



Youth Unemployment Committee

Corrected oral evidence: Youth unemployment

Thursday 24 June 2021

10.10 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Shipley (The Chair); Lord Baker of Dorking; The Lord Bishop of Derby; Lord Clarke of Nottingham; Lord Davies of Oldham; Lord Empey; Lord Hall of Birkenhead; Lord Layard; Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall; Lord Storey; Lord Woolley of Woodford.

Evidence Session No. 16

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 162 - 169

Witnesses

I: Oli de Botton, Chief Executive, Careers & Enterprise Company; Ryan Gibson, National Careers Champion, Academies Enterprise Trust; Professor Sir John Holman, Emeritus Professor, University of York.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on www.parliamentlive.tv.

Examination of Witnesses

Oli de Botton, Ryan Gibson and Professor Sir John Holman.

Q162 The Chair: Welcome to this evidence session of the Youth Unemployment Committee. The meeting is being broadcast live via the parliamentary website. A transcript of the meeting will be taken and published on the committee website. You will have the opportunity to make corrections to that transcript where necessary. Could I, on behalf of the committee, welcome our three witnesses, Oli de Botton, Ryan Gibson and Professor Sir John Holman, to our first session this morning? I am going to ask them just to say a word or two about themselves.

Oli de Botton: Good morning. Thank you for having me today. I am the incoming chief executive of the Careers & Enterprise Company. We are a national body supporting schools to deliver careers education, 11 to 18. I have just left my post as co-founder and head teacher of School 21 in Stratford, east London, a 4-to-18 free school designed to deliver a curriculum of the head, the heart and the hand.

Ryan Gibson: Good morning, everyone. I am the national systems leader for careers at Academies Enterprise Trust. AET is one of the largest multi-academy trusts in England. We have 32,000 young people in our care in 58 schools, located right across England. Prior to joining Academies Enterprise Trust, I led the Gatsby pilot in the north-east and supported the national rollout of the Gatsby benchmarks. At the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, I led North East Ambition, which was a network of 140 schools and colleges, bringing together careers leaders to help support the implementation and achievement of those benchmarks.

Professor Sir John Holman: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for having me along. I am senior adviser in education to the Gatsby Foundation, and independent adviser on careers guidance to the Department for Education. Prior to that, I was a head teacher and then founder of the National STEM Learning Centre at the University of York. I continue as an emeritus professor at the University of York.

The Chair: Thank you very much to all of you for giving your time to the committee this morning. We have a number of questions that we would like to address to you. Mine comes first and goes to everybody; it is a general question about future work demands. The country is going to require a lot more young people to enter green jobs, the digital sector, the healthcare sector and others. I wonder whether current careers education, information, advice and guidance systems effectively inspire and inform young people about routes to work, particularly in those sectors but in others. In other words, are we doing as much as we should to plan both for the needs of individuals and their potential but for the needs of the country in the future?

Oli de Botton: We are seeing encouraging evidence of improvement in our careers system as part of a 21st-century, modern system that is built on employer engagement, the dynamism of careers leaders and local collaboration. This is leading to benefit primarily to young people, but increasingly, to answer your question, to employers too. There is more to do but it is just worth highlighting some positive, encouraging evidence of progress.

This year, for the first time, we were able to look at the destinations of those young people in relation to the quality of careers education that they were receiving. There was a positive correlation between careers education, as assessed by the Gatsby benchmarks, and young people going into positive destinations, so, in other words, not being NEET. That was around a 10% reduction in those rates in all schools and around a 20% reduction in those schools serving the most disadvantaged.

That same evidence from the same data suggests that there is a relationship between the quality of careers education and those young people going on to apprenticeships.

Finally, and importantly, the employers that we are working with are saying that their engagement with schools is helping to meet their skills needs, which is quite an exciting development.

How is this happening? There has been enormous goodwill from employers. You may have heard from the likes of Tesco and BAE Systems before at this Committee, which we have worked with. There has always been some great practice involving schools, guidance professionals, providers and teachers.

There are things that are moving us in the right direction now. First, we have employers engaging at scale and with co-ordination. They are inspiring. They are highlighting routes into work, including apprenticeships. They are articulating the skills that they need and are increasingly helping to add employment-related learning to the curriculum.

Secondly, the profession of careers leaders is becoming more dynamic. They are almost the unsung heroes. They are now more senior and are receiving more training. Then we have a nice dynamic of sharing of best practice, driving quality locally and sharing information about local labour market trends.

Of course, there is lots to do. Where I sit in my new role, I want to ensure that every young person has the right support to find their best next step, is aware of all the high-quality routes, with technical routes amplified, and is able to thrive in a destination based on skill and aspiration, not circumstance and stereotype. There has been progress, which is linked to employers and schools working together at scale, with co-ordination, and sharing a vision of 21st-century careers education.

Ryan Gibson: I am sure that the panel is aware of previous research by the World Economic Forum that says that young people's careers aspirations have little in common with the jobs needed in the future of the economy, and that sometimes young people are unable to understand the jobs that are going to be needed in the future—it is difficult for them to imagine. I recognise that in our schools, but what I would say, agreeing with Oli, is that we are getting better at this.

The framework of the Gatsby benchmarks has inspired that. They put a focus on labour market information and intelligence, in benchmark 2, and on promoting and exposing students to a variety of progression routes, in benchmark 7. They are also exposed to a range of encounters with employers and workplaces, in benchmarks 5 and 6. Integrating careers learning into the curriculum is a feature of benchmark 4.

