefit of their students—is to provide some hooks in programmes of study. Even I would argue that we need curriculum guidance on that site—mainstream curriculum guidance—so that in schools' minds and in senior leaders' minds, they know that careers work is part of their overall curriculum.



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As Jo said, there are so many ways of delivering careers. It can be standalone, it can be cross-curriculum, it can come through subjects, it comes through enrichment activities. However, at no real expense, getting a working party together to produce that curriculum guidance, lifting quite a lot from the January statutory guidance, which was very well received and people do welcome that, would not be a difficult thing to do. Look at the curriculum guidance on the Government's website.

**Chair:** I can see Joe to your right nodding strenuously when you are saying that. Is there anything you have to add to that?

**Joe Pardoe:** Yes. All the Gatsby benchmarks are useful and they are all equally important but they are not all equally easy to meet as a school. Gatsby benchmark 4 was one that I would highlight as a particular challenge because it requires support and training for teachers so that they know exactly what is out there and available—because many teachers may not have experienced those routes personally and they might not be able to tie it to their subject as naturally as they may do other things. Therefore, support and training.

It has to be driven by the school leadership. I work in a school, in a trust, where we value this type of education and it is driven from leadership. It has to be seen as everyone's responsibility, as something similar to safeguarding or literacy in schools, that it is everyone's job in the school's community to help prepare students who we teach for the future, whatever that might be.

Q219 **Chair:** Where do you strike the balance between what gets taught to teachers as part of CPD and what is part of initial teacher training? Does there need to be more content in both?

**Joe Pardoe:** Yes, I think both. My understanding of initial teacher training is that there is very little currently, so there should be more. Then there is the ECT framework for new teachers going into the profession. I am not sure how much of this knowledge is in that. Then there is continued professional development. There are organisations out there—the CEC is one that we have engaged with—that offer training for teachers but that could be enhanced.

**Chair:** Anything to add to that, either Nick or Jo?

**Jo Sykes:** Yes, we know benchmark 4 nationally is the hardest benchmark to achieve and it takes a career leader to understand the intricacies of developing staff and giving them time on the CPD calendar. When you work in a school, CPD time is like gold dust. To try to get quality careers time within there is going to be valuable. It cannot be half an hour on a training day; it has to be progressive, it has to be regular. It is about dissecting the curriculum and making it obvious to teachers where there are implicit and explicit opportunities, because there are so many times where you could bring an employer in or you could link it to a career related to that subject.



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There is a big agenda around upskilling teachers. We are looking at it as a Co-op. We are looking at using our career advisers. They have the knowledge regarding pathways and routes related to subjects and they are now working with teachers to upskill them. There are solutions to this; it is just using the time that you have with your careers advisers and using the capacity within the school to do it creatively and progressively.

**Chair:** Thank you. Anything to add, Nick?

**Nick Chambers:** Two points. One is to make it really easy for teachers to be able to access employers. That is what we are trying to do with the national database Inspiring the Future. The second is the whole labour market information and guidance. It does come up in John Holman's recommendations, and it came up in a report that Ministers requested nearly 10 years ago. The National Careers Council report about the National Careers Service recommended that a lot more needed to be done to provide information available to young people.

Just out of interest, I googled, as a young person trying to find information, about jobs in sustainability and green careers. You get lots of commercial companies telling you things and two websites that were very good. One was in Canada and one was in France. If you look at where young people are going to look for information, where they have the full range of careers, videos and everything else, that could be done quickly and would support schools nationally and help young people to access all this information.

Q220 **Ian Mearns:** Going back many years, to declare an interest, I was chair of the board of Tyneside Careers when it existed. We used to have very good labour market information about our sub-region and wider region. Given that the vast majority of youngsters will be looking for employment opportunities in their own locality, shouldn't that information therefore be done on a regional or sub-regional basis?

**Nick Chambers:** I think that it should be done on both. You should be able to look at what is nationally available and you should be able to look at what is locally available. People might want to move into the region or out of the region and you need to be able to filter it as to what is available for both.

Q221 **Ian Mearns:** This morning we were listening to Radio 4 and there was a representative of the Federation of Small Businesses. The small businesses community provides a huge part of our employment base now. How is it going to be easy to get employment data or labour market data about small businesses, which the FSB this morning said employ 16 million people in this country? It is not to be sniffed at as a significantly important part of the employment base.

**Nick Chambers:** Looking back on the past evidence, there has not been much mention of BEIS as a Department involved in this. I would expect



that BEIS would or should have a lot of that information and make it available.

**Ian Mearns:** That is a massive assumption.

Q222 **Nick Fletcher:** What role do you think that parents have to play in this? We have talked about teachers and children but we have not talked about the parents. Is there something that teachers could do with parents that would mean that they pass the information on and they involve the parents in the future? Obviously there will be some children in disadvantaged backgrounds. We will talk later on today where it is more difficult, especially for children in care, maybe. If we involved parents who were there, available and interested, it would give more resources to the ones whose home life might not be as stable. Do you think that we should be using parents more in the career of the children?

**Anthony Barnes:** Much more, and I would like to point to some good work that is going on. The Careers and Enterprise Company has just published a resource called "Talking Futures", which is a guide to helping parents have conversations with their children about careers. It is a missed opportunity if we do not engage parents and carers more extensively.

This is going way beyond lip service about informing them or just loose language about involving them. We need to build parental capacity. We know that the more disadvantaged students that we want to help may have parents who have no experience of apprenticeships or higher education. Their school histories may have been traumatic so they are not great at coming into school to attend events.

If we can give more support to enable schools to work out a sort of co-construction philosophy, where the formal inputs that the school provides or the college provides is complemented by the work that parents do when they take their children to careers fairs or pick them up from work experience of whatever. It is an important area that we need to do more on.

Q223 **Anna Firth:** This is a follow-on, Anthony, to your evidence. First, just as a point of detail on the figures, your written evidence states that 719 schools and colleges have so far achieved the Quality in Careers Standard, and a further 472 are working towards it. So that we have some context around those figures, what proportion of all schools and colleges does that represent and how could that be increased?

**Anthony Barnes:** Probably just about a third. Certainly, recovering from the covid pandemic, the numbers are starting to pick up again. Schools and colleges tell us that the biggest obstacles to their participation are time and money. In our submission we did put in a proposal for some development funding to enable schools and colleges to participate in the Quality in Careers Standard. That would certainly help. This is always a dilemma, is it not? You can get the first third of people and organisations



to get involved, but how do you get the rest on board? It is about having a joined-up system, with the Careers and Enterprise Company, Gatsby Foundation, Quality in Careers Standard—all those key organisations working together to try to raise the profile.

We also have another powerful weapon in the young people themselves, who, as the Chair said, want more and better careers advice. If we listen to learners a lot more, we can start to design systems that meet their needs. I think that young people increasingly will be reflecting issues that perhaps we have not given so much attention to in careers work up to now—things like the greening of careers education and guidance. Young people expect to have information, advice and help with sustainable living and working in the future. There will be issues like that that we need to address. I think that young people will also say that they need help in the school holidays and at weekends. The system is not great at providing that help outside term time. That is another issue to think about.

**Q224 Anna Firth:** A third is a good start, but what is the actual strategy to move from a third to two thirds and then ultimately to all schools following this standard?

**Anthony Barnes:** The strategy is multi-pronged. One issue is that we are publishing good practice case studies on the Quality in Careers Standard website. They are regularly updated. We have just put on one that is the first PRU in the country to get the Quality in Careers Standard. We use that as a way of encouraging others.

We have 12 awarding bodies that are assessed and accredited. They have to renew it every three years and they have annual checks as well. On the whole they are charities, private companies and education services from local authorities. They do much more than just the Quality in Careers Standard, but what they see is that the Quality in Careers Standard complements their other offer, whether they are providing careers advisers, providing an education business link facility or developing CEIAG resources. They are part of our foot soldiers to make it better known.

Last year we had some video conferences that attracted quite a lot of schools and we have more planned for this year. We are doing what we can and we are very grateful to the DfE, which does provide us with some contribution towards our running expenses, but we could do with more funding. I will put that on the table.