Schools are now working much more closely with local enterprise partnerships, inspired in part by the approach that we developed at the North East LEP, when we were leading the Gatsby benchmark pilot. That approach has been taken forward in the current careers hub model, which means that schools are able to link into networks with employers through hubs and into economic information and intelligence through LEPs.

The point that I would make builds on what Oli was saying. It is one thing to inform students and another to inspire them. At AET, the motto of every one of our academies is, "Find your remarkable", but the mission is to inspire young people to choose to live a remarkable life. We know that children almost need to see it to be it. They have to be exposed to pathways. We focus on promoting a range of pathways, ensuring that students have encounters, opportunities and experiences with employers, apprenticeship providers, training organisations, universities, entrepreneurs and community organisations, so that they can make more informed decisions about their future.

This year alone, recognising what Oli said, we have created a series of lessons in partnership with employers, looking at what has to be taught in the curriculum and how that can be brought to life with employers. We have done a lot more with growth sectors, getting leading digital employers—for example, LinkedIn, Vodafone and ForwardPMX—working directly with our students through assemblies, workshops and mentoring.

There have been great strides forward, but there is more to do, particularly on the inspiration front.

Professor Sir John Holman: We have heard from Oli de Botton and Ryan Gibson that real progress is being made in careers education. If we had been doing this five years ago, we would not really have been able to make a statement about that, partly because we could not measure it. We are now in a position where we can measure the inputs into careers guidance that schools are making, using the Gatsby Careers benchmarks.

We can compare them with the outcomes and show that things are getting better, so I would agree with that.

I would add that you cannot do careers guidance in isolation from everything else. Almost uniquely, careers guidance is an activity that happens right across the school or college and right across the curriculum. As for inspiring people about future careers and future areas in the economy, the people who can really do that are, above all, science, mathematics and design teachers. This is a whole-school activity. This is why the role of the careers leader, integrating and orchestrating all this across the school, is so important.

I would like to develop a point that Ryan touched on, which is about labour market information—LMI. It is very important that we get high-quality and up-to-date labour market information into schools and colleges, so that young people can tell which areas of the economy are growing and which are contracting. It needs to be locally nuanced. Locally nuanced labour market information is what we need. Some schools are very good at doing it, and one of the Gatsby benchmarks requires it, but we have quite a long way to go to get the practice of the best schools happening in all schools in respect of receiving, interpreting and presenting locally nuanced labour market information.

The Chair: Thank you for that and for the very full replies, which we will explore in greater detail in further questioning.

Q163 **Lord Hall of Birkenhead:** Good morning. This question is mainly for Professor Sir John, but others may wish to join in as well. It is really going more deeply into what you have all been addressing about the Gatsby benchmarks. Where have they been successfully implemented, where are the problem areas and what needs to be done? I am thinking particularly about addressing the needs of each individual; maybe that is an issue that you would like to talk about.

You have talked about the evidence that these benchmarks are working. Not all of them are working yet to the degree that you might want. I would quite like to hear your views on that. What challenges do you see in pushing this across all schools in the national rollout?

Professor Sir John Holman: The Gatsby benchmarks are a set of measures of what world-class careers guidance in schools and colleges looks like. They were developed by means of a study of six leading countries, extensive literature review and in-depth piloting in the north-east of England from 2015 to 2017. We have a measure, for the first time, of what world class looks like. We can also measure how far schools and colleges are going in adopting these benchmarks, of which there are eight. Not only can we see how they are doing on those eight, but we can drill into them and see how well schools and colleges are doing on each one; for example, on benchmark 1, how well are they doing in the sub-parts of that?

This gives us granular information about what schools are doing, which we simply have not had before. It means that we can measure what is lying behind your question, which is how schools are getting on. Not only that but we can see what kind of schools do well and what kind need more support, and which benchmarks they are finding hardest to implement.

If I could just touch briefly on which are hardest, one of the most difficult for schools to reach is benchmark 7, which concerns encounters with further and higher education. It may be that, at some stage in the discussion, we want to talk a little more about that. This enables the Careers & Enterprise Company to target support on those areas that schools find the hardest.

When we look at how schools and colleges are doing, we find that, as you would expect, there is regional patchiness. We know what needs to be done to improve the number of benchmarks that schools are reaching. Schools need to have a good careers leader with the backing of the head teacher. If they are in one of the regional schools hubs run by the Careers & Enterprise Company, they do better. If they have an enterprise adviser, they do better. Across all schools, about 3.75 benchmarks are being completely met. There are eight of them, so that might not sound terribly good, but remember that this is world class and represents tremendous improvement on the 1.87 that schools met at the beginning.

Just to conclude, there is still a lot of work to do in getting every school up to perfect on every benchmark. We may well never get there, because that is an exceptionally high standard, but the way to get there is through supporting careers leaders and getting every school or college into a hub and into an enterprise adviser network.

Lord Hall of Birkenhead: Is there a need for compulsion in this, or is it about steady progress, using all the levers that you have at the moment that show where it is working?

Professor Sir John Holman: I am strongly against making the Gatsby benchmarks compulsory in the sense that there are sanctions if you do not meet them, because that would lead to box-ticking, over-compliance and all the gaming that goes on when schools or colleges are given targets about which they have no choice. This is a self-improvement tool. It tells you, "This is what you need to do, and this is how you can measure whether you have done it". There is evidence from everywhere that self-improvement is an approach that is very powerful, and it is certainly proving that at schools and colleges, so I would not make the benchmarks statutory. The Department for Education strongly recommends them and they are the backbone of its career strategy, but they are not compulsory and I would not make them so.

Lord Hall of Birkenhead: Ryan Gibson, you were involved in the pilot, which has been seminal in the implementation of these benchmarks. Do

you have any thoughts about where the pressures are on education establishments to improve on their delivery of the Gatsby benchmarks? Where are the areas of difficulty?

Ryan Gibson: I have come to appreciate that every school, college and institution is at a different stage of its organisational journey, which means that they are at a slightly different point of implementation. I would emphasise that, across my own organisation currently, we have taken the decision to adopt the Gatsby benchmarks. We have made them central to our careers provision. Their existence as a self-improvement tool allows us to audit our starting points, self-assess those and make evidence-based decisions against all of the sub-criteria. We use the benchmarks as an organising framework that helps us to determine who we are working with, how effective our partnerships are and some of the outcomes that we want.

Different schools will be at different stages. There will be different pinch-points. There may be regional or institutional variation. Having a framework that has world class standards at the heart of it but flexibility around how you achieve those standards is crucial.

Lord Hall of Birkenhead: Again, should it be kept voluntary, without any pressure by statute?

Ryan Gibson: I think so. We have taken the decision to adopt the benchmarks. That is a conscious decision. All our schools use them. We are seeing marked improvement. We were below national standards in terms of benchmark achievement at the beginning of our journey; we are now significantly ahead. That is because careers leaders have been empowered to use the self-improvement framework and to use the benchmarks as that organising framework to question what they have done previously, look at what they are currently doing and plan what they need to do next.

Q164 **Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall:** I wanted to pick up the question of variability among schools and regions. This may be a question that any one of our witnesses can answer. It is about the impact of what has happened over the last 15 months on schools and their capacity to take on any more. My impression is that they have been subjected to a welter of guidance, directives and new requirements, on top of the obvious challenges of just coping through the last year. The Gatsby benchmarks predate the Covid pandemic and everything that it has brought with it.

I wondered if you could reflect on what has happened, if anything, to the capacity of schools and school leaders to implement and take forward some of the things that you are keenest to see happen in the current circumstances, and how you see that recovery needing to be implemented, so as to make some of this very admirable aspiration become a reality. All three of you have been school leaders as well as doing what you do now, so it is from that perspective, in a way, that I

would be interested to hear your views.

Ryan Gibson: You are right to point out that there have been incredible pressures on the education system, on school leaders and on careers leaders. There have been unprecedented challenges around educational delivery and its quality, with different ways of approaching teaching, learning and receiving learning, and different places that people have had to operate in.

Although those challenges have undoubtedly existed, careers leaders have, in many cases, come into their own, as have school leaders. What I mean by that is that digital encounters and opportunities have provided an opportunity for scale and scalability, for breadth, and to reflect on what we have done, how we have done it previously and how we might modernise some of that delivery going forward.

I will give you a couple of examples from my own experience over the last 18 months or so. We had to cancel our work experience programmes across our schools because businesses were closed and school buildings were closed to the majority of people. That meant that thousands of our students would miss out on crucial experiences of workplaces.

We were able to create a virtual work experience programme with the recruitment firm Reed. That was completed by over 2,000 of our students last summer during the pandemic. Our students were able to attend pre-recorded meetings. They had live encounters with employers. The students completed tasks set by employers, and employers gave feedback. That meant that our students did not miss out on their crucial experience; they just experienced it slightly differently.

It has given us a chance to innovate. We have been able to work with a Career Accelerator programme, connecting over 4,000 of our young people with leading tech and digital companies. Those companies have run assemblies and workshops for us and are doing one-to-one business mentoring. There is no way that we could have got LinkedIn or ForwardPMX to come into each of our schools individually, but doing it virtually has given us an opportunity to apply that at scale.

Innovation has come in other forms. We created a virtual learning academy across AET, and part of that was a virtual careers advice helpdesk, where we pooled our careers advisers across the trust to provide an additional layer of support to students and their families. We introduced innovation at school level, with careers advisers able to host meetings on platforms like Google Meet, which has brought us closer, in a sense, to our parents and students. It has meant that we have been able to time guidance needs much more appropriately.

Digital has provided an opportunity for scale, breadth and innovation. Ultimately, going forward, what we are looking at is how we keep the best of the digital and combine that with the best of the physical. For

example, if I was talking about work experience, we might have our students completing virtual work experience placements as a forerunner to a physical experience of a workplace.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall: That is an extremely impressive and very well-prepared answer. I hope that I have not inadvertently strayed into territory that my colleagues on the committee were going to cover; forgive me if that is the case. Oli de Botton, did you want to add to that?

Oli de Botton: I would agree. Across our network, we have seen innovation like that, such as at Morgan Sindall Construction east office, which has tripled the number of young people who have had experience in the workplace there. They have said to us that it has improved their diversity of young people who are coming through.

We have also heard from head teachers that, in a way, the careers leader has become busier than ever. Let us think about last summer, when I was a head; the exams were one thing, but they were a process. What we were thinking about in education was how we could get young people into a secure destination without the normal examinations, so that focus on destination is positive for the work of careers, because it makes us see that it is a crucial part of what happens at the end of school life, at 16 or 18.

The other thing to note is that we have seen quite a lot of responsiveness across the hubs because of Covid. Last summer, the south-east midlands hub was worried about young people not having secure destinations. It brought together partners and targeted young people at risk of being NEET, and 81% went to secure destinations.

In Blackpool, organisations such as BAE Systems, transport north-west and the Civil Service wanted to speak directly to careers leaders so that they understood what was happening in their organisations, the impact of the pandemic and why T-levels, access to apprenticeships and co-design of work experience were important. That created a really positive dynamic, where, in a way, schools were very interested in next steps for young people—particularly employment—and thinking about the storm to come, potentially, in certain industries. Through the hubs and networks, employers are being very forward with schools, which gives some encouragement for the future.