**Q225 Anna Firth:** For the next question perhaps I could hear from others as well. What impact do you find that the availability of the Quality in Careers Standard has on school or colleges' careers provision? Do you find it a helpful benchmark and aspiration and how does that manifest itself?

**Jo Sykes:** Can I answer that one? At Co-op Academies Trust we are 100% behind the Quality in Careers, and our expectation is that by July





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2024 all of our academies, primaries and secondaries will have achieved the benchmark. In terms of secondaries, 90% have achieved it so far and 50% of our primaries are doing it this year. We are absolutely fully behind the Quality in Careers award. It is a thorough and rigorous process and it rubber-stamps what you are delivering. I always say it is about the outstanding provision. Yes, it is quite an experience and you have to be highly organised and have all your evidence. It prepares you well for Ofsted as well when that is coming up, but it just endorses that you are delivering a quality programme. It is checked every three years as well, so it is continual. It is not that you get the award and then you are left to do it; it is continual.

Q226 **Anna Firth:** Thank you, that is good to hear. Does anyone else want to add to that or give a different perspective?

I would like to go on now to look at the Baker clause. We have heard from multiple sources now that many schools are still not complying with the Baker clause. I would like to know from all of you why you think that is and what more needs to be done to ensure that schools do comply.

**Jo Sykes:** I am happy to go with this one as well. The provider access legislation that has just come out, as from January 2023, should help because it replaces the Baker clause, in that it makes it statutory that students have to have six encounters from year 8 right the way through to year 13. For all the career enthusiasts out there, it is perfect because it raises the profile of careers, it raises the expectation and it provides absolute clarity as to what the expectation is in school. There is a timeframe for when all the employer encounters have to happen or whether it is with FE, HE and so on—all the providers. Again, it is helping that development of careers. It is called the PAL—another acronym—and it is welcome in the career world.

**Nick Chambers:** We have heard before about the perverse incentive on schools that if children leave, the school loses money. That is a key issue. Schools are now required to list the careers leader on their website. It has been suggested that they should also publish their careers strategy on there and that might help make it a bit more visible and easy thing to be done that does not involve legislation, that schools could do quickly and easily and it would show a bit more visibility of this area.

**Anthony Barnes:** One of the things that we can do is include it in the careers leader training—the importance of getting this right, access to providers. We also now have an emerging group of strategic careers leaders who work for multi-academy trusts. Training has started for them. Again, they will be key players in making sure that people understand what the requirement now is and can fulfil it. In the Quality in Careers Standard, when we are relicensing awarding bodies, one of the things that we ask of the schools that are appearing before us and of the staff in the awarding body is how they assess that this is being met and not just paying lip service to it. That is important.



Going forward, careers hubs will have an important part to play in this. However, as ever, as Nick has just said, it is the way that schools are funded that makes it very difficult for them to perhaps be as open to other providers as they should be.

**Q227 Anna Firth:** We have already heard a bit about the Skills and Post-16 Education Act coming into force this month, which is very positive, but in 2021 this Committee published a report on white pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. In that report the Committee recommended that schools that are not complying with the Baker clause and are not complying going forward with the Skills and Post-16 Education Act should be labelled or categorised as “requires improvement”. Do you think that there needs to be more of an enforcement stick to make sure that schools are fully complying with their obligations to really push home the importance of careers in schools?

**Anthony Barnes:** Ofsted, in its submission to this Committee inquiry, said that its inspection framework does now address the Baker clause. Inspectors will ask that question if it does not appear.

**Ian Mearns:** It did take some convincing to get to that stage, though.

**Anthony Barnes:** It did, yes. Because Ofsted inspections are not that frequent, it does not address this issue of keeping your eye on the ball and continuing to hammer it home, does it? We want continuous improvement and that is where the other key players need to step up.

**Anna Firth:** Thank you. Jo, do you have any observations on that point?

**Jo Sykes:** Yes, I agree with what has been said. It should be statutory because you would expect Ofsted to refer to it because it reflects the national agenda. Again, we are raising the profile of careers, so it needs to be talked about. If we are saying it is statutory, we need to reflect that through Ofsted.

**Chair:** Can I bring in Flick on the subject of disadvantaged people?

**Q228 Mrs Flick Drummond:** Witnesses in a previous Committee session told us that one of the biggest barriers for disadvantaged children is the lack of aspiration and the lack of knowledge about the system within family and friends to explain it to them. Disadvantaged students are much less likely to receive careers support than their peers. What more needs to be done so that schools can support these pupils?

**Nick Chambers:** I may argue that it is often not a lack of ambition, it is a narrow ambition. A lot of children have very high ambitions. To be a first division footballer or a model, if we made it, is a great ambition, but it is a very, very narrow ambition. What we find, and the work of the OECD backs this up, is that children from more disadvantaged backgrounds have a narrower range of aspirations, often based on who they see and who is around them. The whole social capital, the whole bit about whether people see people who are in apprenticeships—we need to



do a lot more to broaden those horizons so that whatever background you come from, you see a range of people.

If you are from an affluent, middle-class family, you are surrounded by lots of people from different professions. That is the norm. That is your social capital, that is who you see around you, whereas in those more challenged schools, it is not. The narrative is about broadening horizons and showing why it is relevant to them. It is not saying, "You shouldn't aspire to that, but you should also look at this and you should look at that and look at that".

Q229 **Mrs Flick Drummond:** How would you put that into practice?

**Nick Chambers:** I would give all schools a chance to meet people from all different backgrounds doing all different careers so that children can meet people first hand and be inspired, from apprentices to CEOs, and we should be able to do that either in person or virtually. That should be a right for all our young people.

Q230 **Mrs Flick Drummond:** Would you support the introduction of specific careers programmes for disadvantaged pupils, and specialist training for careers advisers?

**Jo Sykes:** Could I come in? A lot of our Co-op academies are in disadvantaged areas, so we have a lot of disadvantaged students. However, in our 2020 year 11 leavers, we had 1.7% NEETs, which is way below the national average. It is about what I said previously about that career programme and that benchmark 3 about addressing the needs of every single pupil in your school. It is about having a layered approach. One size does not fit all in careers. You cannot roll out a blanket career programme; you have to have layered provision. Those students who are disadvantaged might have multiple meetings with the career adviser, they might have different experiences of the world of work. It is all about meeting the needs. Unless you know the needs of your students, it is difficult to achieve.

Schools are data-heavy now. We have lots of data in school but it is about using that data in a way that is going to bring about positive outcomes. For example, one project we lead for disadvantaged students is called Reach and we expose year 9 students to the world of work through business mentoring, employability certificates. We have 300 students who have completed the programme now. It is about doing something different for the students, not always doing the same.

**Mrs Flick Drummond:** Thank you. I was going to ask for an example, so that is great.

**Joe Pardoe:** Can I come in briefly? Big Education schools are also serving disadvantaged communities in London. One thing that we have found is that if it is embedded in the curriculum and it is come back to over and over again, there are more opportunities for students to have a range of different options available to them and to meet people in



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different professions, including our work experience programme. They get two chances to do that in year 10.

It is also important to mention in this topic that the whole curriculum should be engaged in giving students the confidence and skills they need. For us it is oracy, things like being able to collaborate in teams, being able to work independently. If that is not also part of careers guidance, we might not be doing as well as we could.

I would also like to reference a previous point around parental engagement, because that is important and has a massive influence in students' future careers. If you start this in primary—and all of our schools have a primary phase—you have a much longer time to build a relationship with parents to help them to see the different routes available to them.

**Q231 Kim Johnson:** Good morning, panel. My first question is on SEN and careers advice. I would like to direct my first question to Nick because you mentioned earlier about providing high-quality support to all pupils, but we know that we do not have a level playing field. Giving the structural barriers to disabled workers in the workplace, what role do you think careers advice can play in preparing SEN pupils and students for knowing their rights in the workplace and ensuring they are prepared for demanding the reasonable adjustments that they are entitled to by law? To what extent, if any, is there any work being done with trade unions on some of these big issues?

**Nick Chambers:** I am not in a position to answer the trade union question but I will answer your question on SEND. A lot of those children have a fantastic amount of opportunities open to them; they are not often aware of them. More focused support for teachers working in those settings is vital to show them what the range of employment opportunities are. We do need to do more focus in that area to show children what opportunities are available for them.

**Q232 Kim Johnson:** There is one point in showing them what opportunities are available but we know the difficulties that SEN people face in the workplace and demanding the rights that they should be entitled to. Do you think that, in terms of careers advice, providing SEN students and pupils with the information would help them navigate some of those issues in the workplace?

**Nick Chambers:** It would, yes.

**Kim Johnson:** Thank you, Nick. Jo Sykes, would you like to contribute to that question as well?

**Jo Sykes:** Absolutely, and it links up to what we talked about with the disadvantaged students. It is about having that word "provision" and it is also about upskilling your SENCO. Every school has a SENCO and they are incredible people. It is a multifaceted job. Careers has never properly



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been up there as a priority for the SENCOs, so there may be work to be done around that.

You have your SENCO teams as well and it is about upskilling all of that team so that they are aware of what the opportunities are for FE, starting transition in year 9 rather than year 11 so that they can go to the FE providers and experience it, and get the FE providers to come into school. It is about those partnerships and exposing them much, much earlier because of their need and their fears. Also, going back to what we talked about earlier, getting parents involved so that they can understand what the future could look like.

We have three special schools and we work with all of those to see what they are doing regarding supported internships, for example. There are pathways; it is just that we are not always sure what they look like. There is upskilling to do around that area. We offer multiple career advice meetings. Like I say, we have strong partnerships with our FE providers so that they are supporting the students much earlier than your mainstream students. There are a lot of solutions out there to make it much easier for the SEND students.

**Anthony Barnes:** There is a lot going on. The Career Development Institute, in its professional training programmes, put a great deal of emphasis on this about how we can help students with special educational needs. I would like to see much closer collaboration between careers leaders and the SENCO in a school, because they can work together very effectively.

We could also do more to emphasise—when we talk about career management skills, which you tend to think is just about CVs and letters of application and that sort of thing, career management skills go quite deep and they are about self-advocacy skills. To be honest, if you have a disability, you often do have to work very hard to persuade an employer or somebody that you are capable and can do the job. We include in our thinking about the purpose of careers work that it is about resilience, building resilience, cultivating optimism and hope. The whole thing is about not depressing expectations. I would like to see more of that happening in schools.

**Joe Pardoe:** I agree with everything that has been said. Whenever there is an inclusive curriculum, it benefits all students. All students should be knowledgeable about what rights they have in the workplace. If it is embedded in the curriculum and it is revisited over and over again, there are more opportunities to have visibility and mentorship for students who might be from more disadvantaged backgrounds. It is also, as Jo mentioned, around training and upskilling of teachers, and I also liked the point about more collaboration with the careers leads and the SENCO.

Q233 **Kim Johnson:** My follow-on question is around race and race equality. Given the wealth of evidence that shows that black pupils and students attain lower salaries when they leave education compared with their



white peers with equivalent grades, what role do you think careers advice can play in challenging these inequalities and the structural racism that exist as pupils and students enter the labour market?

**Jo Sykes:** It is building up the alumni in schools. We are getting there. There is still a long way to go with that, but calling on past students who have gone into positive roles and positive careers is a very strong thing that will complement your careers programme. Having those positive role models from different career sectors shows students that, yes, they can aspire. "This student came to our school, this student lived in our community and this student is now working for PwC" or BAE or whatever that might be. That is a powerful model to use in schools, using your past students and exploiting those opportunities to say, "You can achieve. There are no barriers here".

Q234 **Kim Johnson:** Does that actually work, Jo, in terms of black students? I am a firm believer that you cannot be what you cannot see. That is a major issue. One of the panel mentioned the lack of social and cultural capital and that is one of the issues that often has an impact on black students gaining jobs at the same level as their white peers.

**Jo Sykes:** I totally agree. We often use, "If you can't see it, you can't be it". We go with the idea that if you can see it, you have a chance to be it. The world of careers has become much smaller in terms of all the virtual opportunities. We can access anything from anywhere, locally, nationally, globally. There are so many opportunities and those role models out there that we can tap into. We are resource heavy at the moment. Careers is a complex and full world and sometimes it is about filtering all of that information to make it meet the needs of the student.

It goes back to benchmark 3, knowing what the needs of your students are, whatever background they come from, but meeting that need if you know what their aspiration is and doing the programme that is fit for purpose.

**Kim Johnson:** Thank you, Jo. Do any of the other panel members want to contribute?

**Anthony Barnes:** One thing that we can do is start younger. We may want to come on to talk about primary in a moment, but certainly, if you are going to challenge stereotyping, if you are going to raise aspirations and build aspirational capability, then you need to start younger. There is some very interesting work happening in primary at the moment.

**Nick Chambers:** The quote from Marian Wright Edelman, who said, "You can't be what you can't see", has a lot of truth to it. At the moment out in London, we are working with the GLA this week for black students in primary schools to see people who are involved in construction and manufacture infrastructure in London. We know that that has a real impact on those students. It is not going to solve all problems but it will



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help if kids from an early age have the self-belief and confidence that people like them can do careers that they see in front of them.

**Joe Pardoe:** I agree that we have to work hard when developing this curriculum provision to make sure that we include a diverse range of role models, so that our students see all of our schools are diverse communities. In School 21 there are 14 different languages spoken.

Alumni have an important role to play, bringing ex-students back so that they can see, "This student came to my school and now they're doing this amazing job or this amazing apprenticeship". That is powerful and peer networks have a huge influence over a student's career choice.

It is also about having high expectations of all students. An example of this in our work experience programme we send students to all different types of industries that they might not have any experience of. I have one example of one of our students from a minority background who went to an investment bank. When she found out about it—it was a local branch of the bank—she was coming home and telling her parents, "I could be an investment banker. Here's how pensions work". She was educating her family. It is important to give opportunities like that to students.

**Q235 Mrs Flick Drummond:** The last group who we have not mentioned yet is children in care, and 41% of care leavers aged 19 to 21—we did an inquiry about this recently—were not in education, employment or training, and that has gone up. What do you think schools and colleges could do more to help young people in the care system to ensure that they have access to high-quality careers advice?

**Jo Sykes:** I keep talking about provision but every school knows who their looked-after children are from when they come in from year 6. From year 7 you are starting early, you are mentoring them, you are giving them bespoke support, you are listening to their needs, you are finding out about their skills and qualities. It is developing that career journey with them right from year 7, ideally from primary, which we will probably be coming on to. However, right from year 7 they are building up that portfolio and an understanding of themselves. Until they understand what their skills and qualities are, they do not know what they can contribute to society. It is unpicking that in a granular form more so than you would do with many of the other students.

It is about that bespoke provision and having skilled mentors in schools. All schools have fantastic pastoral staff, but it is about working with those students on a one to one on a regular basis, in addition to getting the career advice from the qualified career adviser in school. If you have an internal career adviser, they can start working with students much earlier and do that bespoke intervention.

**Q236 Mrs Flick Drummond:** Why are so many children falling through the net, then? Because 41% is a very large proportion. Do any of the other



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panellists have views on this?

**Anthony Barnes:** I do not think that careers is a silver bullet that can solve all society's problems. It is such a big problem. I agree very much with what Jo has said and it is helpful what schools are doing there.

I would just add that a senior leader has responsibility for looking after the children in care. That senior leadership involvement means that you can harness the resources of the school, of the local community and liaise with external agencies to try to make the right things happen but it is, as you say, a very difficult problem.

**Mrs Flick Drummond:** Joe, have you anything to add?

**Joe Pardoe:** Yes, what I mentioned earlier about moving careers education away from the margins of a school and putting it into the heart of a school will mean that people like form tutors, pastoral leaders and other people in a school who will know much more about the backgrounds of every individual student will see it as their job to prepare these students for the future.

Q237 **Chair:** Thank you. You have all more or less pre-empted my question on whether you think primary careers education is important. I can take it as read that the panel does. Nick, I know that you have done a huge amount of work in this area. What would perhaps be a more interesting question to ask is how do you feel that it needs to differ in its targeting and its approach? Across all the key stages in primary, what do you think are the most effective ways of introducing the concept of careers and role modelling so that children can learn from that?