Professor Sir John Holman: The progress that was made using online virtual encounters with employers was tremendous and happened very quickly, and some of it will endure. As we go, as we all hope, into normality, schools will go on using virtual encounters with employers, where appropriate, but we have to be careful, because there is a world of difference between simply showing a video of the workplace, which is in a sense a virtual encounter, and having the opportunity to interact with an employer. The best virtual work experiences or encounters are those in which you see the pictures but also interact with the person; young

people can ask the employer questions, and the employer can give those impromptu, unrehearsed responses that make for more reality. It will endure, but it needs to be the best of it that endures.

- Q165 **Lord Storey:** I am impressed with all our speakers, but I was very taken by what John was saying about careers education. Incidentally, I have just had a submission from Teach First on the vocation and skills Bill. It wants us to use the term "education guidance"; I always struggle with whether it is careers education, careers guidance or careers advice.

My observations are these: first, Teach First talks about hardwiring careers guidance for our education system. As a head teacher who did careers education at primary school, I very much take that on board. If you remember, John—perhaps you do not—the White Paper suggested that careers advice should be offered from year 7, but this was not in any of the proposals.

Secondly, the White Paper highlighted the enhanced role of Ofsted in assessing careers provision. Ofsted does not believe that the current structure prioritises careers guidance. Do you have any thoughts on those two matters?

Finally, I cannot resist saying, when you talk about the involvement of the science and maths teachers, do not forget the teachers teaching creative subjects as well.

Professor Sir John Holman: If I could take your last point first, which is about the involvement of creative subjects teachers as well, I could not agree more. Here is a very general point: if we want young people to be employable, they must have mathematics, English and a basic education, and of course they must have the careers guidance to point them in the right direction, but there are many other characteristics that make people employable. I am thinking of things like teamwork, leadership and wider essential skills. These are developed right the way across the whole curriculum, not just in the science or creative subjects but in the many things that schools do outside of the curriculum, in sport, drama and music, which build skills like teamwork. We should not forget about the importance of having this wider range of skills for a young person to be employable.

You talked about the age at which all this would start. The ambition is that it starts in year 7, and many schools—perhaps most—do begin it in year 7, at the beginning of secondary school. It certainly should start then, because young people begin to make up their minds about the kind of person they are going to be easily by the age of 11. They may not have a precise idea such as, "I want to be an electrical engineer", but they begin to have a picture of the kind of person that they are going to be, so it needs to begin early.

If I could touch on a related point, which I will do briefly because you may feel it is a bit of a digression, parents are very important here. If you ask young people who the biggest influence was on their career choice, they will say their parents. Often, this is a very powerful influence, but sometimes parents do not have knowledge of the full range of careers. Schools need to bear in mind that parents start talking to their children—this comes back to the point about age—probably before the beginning of secondary school about what kind of careers they want to take part in. We should be beginning at year 7. The Gatsby benchmarks should come in at that year, and that, as I understand it, is the intention of the Government.

Lord Storey: What about Ofsted?

Professor Sir John Holman: You have to be careful what you wish for with Ofsted. If you require it to lay a heavy hand on any activity, that will encourage over-compliant and box-ticking behaviour. Ofsted has said that it has been asked to carry out a thematic review of careers guidance, which will be very helpful. Not only will it paint a picture of careers guidance in schools and colleges but it will show schools that Ofsted is looking. It will make the point, “We look for this habitually when we inspect schools”, so I look forward to Ofsted taking forward that thematic review.

Lord Storey: That was very helpful. Turning now to Oli, I realise that you are newly in post, but I am sure that you have picked up pace very quickly. I want to look at employer engagement in careers education and the role of mentors, enterprise advisers and influencers—that is a term I had not come across—and how important this area is. On Tuesday, we had a community engagement session and I was quite shocked that so many people in our group said that young people did not know what opportunities were available to them. I was quite alarmed at that, to be quite honest.

I will ask this now, so that you can roll it into one answer. I want to understand the role of the careers hubs. The Careers & Enterprise Company funds careers hubs, and I wonder if you would say how successful they are and how they are working.

Oli de Botton: Employers are absolutely central to 21st-century careers education because they bring relevance and rigour to the process. They are or should be giving young people an insight into the role of work, information about routes in, including apprenticeships, and, crucially, the sorts of skills that they are looking for. In our organisation, we are lucky enough to work with big and small businesses across the country, around 4,000 business volunteers and enterprise advisers, and 300 cornerstone employers. It is really encouraging to see, from my perspective, what happens when you connect schools to employers at scale. You see benefits to each. For the employer, the work can become more talent-

spotting than outreach at its best. For the school, it becomes a crucial way of providing information and inspiration about what comes next.

In answer specifically to your question about role models or influencers, it is not an either/or. We have examples from our work. One of our business volunteers from the Tees Valley, from Jacobs Engineering, goes into schools to extol the virtues of that particular industry. They were able to recruit an apprentice, and now she goes back into schools to share her story and inspire what comes next. It is that virtuous cycle that we want to see and that makes a difference.

Employers are crucial too because, at a strategic level, where careers guidance works really well is when it is not just an education strategy but an economic strategy, so that you are linking the advice that young people are getting with the jobs that are there locally. That speaks to how we are set up. We situate our work in hubs and LEPs, as Ryan mentioned, in areas of the country that are thinking about economic growth industries. I can give you an example from Lincolnshire, where our business volunteer is going into schools to talk about green power. They are doing a really fantastic project building green cars, and that links to the growth sector in the Humber estuary. It is bringing that economic opportunity to life.