**Nick Chambers:** I can speak to that. Our work started in secondary back in 2012 where we proved in a report, "It's Who You Meet", that the children who had four encounters with employers were four times less likely to be NEET. Of the ones who had no encounters with the world of work, 26.1% ended up NEET. For the ones who had four or more, that dropped to 4.3%. That causal link between who you meet and the chances of being NEET led to the four or more encounters that is now at the heart of Government strategy.

In 2014 we consulted the National Association of Head Teachers, who represent 98% of primary heads to see what role the world of work had, and 87% of them said that it helped motivate and inspire. We then asked young people themselves, primary-aged children, what they thought and what was important to them. We did a study where in 19 countries we had 20,000 children draw a picture of what they wanted to be. They also said what was their favourite subject, how they heard about the job and so on. That very clearly showed that the career choices that children at seven were aspiring to were very similar to 17-year-olds and had nothing in common with the labour market. Half were basing choices on their parents or their family, which you would expect. Fewer than 1% heard about different options by someone coming into their schools. In all 19





countries gender stereotyping was evident everywhere at a very young age.

We then went on to see what we could do on the ground about it. We involved 114 local authorities. We got volunteers from the world of work to go into schools to talk to young people. We had 67,000 children. What we found very clearly was that we had positive gains for those inspiring children about the importance of maths and English. Eighty-eight per cent. saw gains and a further 88% better understood why what they were learning in school was relevant.

Our bit on primary is showing children what is possible, keeping their options open for as long as possible, helping making learning fun, showing them the relevance of the subject, bringing learning to life, which is quite different from secondary. It is more about young people understanding the world that they are in, as they would do with religion or food or history, from a very young age so that they begin to think of their role in this big wide world and they understand it in the way they might go to a museum, but this is exploring the world of work—and then leaving careers advice to secondary but ensuring that children before the age of 10 do not rule out options for themselves because of where they live or what their parents do. We have to keep those options open as long as possible.

Q238 **Chair:** Any views as to the distinction between key stage 1 and key stage 2? Is this largely a key stage 2 activity that you are focused on, or do you think that there are opportunities at key stage 1?

**Nick Chambers:** No, I think from the early stages. ASSET Education Trust at the moment has 14 primary schools. They have done “Drawing the Future” from reception years all the way through. Obviously there are different stages. At very young it is about excitement and about life. As you get a bit older it gets more subject, so it has to be tailored around the different ages of the students, but we think that you should start young and then when you get into secondary get much more specific around careers. Therefore, at all stages but differentiated.

**Anthony Barnes:** At a very early age children have magical thinking: “I am going to be a mermaid when I grow up”.

**Chair:** Or a penguin, as one of my sister’s friends wanted to be.

**Anthony Barnes:** Certainly, when we get to key stage 2 we are getting to the beginnings of linear, rational career thinking. We do need to tap into that and make sure that what we offer is age appropriate. In that key stage 2 phase, children will start to develop stereotyped thinking if we do not hit it on the head. They will have ideas about the social status of different occupations and things. In our efforts to keep their thinking as broad and as open-minded as possible, there is a lot that we can do at key stage 2.



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When we get to the end of key stage 2—this is where there is currently a lot of work going on—schools are thinking about the transition from primary to secondary. What we can do to build transition skills and confidence is very much a year 5, year 6 issue. I certainly back up what Nick is saying about the importance of providing experiences and experiential learning with that age group, and doing things that are not within subject boundaries, more topic-based inquiry or project-based work is a good way of learning.

If I could say briefly, in the Quality in Careers Standard, six or seven of our awarding bodies do have primary awards. What we are doing is offering an endorsement scheme where if they meet our criteria they will have the backing of the Quality in Careers Standard. The Quality in Careers Standard is owned by a consortium that includes professional associations like NAHT, Association of Colleges, including sixth form colleges, ASCL. Particularly with NAHT, which has a strong primary focus, what we would like to do—and we have been having some discussion with the Department for Education about this—is, when all six or seven get through, convert their awards into a national standard for primary.

The criteria that we currently use are quite illuminative. One of the key things, as Nick has referred to, is about inspiration. We need to inspire young people and children at that age. We do also think that it needs to be hard-headed and backed up by some rigorous support and thinking, not just wishy-washy stuff.

**Q239 Chair:** It is interesting that you mentioned the role of the NAHT there, because in my experience, what I have seen in my local primaries is that when the head takes an interest in careers education in the primary space, that is when you tend to see the exciting work. I have seen some brilliant work going on in my local primaries where the head has taken that interest and that lead. However, because you do not have the same subject specialists or career specialists in the primary level, it needs that leadership input in order to make it happen.

**Anthony Barnes:** Indeed. Definitely.

**Chair:** Jo, you were nodding there, but you also mentioned that a number of your schools had achieved that mark.

**Jo Sykes:** Absolutely. I am passionate in developing the careers-related learning in primary rather than CEIAG. We started on this journey two years ago so we now have career leads in every primary school and we have career-linked governors in every school. They all have development plans, they all have a programme, they are all putting it on to their website. We are following the Gatsby model. We have looked at the benchmarks and we have altered them so that they make sense to primary schools. Working with our sponsor, the Co-op group, we have developed a programme from early years right the way through to year 13. We have just launched the primary. In early years, as has been said, it was all around role play, dressing up, having fun around careers,



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careers that they have been exposed to. As they go through school, it is exposing them to careers that they do not know about.

It is hard to measure impact in primary because you do not have destination data, you do not have Compass audits. However, you can do aspiration audits with your students. We do it in year 3 and year 6. Hopefully by year 6 you do not have students wanting to be a penguin, for example. You might have fewer wanting to be Premier League footballers. That is a way of them starting to understand what their place in the world could look like.

**Chair:** Thank you. Anything to add, Joe, before I go on?

**Joe Pardoe:** Yes, briefly. I completely agree that the earlier we start this work, the more opportunities we will have to engage students in the range of options that they have available to them.

Everyone has talked about the explicit work that schools can do to raise aspirations, by bringing in role models who work in careers so that students do not just want to be penguins or mermaids. However, there is work to be done within the curriculum. All of our primary schools plan projects with employers and with outside organisations from a really young age. They are not only getting that explicit careers guidance; they are interacting with professions from a young age more informally.

Q240 **Andrew Lewer:** Nick, focusing a little more on some of your own work rather than your observations about the wider sector, in 2020 you reached 67,000 children across 370 schools through the Primary Futures programme that you and your team ran. What impact do you feel that that particular programme had and are there any plans to expand it?

**Nick Chambers:** Where we did pre and post evaluation, that looked at attitudinal changes of the children to learning and their motivations to learn, particularly around maths, English and science. In terms of expansion, we launched Primary Futures with the NAHT. In fact, it was so long ago, the Secretary of State at the time was Nicky Morgan, who helped us launch it. Since then, we have had something like 9,000 teachers sign up. We have had over 2,500 primary schools doing activities already, probably impacting over half a million primary-aged children. In total with our work in secondary, we have had about 3 million encounters with the world of work. Our aim is to scale that, using technology, to enable schools to connect directly with volunteers from the world of work and then provide resources, particularly through the NAHT, as Robin Walker said. Primary schools are quite different from secondary schools. We are not saying that you do not need it in secondary, but in primary it is that integration into the curriculum.

For instance, in your constituency, as I am sure you know, later this week in one of the schools, Hollymount, they are doing things in year 6 where they are bringing in people to excite them about maths and to show what is the point of maths to a young person so that they can say, "It's not



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just my teacher saying it is important; I can understand how it relates to me". Our intention is to ensure that every primary school, of which there are 16,000, has access to that.

**Q241 Andrew Lewer:** Broadening out to everybody on a specific but different issue, in June the DfE put out a tender for £3 million to support primary schools in disadvantaged areas to develop their careers programmes. What are your views about the impact that will have and do you think it is enough? Do you think that it is enough in the sense of competing pressures for scarce resources, rather than the platitudinous response, "No, it's not enough, We'd like more money"? What do you think the impact of the £3 million will be?

**Anthony Barnes:** The £3 million project is targeted on certain areas. The first thing is that if it is successful we would like to see it extended nationally. There is always an issue around: is careers education and guidance just for those who are in need or are deficient in some way, or is it for everyone? We would like it to be universal.

The benefits will be in terms of young people having greater aspirational capability and not having limits set on their horizons, challenging stereotyping, creating opportunities for children. You can create opportunities in the primary school. There are lots of roles that pupils can perform in a primary school and that is an early experience of having a career, being selected to do it and being evaluated for it. There is a lot more we could do.

**Joe Pardoe:** Money is always really helpful when trying to do anything in schools. It often creates time and space to do this work, but it needs to go alongside the training and support and needs to be driven by the leadership. Money alone will not make the difference.

**Jo Sykes:** Funding is absolutely welcome. Again, going back to all those career enthusiasts out there, it is like the provider access made statutory. Yes, it is starting to happen now in primary school, so it is a stepping stone. It is absolutely welcome. I think most importantly what primary schools need is the same transparency as secondary schools in terms of benchmarks, which I did mention earlier, because that gives them the framework. It is a new landscape for primary schools and for primary teachers. There will be some concern over it, another thing to do; however, if it is done in the right way and it is progressive and it is upskilling staff, I think it is going to be phenomenal. We do need that framework behind it to support them in that roll-out.

**Nick Chambers:** In many ways we welcome this. We have been campaigning with Ministers for eight years about the importance of primary and I think in our time we have had four Secretaries of State, six Ministers and two former Chairs of this Committee go into schools to see how employers can make a difference. We have encouraged the Department—and I know someone from the Department is sitting right behind me, so I probably need to be very careful about what I say—for a



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number of years to move a little bit of its money from across all of careers into primary because we know that is where the evidence is of mass impact. Even 5% of the overall careers budget into primary would make a massive difference.

We have lobbied very hard on the need for a programme. We did apply and were unsuccessful. We were disappointed because we are currently working in all 55 of those areas and we are currently working with more schools than the target of the bid, which I think was 1,200 schools. It is great just covering 8% but that is more about infrastructure and not around delivery. Our focus now is the other 92% and making sure that those teachers can access a massive pool of volunteers, which they can through our Inspiring the Future system, and all the resources which have been developed with the NAHT over the last eight years.

Q242 **Chair:** I want to bring in Kim off the back of that, but just before I do, how well tailored are the Gatsby benchmarks for primary? The need to tweak them when looking at the primary cohort was mentioned. Is that something the panel would broadly agree with, that they can be used but need to be tweaked, or are there changes that you feel would be useful when it comes to looking at the primary space?

**Nick Chambers:** On that, I am fully supportive of the Gatsby benchmarks. We did a version about four years ago called "hallmarks", which were adapted through the NAHT. We looked at a slight variation that looked more at people outcomes, so outcomes around excite and motivate, about linking to the world of work, broaden horizons, help children see a link. That was published. I think it was in the report we wrote for Teach First and CEC. We wrote two reports on primary, and I think we included "hallmarks of success" in both of them, which is similar to the Gatsby but more focused on young people and tailored for the need of primary schools.

**Anthony Barnes:** I am very pleased that the Gatsby Foundation still wants to support the work in this area, and I think that probably they will be actively thinking about how they can adapt the Gatsby benchmarks for primary. I am sure that will be a major contribution to the field.

Nick has mentioned another system that has a proven track record. The Career Development Institute has published a career development framework, which will eventually be all age, and guidelines have been written for secondary, tertiary and primary and there will soon be some for adults. They look at outcomes in six areas. I will briefly run through them: growth through life, explore possibilities, manage career, create opportunities, balance life and work, and see the big picture. That is a powerful framework for helping primary schools particularly to get their heads around what is being asked of them and how they can integrate the career learning outcomes with the other learning outcomes that might be part of the work that they are doing, whether it is English, maths, science or whatever. There is a lot of scope there.



Q243 **Kim Johnson:** I want to pick up on the roll-out of careers advice in primary schools. I think we all agree that starting younger is beneficial to students and pupils.

My concern at the moment is the pressure on schools, because we know that there is a major issue in terms of recruitment and retention of staff, particularly in primary schools, and whether you see this as an extra burden. I know there is £3 million available, but what does that equate to per school, and will there be an opportunity for them to recruit the necessary staff or, if staff are going to be moved forward, to buy in support?

I know the three years of pandemic have had a major impact, particularly in trying to recruit agency staff in schools. I am curious how you see it rolling out, whether the £3 million is going to support schools to do that, and whether there is going to be additional pressure on teachers, who are already under significant pressures.

**Anthony Barnes:** It is not possible for us to answer this because we are not part of the project that will be delivering this, like Teach First and the Careers and Enterprise Company. There comes a light-bulb moment when primary teachers realise, "We are doing this anyway. We did not realise because we never called it careers before," and if you can harness that so that it does not seem like extra work, then you are harnessing their enthusiasm, which is a great thing to do.

I also come back to the point I made earlier about secondary, which is that if we had more hooks in programmes of study and curriculum guidance that made doing this careers work an integral part of what you are doing anyway, because it contributes to learning across the curriculum, then, again, it will not appear like yet another bolt-on thing that we are asking teachers to do. Yes, in this project we will see how it unfolds and that is going to be a key thing that they need to address because schools are under a huge amount of pressure, time and funding.

Q244 **Nick Fletcher:** The sixth Gatsby benchmark is the experience of workplaces, yet we have heard that the levels of work experience are very low, with young people often having to find placements themselves with little support from schools. Is this something that we can improve, and how can we improve it? I would like to go to Joanne first, although I welcome all members of the panel.

**Jo Sykes:** What you said is a good point. It upsets me to think that students must find their own placements. It just widens that gap, particularly for disadvantaged students who do not have the network to get those experiences.

I absolutely value work experience but I think we are at the right time now, post-covid, to look at it again. It does not always have to be one week in year 10. It should start from year 7, because it is the experiences of the workplace, rather than the work experience, and it is about building a really fulfilling and progressive programme right from



the very start, all the way through to year 11 or year 13, where those experiences happen in every year, not just in that one week.

However, if schools have the capacity—and by capacity I mean resources and time—to have that one week, because it is incredibly time-consuming and expensive to deliver a one-week work experience, that is fantastic. Students will develop skills during that but the key question is what the learning outcomes of work experience are, and that is what schools need to consider. If they are about getting a deeper understanding of the world of work, if they are about developing employability skills, absolutely. If it is about having a week off timetable, absolutely not.

I had a week's work experience in a secondary and primary school, and when I went to sixth form I had another week of work experience in a primary school and that made me think, "I want to work in secondary schools," so for me it was a valuable experience, because I knew what my skillset was and it was definitely with older children. For some others it is just as important that they have a work experience and they do not benefit from it, and they think, "That is not the sector I want to work in." I absolutely think it is a valuable experience, but I think we need to look towards a hybrid model of delivery, whether it is work safaris, work visits, part of a step-up career week, where you are exploring different mock interviews and the chance to go to a workplace.

There are different ways of working now from what we traditionally did in the past, which was that one-week work experience in half-term six. There are fewer workplaces, there is more need for T-level workplaces, which means that reduces capacity as well. Often schools are competing for the same places in the same week, so there are all sorts of barriers. It is about us looking at this and looking at the solutions of how we can upskill students, giving them that experience, but across the five or seven years of secondary school and post-16, rather than just that one week.

**Q245 Nick Fletcher:** Before I go on to the other members of the panel, you said there was a cost involved in that. Where is the cost?

**Jo Sykes:** Good question. Different schools do it different ways. If you have capacity in school and you have a career co-ordinator—not the career leader—or career adviser, they do a lot of the groundwork in terms of sourcing all the risk assessments, going to the places of work, doing the checks, or you can outsource and pay for that.

At my last school we did not have the budget to do that, so we did it all internally and it is a six-month leadup to get your work experience off the ground. It is very time-consuming but a worthwhile experience, but it is finding that time and resource to make it happen.