I have a final point on employers from personal experience. As head of School 21, we put employers front and centre of our approach. We called it the curriculum of the hand: to help young people think differently about the future and do hands-on learning. Instead of an eighth GCSE, we did an extended work placement in its place for year 10s, with 12 weeks in industry. We tried to make it as rigorous and as real as possible. They could be fired. They could present their work at the end. We found that really helped in two ways: in their own motivation and academic achievement, but also in opening up opportunities for the future. Employers are critical to making careers education work.

In answer to your question about hubs, it is important to note that they are not an and/or; they are part of promoting really good careers education in schools. Fundamentally, hubs answer the urgent challenge of careers education, because the work, by necessity, is multi-institutional, with schools, colleges, providers and employers working together in a neutral space in the interests of giving all young people on all pathways all the options, independent of any institutional boundaries. So they are important.

They are not empty-vessel hubs. They are full of great things, such as more training for careers leaders, who can then learn from one another; that is a simple idea in education that works in terms of sharing best practice. There is a compass tool, which allows us to see how schools are doing in relation to the Gatsby benchmarks and compare how other schools are doing. Compass+ is an upgrade on that, which allows careers leaders to see which young people from particular cohorts have had the

right intervention. It comes with business volunteers, who we have talked about and who are having an impact on the ground. It has clear governance and local leadership. These hub leads are an increasingly important part of the careers system.

As Sir John said, the schools and colleges in hubs are making more progress against the Gatsby benchmarks. As I also mentioned, they are able to be responsive to what is happening locally and to mobilise resources to support particular issues. I have given examples from Blackpool, but I could give an example also from the south-west, where schools are working to support young people with SEND, with employers adapting their work experience placements so that they are inclusive and accessible. Local tailoring is helping to make changes on the ground.

Ryan Gibson: We have found hubs incredibly useful. Our schools being connected into careers hubs means that our careers leaders are connected to networks with other careers leaders, both regionally and nationally. They are connected with local and regional employers, which we have found to be incredibly useful as well. The access to employer networks is something that schools have traditionally struggled with. As a teacher in a classroom, where do you find and approach an employer? Having a mechanism through the hub to be able to do that is incredibly useful. Having a careers leader in the school to facilitate that conversation between classroom and employment setting or employer has been incredibly beneficial.

Employers do have a crucial role. They have the traditional role that they have always played, in that they have been able to run assemblies, attend careers fairs and offer mentoring, but a difference that has emerged over the last three or four years is employers working closely and strategically with the leadership in schools. Employers looking at the careers programme alongside a careers leader just brings that employer perspective. An employer bringing their black book of contacts has been really useful, because it allows a careers leader and curriculum teams to think about where some of those opportunities are and some of the connections they can make.

In our organisation, we have developed some significant employer partnerships this year where our teachers have co-created curriculum resources with employers. Getting teachers working together with employers does not always mean that the employer has to be standing at the front of the classroom; they can support the teacher from the background, and the teacher can bring the employer context into the classroom. With digital opportunities, you can have live linkups and physical visits, and you can bring the employer in. We have found hubs to be really beneficial, and employers are absolutely crucial.

Q166 The Lord Bishop of Derby: I really appreciate the conversation we have had so far. Ryan, I will ask my question first to you, although I would be really glad for others to come back, and ask you to be a mouthpiece to

amplify the voices of careers leaders, as you have been talking about them. What are the most common challenges that they raise about the best possible delivery in their institutions? What are their most frequent concerns or asks that they have? Can you be their voice for a moment for us?

Ryan Gibson: I can certainly try. I would not profess to be their voice, but having been a careers leader in a school, led the Gatsby benchmark pilot, supported the national rollout of those benchmarks and led North East Ambition, which was a network of careers leaders in the north-east, and now leading careers provision across a large MAT at AET, I have had lots of opportunities over the last three or four years to talk to careers leaders both in schools and colleges. To a point I made earlier, I have come to appreciate that every school and college is different. They have different needs at different times, and careers leaders are at different stages of their professional journey. That often means that they have different challenges and concerns.

To answer the question directly, if I was summarising those concerns, some most frequently relate to time: both time to do the job and time in the school or college day to deliver the careers provision that they want to deliver. Careers leaders will often talk about funding as an issue: the funding to be able to deliver the careers provision they want—maybe to fund a careers platform, or more time with careers advisers, or transport to and from places. That is a frequent message.

Challenges are often raised around organisational or leadership prioritisation of careers, with competing pressures in schools and colleges. Some careers leaders feel that their work is not prioritised as much as it perhaps could be. Sometimes there is an issue around, “Where do I start?” That is particularly with new careers leaders, who may not have the networks, contacts or experience initially.

However, for all of those issues that people might raise, there are solutions—where people have faced those issues and navigated a solution. That was certainly something we captured in the original Gatsby pilot, but it is something that I see daily as well.

On time, there are different models that schools and colleges can use. There is not one recommended model, and you have to create the model that works in your context. Often, it is about making maximum use of the time that you have available as opposed to comparing yourself to somebody who may have a perception of more time. I have heard Sir John say before that the careers leader is the conductor of the orchestra. Their job is to bring everything together into a coherent whole, not to play every instrument, so they should not be expected to have to do everything themselves. That is something that careers leaders still take on. They still think that, in many situations, they are responsible for the doing as well as the leadership.

To the point on leadership prioritisation that is sometimes raised, what we found in the Gatsby pilot is that leadership is absolutely key. Sir John alluded to it earlier. It is leadership at all levels: the leadership of the careers leader; the leadership of the school, including the senior leadership team and the governors; leadership at a regional level through LEPs and hubs; and leadership at a national level, particularly through the Careers & Enterprise Company.