**Q246 Nick Fletcher:** Wouldn't the employer do that? Does it have to be the school? I have employed apprentices for many years and I have done the risk assessments as an employer, prior to working in this place.



**Jo Sykes:** You have an employer liability, and I think with work experience you are looking at under 16, so it is different from your apprenticeship route, which is post-16. You must have the risk assessments in place to cover yourself and you also must get parental consent and so on. There is a lot of administration that goes into sorting out a work experience. It is very valuable but we maybe need to look at it differently moving forward.

Q247 **Nick Fletcher:** I keep labouring this point, but I am quite interested in it, because it always comes down to money. Surely if you have done the risk assessments and the method statements once for one child, then they can just be copied for the next child if it is going into the same workplace, doing the same job. Once we have this up and running, then the costs should be reduced for the forthcoming years. Things do change, but the amount that they change is minimal. I would imagine any sensible employer would not put a child anywhere they would be at risk anyway. Especially if you are going into a school, as you did, it is full of children anyway, so the risk is limited there.

**Jo Sykes:** Yes. I see what you are saying. Let us say we have 250 students in year 10, so that is a lot of places you have to source. You will know that annually those places will come and go. It is never a fixed 250 places that you carry forward to the next year. The landscape is continually changing; some drop off and new opportunities come.

If you have that role of co-ordinating work experience, it is incredibly difficult to keep on top of everything, on top of the paperwork, to get all the consent, to get staff out to visit the students while they are on the placement. As you can see it is a massive week for schools, but as I said, the impact of that is you often see the students coming back into school on Monday invigorated and wanting to talk about it. They want to talk about the skills they have developed and the experiences they had—some good, some bad—but they do come back excited about it. You cannot replace that, and I do think it is wonderful, but we must think creatively.

A lot of people are working in a hybrid fashion now, so there are not the places there that used to be there. You cannot send a student on work experience to sit at a computer all day doing it from home, working from home, because that is not developing their skills, but that is reality in terms of the world of work and how it has changed.

I think as educators we just need to be on the front foot and think how we can make it work for our students moving forward in this new landscape, and that definitely has to be a hybrid model. I would love people in my role, careers leaders, to come together to talk about this. Let us see what could make a good step-up week where the students get more than just work experience, and learn about how to apply for jobs, how to have the mock interviews, which are often virtual as well, because everything has changed in terms of that, the assessment centres. There





is so much more to look at and it is a very packed week, but it is exciting to think how it could look in the future. It has changed incredibly.

- Q248 **Nick Fletcher:** Thank you. I love your enthusiasm, by the way. I do share it. It is so important. If we are not smiling and being happy when we are talking about children and careers, then there is something wrong. We must put that into our children, that it is exciting and work life can be fantastic, and we need to get that across to them. It is good to see that. Joe Pardoe, could I come to you?

**Joe Pardoe:** We also think it is important for students not to just have experience of the workplace within school but to go out of the school building and experience the world of work. That has a powerful role in raising aspirations for students.

As Jo Sykes mentioned, it is incredibly difficult. There is a lot of work to do but our leadership values it, so every school has different trade-offs and we put a lot of firepower into our work experience programme.

Something I would add is that with our work experience we did not want it to just be students go to work in a coffee shop for one week. We wanted to plan a rigorous, extended, one afternoon per week, going into an employer to work on a project that we had also planned with the employer, so building our project-based curriculum. I think that is important, because it allows the students to redraft their workplace persona, because every single week they get feedback from their employer and from the pastoral team in school, to develop their workplace skills, etiquette, how they collaborate with those in the workplace.

- Q249 **Nick Fletcher:** Anthony, can I broaden it out a little bit? Do you think it is equally as important for a year 7 to go? The sooner they get in to see a workplace, the better? Do you think that is a good idea? The work experience would be difficult but it would show them, "This is what a factory looks like. This is what a hospital looks like". Do you think that would be worthwhile?

**Anthony Barnes:** Visits, visitors and enterprise-type activities are good for year 7. We have not done work experience for year 7 very much at all but what we have done is a scheme where you took your son or daughter to work day. That was quite illuminating for both the parent and the child.

There is a lot we can do, because what we are harnessing there is experiential learning, which is a powerful way of learning, so all those different mechanisms.

Schools need a bit more support, whether there can be at a local level an organisation that co-ordinates things such as the risk assessments, because you do have to take it seriously, but equally we must not let it get in the way of us being able to do this kind of work between employers and schools because it is so valuable.



Q250 **Chair:** You mentioned that at a local level. Could careers hubs take on part of that role in terms of helping to co-ordinate the support and help schools with some of the legal side?

**Anthony Barnes:** Definitely. Expanding careers hubs across the country and working out what are good roles for them is something they definitely could do to ease the burden on individual schools and colleges.

Q251 **Nick Fletcher:** I am going to move down the questions, because we spent a bit long on the other bits and pieces. Should the statutory duty on schools to provide work experience be reintroduced? Apparently, it was statutory and now it is not. Do you think that should be reintroduced?

**Nick Chambers:** No.

**Nick Fletcher:** That was very simple.

**Nick Chambers:** You asked me a question. No. Work experience started in 1950. We need to reimagine it. The school leaving age of 16 is not that anymore. We are in a very different society. What we need to do is have all young people experience the world of work, as Jo Sykes and Joe Pardoe have said. There is the challenge around exacerbating social inequality. I was talking to a colleague in Sweden the other day where they have just introduced it and the problem they are having is that all the great placements are going to the people who have well-connected parents, and it is the same problem. I think there is a real challenge. The whole work experience needs to be rethought. It is important and it would be great for this Committee to look at it in a bit more detail, whether it is looking at the OECD, who did a study of five countries and found that only really in one did it work well, and that was where there was a lot of investment going in. If you go back to 2010 in this country, we were spending £120 million on work experience when it was mandatory. For all the others, the evidence was a bit lukewarm.

Where there is strong evidence is on job shadowing, and they published a report recently, where people get tasters and they get to experience it. Some of that could be virtual. Through our online we have had about 12,000 volunteers all over the country, so that young people, wherever they are, can be beamed into different parts of the country, because geography is also an important part. Where you are is a fantastic location, in London, but if you are in more rural areas, you have limited jobs. A lot more work could be done with work experience, but it is about the experience of work and ensuring this idea of equality.

When I was a teacher I used to be involved in organising work experience and our research has shown—and Jo said this and is smiling—that people will go out and either come back and say, “That is a job I really want to do” and they get motivated, or they think, “That is a job I do not want to do. I must work hard on something in between.” But they can see why what they are doing at school every day, that the teachers are doing their best to instil and motivate and they think that there is a purpose to do



that. I think we should do that, and it should start young, that experience of the world of work.

Q252 **Nick Fletcher:** Do you think we should incentivise employers to take work placements on?

**Nick Chambers:** It depends if you have a very large budget. A lot of it is about making it easy for employers and making it easy for teachers. Back to Kim Johnson's point, teachers are incredibly busy. If you can make it easy and help them, if you can take away the bureaucracy, they will do it. Most employers here want to help. If you can make it easy—in our system, people volunteer for from an hour a year and sign up and talk to the young person. Otherwise, once you get into the safeguarding, which is absolutely vital, it is complicated. It is time-consuming and expensive. Shouldn't we be looking at a system where we have a lot more young people getting those experiences, but light touch, having people meeting some of you, seeing what you do, some of your researchers, people in your teams? If we had all the money in the world, that would be great, but we do not, so I think it is about using limited resources in the most effective way, and technology has a big part to play in helping to connect employers and schools.

Q253 **Nick Fletcher:** Finally, I want to go to Jo if we have time. Have you found any resistance with employers, or do you have a lot of employers who would engage, from your experience?

**Jo Sykes:** Absolutely. When I started the Reach programme I was connecting every school with a local business and I was inundated with offers and overwhelmed by how many local businesses, small or large, want to support schools. It is part of their CSR, I guess, as well, but they just want to come in. They will take students in and do insight sessions, will do work-related tasks with students, so that they can get a feel of it. I have not found any reluctance at all with getting those connections; it is just the bureaucracy behind it.