What we found in my schools and when I was running the pilot was that, if you have a careers leader who is a member of the senior leadership team, the rate of progress in terms of Gatsby benchmark achievement is rapidly increased. Also, if they are not on the senior leadership team but report to a member of the senior leadership team who has responsibility for careers provision, progress is equally rapid. It is slower if you have a less engaged leadership team.

That is the point I have made previously about the benchmarks providing the framework for what needs to be achieved, but they give the careers leader the flexibility around how to achieve it. That is crucial. Hubs give you connections into networks and support, and the training made available through the Careers & Enterprise Company and other organisations such as the Career Development Institute has proved really useful for careers leaders.

The Lord Bishop of Derby: That was a really comprehensive answer, but I want to see whether Oli or John have anything that they want to add to that with regard to the particular perspective of careers leaders.

Professor Sir John Holman: Could I just add one quick point? This is something that we learned in the original international study that we published in 2014. If you go to Finland, the Netherlands or Ontario and look for the equivalent of a careers leader, you will find that they often have a very high status in the school. Their office may be next door to the school principal's office. They are consulted extensively when decisions are made about the curriculum.

We are not quite there yet in most schools; indeed, the population of careers leaders is really quite diverse, as is the amount of time they have, often with far less than one full-time-equivalent of time to spend on the role. The fact of naming them careers leaders, giving them training, showcasing the role and bringing them together in careers hubs is part of a mission that will take several years to carry out to raise the profile of careers leaders to the sort of status that I have described elsewhere in the world.

The Lord Bishop of Derby: That is really helpful. Oli, is there anything that you feel you need to add that has not been covered?

Oli de Botton: I am in violent agreement, but I would add two things. It is an interesting new workforce or can be a really interesting addition.

The careers leader who worked at my school, School 21, did not have a teaching background. We know there are some career guidance professionals. It is an important note to think about routes into schools and into teaching. This is a slightly different and very attractive role that could help the workforce.

The second point to note is that the careers leader needs the whole staff team, as has been previously noted. One of the interesting things in the Government's White Paper was careers awareness as part of initial teacher training and ongoing training, so that the careers leader is speaking to a cohort of teachers who are aware of the different routes and of the value of employer training. That feels like a positive development too.

Q167 Lord Woolley of Woodford: I am fascinated but also slightly worried about certain aspects of this conversation, particularly in regard to the Gatsby benchmarks, which seem to be laudable. Before I go into my main question, I wonder what the cost of implementation of these Gatsby benchmarks is, not least because, having spoken to a couple of head teachers, they have been telling me that they have been using the education catch-up funding not for that but to plug existing gaps in their finances. It was interesting to listen to Sir John talk about the tremendous work that schools are doing online, but what about the digital divide? Those who can will go steaming ahead; those who cannot will go further behind. That is a question to you, Sir John, and maybe to the others.

My central question is at what age young people should begin being taught about careers and what form that should take.

Professor Sir John Holman: On the first point about the digital divide, it is not confined to careers. We are never going to go back to the era when all teaching was done face to face; there will always be a place, going forward, for online teaching. It is very powerful. It can do some things very well indeed; other things it cannot do so well. It is not only careers guidance but right the way across all of our schools and colleges. We must gear up all young people to have a fair go, with high-quality devices, at getting digital education.

On the question of when you start, we touched on this a little earlier. I would certainly start at the beginning of secondary school. In the end, the thing that really matters is that young people are able to make informed choices about what they do next. For careers guidance in schools and colleges, that is what it is all about. They need to be able to make an informed choice for GCSE and for post-16—A-level, apprenticeship and so on—so everything is leading up to that. It needs to begin in secondary schools at year 7, so that, by the time they reach GCSE, they know a bit about the world of work and make an informed choice about what GCSE subjects they should do.

There is the question of whether this should all start in primary school. There is a strong case for it, because the evidence is very strong that people make up their mind before the age of 11 about what they want to be. I mentioned earlier the point about when parents start talking to their children about what they want to be in the future. What is more debatable is whether this should be a required part of the primary curriculum in the sense that it is a required part of the secondary curriculum.

There are arguments in both directions. I have set out the arguments for why you would give careers guidance in primary schools. To set against that, there is the whole question of whether primary schools should really be the place where we lay the foundations of literacy, numeracy, and some science and IT, and really concentrate on laying that ground down. I would not make it a requirement, but I would strongly encourage schools to start giving young people in primary schools a taster for what the world of work is like by inviting employers in from a range of diverse companies and showing the boys and the girls what these different roles are.

Lord Woolley of Woodford: It is interesting that you said that parents should play a big role in this. Many black, Asian and minority-ethnic parents often guide their children towards becoming lawyers, doctors and engineers, but not teachers or carers. How can the careers leaders open up those other professions that make a dramatic impact in society through ambitious parents who have a narrow band of what success looks like?

Professor Sir John Holman: I was very familiar with that in the school that I was head teacher of. It is the same question as for young people: how do you start opening doors and showing young people what technical careers are available and that apprenticeships are available to them? That has to begin in secondary schools. I would argue for a strong association between parents and their student children, right from the beginning. Encourage parents to come to careers evenings. Get them involved, so that they can widen their horizons, as well as the young people themselves.

Ryan Gibson: In our secondary schools, we start our careers provision at year 7. Indeed, we start it in our transition programme with our new year 6s as they join us, and that is important. Interestingly, we are starting work in our primary schools as well now to introduce careers much earlier. We were struck by the research that showed that children have their first aspirations aged three and four, start to make limiting decisions based on gender by age 7, and career-limiting decisions by age 10, which are solidified by age 14.