Going back to the primary and that benchmark, that experience of the workplace, all primary students go on visits and trips, whether it is to a museum or a zoo, whatever that might look like, and they always say, "Do some prep. Get somebody, get the curator, to talk about their career journey. Get the person who is looking after the animals to talk about how they got that role". There are opportunities throughout everything in education. It is just about seeing them and doing the prep prior to it. It can happen in primary schools as well. It is just about being a bit cleverer about it.

**Chair:** I am going to get through the questions if we can. Are the panel all right with us going slightly beyond half past? We usually try to wrap up these sessions by half past, but if you are all right to continue a little bit, we have a few more questions and you have been so interesting in your answers that you have prompted a lot of supplementaries. I am going to hand over to Ian and ask him if he can clip through some of the



questions.

- Q254 **Ian Mearns:** Joe Pardoe, School 21's Real World Learning projects offer pupils the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time in the workplace. What are the benefits and the downsides of this approach and how has it affected the careers decisions that pupils make?

**Joe Pardoe:** The downside is the amount of work that goes into setting this project up. As mentioned, a lot of the work was up front. Now it is up and running, it is a bit easier to keep it going. We know School 21 is quite unique in terms of its location. It was a start-up school and we were able to put this right in the curriculum from the start.

In terms of the benefits, as I have alluded to already, first, on the benefit to the employers, which adds a little bit to the previous question as well, we often find that the employers want to take our students because our curriculum has enabled them to have the confidence to be in the workplace, to collaborate, to have the oracy tools that they need to communicate effectively. Employers value the young, diverse voices, so if they are planning projects, an example of this would be we had a group of students go to help an organisation to make their recruitment advertisements more appealing to young, diverse people in London, so they benefited from that. Also, the frequency—going out on a regular basis, having it assessed, using the same language we use at schools, collaborating with the employers—means that students get the chance to reflect and redraft themselves as they go through this project.

- Q255 **Ian Mearns:** What was it particularly that allowed you to do that approach in the first place? Were you incentivised or were there some resources available?

**Joe Pardoe:** From my understanding, it was just driven entirely by the leadership, who thought our curriculum should be focused on preparing students for the future.

- Q256 **Ian Mearns:** I think the big question from this is how do we scale that up so that it is available to young people across the country?

**Joe Pardoe:** It is a difficult question. The first thing I would say is I do not know if it could be in its current form, given that it was designed for a very specific school in a very specific context. I definitely think, as I mentioned earlier, rigorously planning work experience as you would plan any curriculum aspect. We do not just send our students off to a workplace. We have planned that project. What is the essential question? What is the end product that the students are going to create? How are they going to exhibit the work? How is it going to be assessed? What feedback mechanisms have we put in place? What reflection tools have we put in place to ensure that students reflect on the experience? Those principles could be applied more widely.

- Q257 **Ian Mearns:** Prior to those placements being provided, how would schools in your trusts currently link curriculum learning to careers, and



what barriers are there to teachers doing this? In other words, making what is available in the curriculum seem like it is relevant to real life.

**Joe Pardoe:** I will start briefly there and then hand over to Jo. Absolutely we want to start building this into our curriculum right from the start, but it is a different way of planning for teachers, to plan with outside experts who are not professional teachers. It does require some training and we have invested a lot of time into that. Training for teachers is the main barrier. Once you have that and support, so that they know, as was mentioned earlier, that what they were already doing can be tweaked slightly to make this more effective, then the teachers are willing to do that.

Q258 **Ian Mearns:** Before I bring the other Jo in, when we are talking about scaling up, we have heard about businesses being enthusiastic to engage in these sorts of projects, but there are an awful lot of businesses out there who have no experience whatsoever of providing it. How are we going to engage them to achieve that scaling up?

**Joe Pardoe:** If I just briefly jump in there again, we spend a lot of our work training our employers and working with them, so they know how to deal with young people. It can be disorientating for an employer to be thrust into an assembly in front of 200 students or told to go to work with three teenagers if they have no experience of it. We wanted to put a lot of support into that, and it is very important.

**Jo Sykes:** This goes back to benchmark 4 and that shifted mindset for teachers. Primary school teachers naturally are brilliant at developing those skills. Secondary school teachers are brilliant at developing subject knowledge. Sometimes there will be that hesitance about when they are going to get time in a very crammed scheme of learning to put careers in. Joe touched on it earlier. It is those opportunities that are transparent. It is not an add-on. You can do it naturally but to do it naturally means you must have that understanding of pathways, routes and opportunities. That is why we need to make more use of our career advisers, and if you have an internal career adviser, they can do that. It is about quality CPD time for careers to make that shift happen.

Q259 **Mrs Flick Drummond:** I have a work experience person coming to me in the summer and I am rather dreading what I am going to get them to do. Maybe you could give me a programme of what I could do; that would be fantastic.

How well do you believe that the Careers and Enterprise Company support schools in fulfilling their provision, particularly through careers hubs and also careers leaders?

**Jo Sykes:** All our academies have accessed the careers leaders training. We are all part of a careers hub. It has been fantastic, because we are a one-stop shop in terms of the creative resources that are on there, the support you are given. From my point of view, as a strategic lead, they are also just a phone call away, where I can ring someone and say, "Can



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I have your opinion on this?" Sometimes it is quite a lonely job in careers, because you are the only one doing it, but to have that infrastructure and the support has been incredible.

They have introduced a trust dashboard now, so I can look at a granular level and see exactly where they are in each of the benchmarks and hold people to account, which is what we are about if we want to improve careers.

They also have the future skills questionnaire, which we rolled out to all our students, so we do that in years 7, 9 and 11 to see what their aspirations and views are on careers within the school. Again, it is accountability; it is fed straight back to the school, and they can see where the gaps are.

We now have Compass+ so it is evolving all the time in terms of the resources. You mentioned earlier the pilot we are doing across directors of careers, across the trusts. Again, we are doing it in two weeks' time for the very first time to peer review. Again, it is great for people in my role because we are going to have colleagues who we can talk through and look at possible solutions or barriers within our own trust and work collaboratively. From a personal point of view, it is absolutely wonderful what they are doing and long may it last.

**Q260 Mrs Flick Drummond:** Great to hear. Joe Pardoe, do you have the same to say?

**Joe Pardoe:** Similar. It is great to have an organisation available that offers this sort of training and helps schools to engage with employers and creates these local networks to work together to solve problems or share best practice.

As a trust we have engaged with the careers leaders training and we will engage further with that, and we have found their resources helpful to ensure that we are meeting all the required things, and we have also used the Compass+ tool to evaluate where we are currently and where we need to go to next.

**Q261 Chair:** Can I perhaps play devil's advocate on that a little bit? One of the things I have heard more widely is that there is enormous variability in terms of the careers hubs, their performance and their level of access to businesses and also to schools. Within your trusts have you seen that variability and what do you think could be done to try to close the gap?

**Jo Sykes:** I feel fortunate because all our careers hubs liaise with the enterprise co-ordinators regularly and they have all been fantastic, so I cannot talk. All I can say is positive about them and how they collaborate and bring local and regional intelligence into schools as well. I can only talk from a positive point of view.

**Chair:** That is good to hear. Nick, any views?



**Nick Chambers:** They have come a long way and it is encouraging that we have moved from 7% to 12% on the benchmarks, although I do think there is a lot more to be done. Primary is very different from secondary and, as you have alluded to, the role of the headteacher there is very important and I would encourage the Committee to think separately about primary to secondary, particularly on your point here about scale. There are 16,000 primary schools, so a model that works for secondary might not work for primary. That is why we built this longline platform designed with all employer bodies and teacher bodies back in 2012 that gave teachers and careers leaders access to volunteers. We want to make it as easy as possible for people to sign up from an hour a year on the platform and for schools.

Looking across to the people on this Committee, we now know that there are 2,700 people who are local to your schools who are willing to go in. If you go on to the virtual you have nearly 13,000, so any of your schools today can go on to the Inspiring the Future website and find and search for people from the world of work, can search by the languages they speak, the subjects they do, whether they have a disability that they are willing to declare, so there is a massive database. Particularly for those smaller companies, a lot of schools, including Joe Pardoe's, rely on databases like that. How can we scale that up so that the careers teacher or a primary school can search this national database, which has now been replicated by other Governments in other parts of the world? The New Zealand Government, for instance, are using it to connect all their schools because they see the value of using technology to do things at scale.

I think there is a training of teachers, which is vital, and the Careers and Enterprise Company are doing a fantastic job on that, but there is also the delivery. A lot of the delivery is done by local organisations, national organisations and there is no one in the system for delivery, as such. The training is fantastic, and infrastructure, but it is around delivery. It is a bit like saying we are going to train people to be chefs, which is brilliant, but the proof of the pudding is having meals for people to eat and having the ingredients. The training, the quality is all good, but at the end of the day what does it look like for young people? It is only part of the solution and as you heard before we used to invest a lot more money in careers. If you look at the reasons why other Governments are doing it, they are looking at their economy, they are looking at their skills gap, they are looking at what they need, they are looking at the talent pipeline and they are thinking that they need to think long term from an economic point of view that if they want a successful economy, they need to start ensuring that they get the right people with the right skills and knowing about these careers.

We have made some progress as a country, but I would argue that we need to make a lot more and we need to make it a lot faster.

Q262 **Chair:** Briefly, which countries should we look to in terms of who are



doing the best job in that space?

**Anthony Barnes:** Have a look at Finland.

Q263 **Chair:** That always seems to be the case. Whatever we look, at they say, “Look at Finland”.

**Anthony Barnes:** They are a shining light in the careers world. The Careers and Enterprise Company is maturing well as an organisation, so it has moved from concentrating on Gatsby benchmarks 5 and 6 to working across the piece now, which is helpful. I think they will hold careers hubs accountable and they will see it as a reflection on their own performance.

From a Quality in Careers Standard perspective, they are becoming very good team players. We have KIT—keeping in touch—meetings with them over quality assurance issues. We were consulted about the careers leaders training programme as well, so that is one of their success stories. We hope they will continue to make recommendations for new policy areas to move into and continue their careers leaders training and the work they are doing in training for these central strategic careers leads, working in MATs and hubs.

Perhaps the final thing to say is the need to get a toehold into initial teacher training, so that teachers coming into the profession have this understanding about what we are trying to achieve in careers and work-related learning.

**Nick Chambers:** In terms of countries, Canada does a lot of great things, New Zealand do a lot there now, running out a programme to all primary schools, having done the “Drawing the Future” programme, and some of the Nordic countries are doing some great examples. Nearly all are now beginning to look at primary as well, which is encouraging.

Q264 **Ian Mearns:** We have heard that the National Careers Service is not targeted at or used by young people but young people will come across it as they are looking at careers issues on the web. Do you think that the remit of the National Careers Service should be extended so that young people could find it inclusive for their use?

**Anthony Barnes:** Yes. The National Careers Service is not that visible to young people. That is a real issue. When we talked earlier about the need for labour market information that is locally relevant, dynamic, interactive, clearly with technology these days this is something that the National Careers Service could add to what they currently provide in the way of labour market information. They are not in favour of merging organisations. Sir John Holman talks about having strategic frameworks so that organisations know their part within the strategic framework. If we could work on the remit of the National Careers Service to make it more helpful to young people, that would be tremendous.





**Nick Chambers:** I alluded to the National Careers Council. Back in 2012, which is 10 years ago, Ministers called together a group to look at what could be done to improve careers, and I was fortunate to be on that. One of its key recommendations is that the National Careers Service should expand its work to young people and provide independent and trusted advice and improve its careers offer and that it should also be overseen by a body of experts from employment, from careers, from education, from communications, and that very little of its money—less than 1%—was being spent on young people. There was a very clear recommendation on that.

Q265 **Ian Mearns:** It is only 11 years.

**Nick Chambers:** If you look at it, they had £18 million a year, give or take, with £100 million to start with, and they have probably spent about £800 million, so one might argue that even with their £70 million budget they should be able to produce fantastic videos. We run the icould website, which has some great videos, but when you look at what people such as BBC Bitesize have done and other organisations with really very little money, if we are going to have a national body funded by the Government, for that to be able to provide all schools with fantastic data would be a very cost-effective and easy thing to do. Yes, it has only been 10 years, so hopefully in another 10 years we may be slightly further forward.

Q266 **Ian Mearns:** Anthony, you have already mentioned bringing organisations together. Would you therefore not be in favour of bringing the careers provision under a single body to replace the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service, or would you rather keep them separate?

**Anthony Barnes:** I think keep them separate. I rather like this idea of the framework, because if you create a single body that is going to orchestrate the whole thing, that single body then becomes a player in its own right and that often muddies the water and creates more problems than it solves. This is just a personal opinion and others will have other views, I am sure.

Q267 **Ian Mearns:** Do others have any views?

**Nick Chambers:** I do think you need variety in the system, particularly in delivery, because a lot of what has gone on in terms of innovation generally is led by small, innovative charities responding to local and national needs. If you have a large, monolithic organisation you do not necessarily get the innovation, and the costs of that are a lot higher.

We have seen before from Sir John Holman and others this idea of a framework that covers careers and if you go back years BEIS were much more involved in this space. They were involved in enterprise from the days you know, and yet we are talking just about DWP and DfE. With the New Zealand Government, they did the full survey of labour market needs and then projected it and that is why they started on primary,



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because they looked at primary and secondary schools and they found there was nothing in common and they thought that they had to invest properly. To look at the projected needs of economy as a cross-government thing rather than this Department and that Department.

Q268 **Ian Mearns:** Would it be better if the different Departments were working together in a more joined-up way? That is old school, isn't it?

**Anthony Barnes:** It would definitely help. I remembered one thing, which is that the National Careers Service is looking at its website and is consulting the field about things that we would like to see.

Q269 **Ian Mearns:** They might even be watching this today.

**Anthony Barnes:** Fingers crossed.

Q270 **Ian Mearns:** Okay. Anyone else want to comment? Jo Sykes and Joe Pardoe have not said anything

**Joe Pardoe:** Just a broader point around this idea of having online web tools and resources available for young people. The school day is finite, there is only so much we can do in the time we have with our students and there are a lot of competing pressures, so having resource available for students outside of the school day to explore their own career and what they want to be in the future would be helpful.

**Jo Sykes:** Nothing further to add. I have worked with the NCS, and it is incredibly useful at key stage 4 in terms of their skills assessment. Anything lower than key stage 4 students would struggle with the language used on the website, so it is not something I would use with younger students. There is work to be done in that space. I just see CEC and the NCS as totally different bodies in how they work with schools. If we are to develop a common strategic framework and Careers Leaders are a key part of that external advisory group, that would be wonderful.

Q271 **Chair:** Finally, Anthony, you have called for the introduction of a dedicated careers premium grant to improve the standards of careers education. At what level do you think such a grant should be set and what type of activities would you want to see it spent on?

**Anthony Barnes:** From a Quality in Careers Standard perspective the awarding bodies charge typically £1,500 to provide the support, resources and assessment of schools against the standard. For primary schools, that is about £850, so it is cheaper. Once a school has the award, then it lasts for usually three years—one of the awarding bodies does for two years—so that is the equivalent of £500 a year on each school just for that. We put in our submission a figure of around £3 million a year if we had all schools onboard all at once, which is probably a bit far-fetched.

There is also a case for thinking of a careers premium grant for schools as being used for other purposes, because as we have said this morning there is quite a lot of development work that still needs doing and schools



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are strapped for cash. It is something that could be applied more widely, but it would certainly be very welcome to get a bigger take-up of the Quality in Careers Standard. You would expect us to make the argument that it would pay for itself, if it reduces students dropping out, making poor choices, so hopefully that would be a powerful argument.

Q272 **Chair:** I have a supplementary. Should schools receive dedicated funding for careers provision and, if so, should it replace or be in addition to funding provided through the CEC? I presume from your answers earlier you believe it should be in addition.

**Anthony Barnes:** I think it needs to be in addition, yes.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. I am sorry if we have overrun slightly and apologies if that has held you up. I think it is because the answers have been so interesting and the questions have been inspired by them. Thank you very much for your evidence today. It is much appreciated.