What we do not think it is about at primary is asking a child to choose their job. What we do think it is about and what we are trying to focus on is inspiration, aspiration and a breadth of awareness-raising in terms of

job sectors, job families, skills, and routes and pathways through the system. We start in year 7 in our secondaries, but we are increasingly looking to start earlier. We are aware of and very linked in with the good work of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership around that.

Lord Woolley of Woodford: Oli, how do we bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots?

Oli de Botton: Careers education has a role to play in a more inclusive education system. Fundamentally, it is about removing barriers that exist for young people, and certainly that is how we viewed it when I was head of a school serving an under-resourced community. We think about this in three ways: first, there are barriers around deprivation or under-resource that we need to tackle; there are barriers around stereotype or bias that might be related to gender, ethnicity or religion; and then there are individual barriers that might be around learning needs or special educational needs, or around young people who are excluded. Careers education has a role to play in each of those.

The Careers & Enterprise Company has worked very heavily with the opportunity areas in Hastings and Bradford to ensure that there is additional support, so that work encounters were in place and that those schools could thrive and support their communities. In relation to gender or ethnicity awareness, our careers hub in Manchester has just surveyed young people there about different career options. It noticed gender patterns and is now able to put in place work to support that. In relation to ethnicity, our youth advisory board has been really supportive of people from diverse backgrounds telling the stories of going through apprenticeships directly to young people. We did our Work It series, with 100,000 people looking at Bintou, who was an apprentice at HS2, and Zara at Walsall Council, really telling those stories.

On the individual barriers, we are very passionate in careers education about including every young person. We know that we are not there yet, but one of the things that is helpful is careers leaders having tools that allow them to see which children have which intervention and what that means about their intended destination. It is a digital tool in schools that careers leaders use, and we are at the foothills of that, but can you imagine a careers leader being able to say, "This young person had this aspiration. They had this intervention and support, and then they had this aspiration"? You could see the impact of the work that we are doing. We see that as really important to our work going forward, including everyone in careers education and removing barriers where we can.

Q168 **Lord Baker of Dorking:** As you know, for the last two years, apprenticeships have dropped by about 30%, both at 16 and 18. You have failed to produce people who want to be apprentices, although you have probably raised their expectations about apprenticeships. I want to know why this has failed. I assume it is not your message, because you have work experience and employers in, and all those good things that

you have just talked about, but it has failed. Could you give fairly crisp answers, because time is running out? Starting with Ryan, why have you failed?

Ryan Gibson: At Academies Enterprise Trust, we have more students progressing into apprenticeships than the national average, but I take the wider point of a decline. We have more students progressing into apprenticeships because of the careers programmes that we have now put in place. It is a long journey, but it is about having employers engaged much earlier and having better information provided to students and their parents. Crucially, to the point I made earlier, it is not just about information but inspiration and trying to allow young people to explore what an apprenticeship is and to meet a young apprentice from the Young Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. That gives young people a line of sight to people like them.

Lord Baker of Dorking: Oli, I will come to you next. Congratulations on School 21. It is brilliant. You should have set up a network of them.

Oli de Botton: There is a network coming, Lord Baker, which I can speak to you about.

Lord Baker of Dorking: Why have you failed on apprenticeships?

Oli de Botton: Where it is working is, as you say, where employers are giving messages directly to young people alongside training providers. As an example, Sovini Property Services in Bootle, in Merseyside, is working with us to share its experiences and the routes in. Crucially, it is also getting feedback from young people about its recruitment processes to make it more attractive. Where it works it is because employers, with providers, are talking directly to young people, sharing information and having that really positive dynamic.

Professor Sir John Holman: It is about supply and demand. For a market to work well, you need information. We cannot change the supply of apprenticeships, but we can make sure that young people know about them in a timely way, long before they reach the age of 16, by having visibility of apprenticeships. That is where we can help with this problem.

Lord Baker of Dorking: You are promoting a product that suppliers cannot supply in sufficient quantity. That is bound to lead to failure. The schools that I do get over 20% apprentices. I do not think you do 20% apprentices, Ryan, but we do between 20% and 25% apprentices each year, which is high. Do any of you think you should be lobbying the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education or the Department for Education to say that the apprenticeship levy needs a complete overhaul by focusing on 16 to 24 and not on giving people in their 30s, 40s and 50s apprenticeships for very expensive management courses? Do any of you look on yourselves as lobbyists for change? You are all being put in an impossible position. You are selling a product that cannot

be delivered.

Professor Sir John Holman: Just going back to the question of supply and demand, I do not think that we can intervene in this. If the supply of apprenticeships is not coming from employers, we cannot do anything. There is a relationship between the supply and the demand. If really cracking young people who are well qualified and highly motivated are coming forward to become apprentices, that will quickly increase the supply. Employers will see that the way to get a really good employee is to have an apprenticeship and get a good young person into it. I do not think that the likes of me and my colleagues are the people who should be lobbying to make that supply of apprenticeships increase.

Lord Baker of Dorking: The message that we are getting from small and medium-sized employers is that they cannot afford to do it, yet they are the main employers in the country. We are not talking about Rolls-Royce and British Aerospace, but about small and medium-sized employers. Anyway, you do not look on yourselves as lobbyists; I quite take that.

I have a question on the Gatsby benchmarks. Number 4 is to try to link with the curricula of schools. That is a very difficult task, because the curriculum of schools is now dominated by EBacc and eight academic subjects, and schools are now judged on that. All technical stuff is being squeezed out of 11 to 16 year-olds, as is cultural stuff. I do not see where the link in benchmark 4 comes in. Have there been any startling examples of where you have persuaded schools to change the curriculum that they are doing and make it more technical? Sir John might have evidence of this.

Professor Sir John Holman: I have certainly had evidence from overseas and from this country as well. I have seen it in some of Ryan Gibson's schools, so Ryan might give us an example. You can teach the applications and the careers coming from a subject from within that subject. If you are a physics teacher and you understand what careers come out from an understanding of circular motion in the whole world of satellites, which this country is very good at, you can bring that into your lesson. When teachers are being trained and having in-service training, I would like to see them given examples of how their subject leads to a career in real life. We need to be doing that.

Lord Baker of Dorking: That is very interesting. Could I just say one thing about the Baker clause? Sir John has asked to see me about it in his new role of looking at career advice generally. The Baker clause, as it was introduced, was to allow providers of alternative education, such as FE colleges, apprenticeship providers, private providers and UTCs, to go into schools at 13 to 14 and 16 to 18 to explain what they were doing. That was the purpose of the clause. When it was being drafted, I urged the department to make this a statutory duty, but it said no and that it would depend on ministerial advice. The ministerial advice has been

totally ignored and, therefore, it has become useless.

UCAS wants to digitalise the Baker clause. FE colleges want it reformed, and so do the providers of private education. I should let you know that I have had an amendment drafted by the clerks for the skills Bill to make it a statutory duty for schools to provide, between 1 January and 28 February each year, opportunities for alternative providers to go in and explain what they are doing. That will be a transformation in careers advice. They will have a chance of speaking to those students. The schools will try to stop it. The dates are important, because the schools will say, "You can come in in July on a Friday", and that sort of thing. They will now have to do it. The dates are important because, in March each year, the schools close their list of students, and all students know which school they are going to.

I hope that you will all support that amendment when it comes up, because it will make a major change in careers advice by letting those people go in and speak to the youngsters. I hope you will become lobbyists for it. When it gets to the House of Commons, you might write to your MP, saying it is a good thing, Mr Gibson and Mr de Botton. I hope so.

Professor Sir John Holman: The principle behind the Baker clause is absolutely right. You need to have full visibility. It goes back to the point about the supply and demand of apprenticeships, and visibility. Having been a head teacher of an 11-to-18 school, I can understand some of the reasons why schools are not making this operate as well as they might, but it is my understanding that the department will consult later in the summer on some proposals to toughen up the existing parts of the Baker clause. Your extension, Lord Baker, sounds as if it will make a difference too.

Lord Baker of Dorking: It will make a fundamental difference. They offered consultation six months ago. The consultation has not started. The department is indifferent and casual about this. It has done nothing to implement the Baker clause for two years. I do not trust it at all. My amendment will give a statutory right for those meetings to take place. Schools will have to make those meetings available; otherwise, parents or other bodies will complain and, if necessary, take them to court. Schools have to comply, Sir John.

Oli de Botton: As a head, I had the provider-access policy in place. We had links to the local UTC. Parity is incredibly important as part of an inclusive education system, because it speaks to what you are saying: some young people are animated by academic learning and some by hands-on, real-world technical learning, and that is important to us.

Ryan Gibson: We think that the Baker clause is really important. All our schools, as Oli said, have a provider-access policy statement published alongside their careers programme and alongside the name of the

careers leader who will be able to make those contacts. We really want to expose all young people to all pathways, so I look forward to the consultation.

- Q169 **Lord Layard:** Sir John, you talked about the importance of measurement, particularly in relation to the Gatsby benchmarks, but I wanted to ask about measurement not of what goes on in the schools but of the outcomes of students. There are two aspects to that. First, how much, in an organisational sense, do schools know about the outcome of a student? Is there a system that you are promoting whereby schools would, on a routine basis, know what happened to their students? This is crucial to any discussion in the school about careers. The second thing is about the research evidence. There has been some reference to this, but what is known about the impact of careers advice on the outcomes of students? Is there a genuine, solid information base on that topic?

Professor Sir John Holman: Could I go first on your point about destination measures, Lord Layard, and perhaps suggest that Oli de Botton answer on the point about the hard evidence of the link? He has some very new data on that.

On the point about destinations, I agree; this is the ultimate measure of careers guidance. Successful careers guidance helps people to end up in a positive career destination, so it is very valuable for schools and colleges to know the destinations of their students. The straight answer to your question is that the Department for Education, through local authorities, collects and publishes destination data. However, that data is quite lagged, and it takes a long time for it to go through the process of validation and eventual publication to high statistical standards.

My personal view is that the things that are possible now with data handling and artificial intelligence should make it possible to speed that up. I realise that there are all the technicalities of the things that the Office for National Statistics needs to think about. Meanwhile, back at the school, good schools collect the destination data themselves of the young people as they leave and move on to the next stage of education. In Gatsby benchmark 3, we advocate that schools and colleges continue to collect destinations data for three years after each student has left. That is demanding and a difficult thing for schools to do, and it requires staff resource.

If a school does that and has really good records about where everyone ends up, up to three years later, that is a tremendous resource that it can draw on, because it can use that data to analyse how well it is doing in the careers guidance that it is providing—for example, how well it is countering gender stereotypes. What is more, once it knows where everyone has gone, it can build a very strong record of alumni and invite those young people to come back later on and tell their fellow students about their experiences.

Destinations data is collected from the government end, but with a big time lag. Collected from the school end, it is very powerful. If we can connect the government data and the school data, we will have a big win.

Lord Layard: Do the schools get the government data with this lag?

Professor Sir John Holman: Eventually.

Oli de Botton: For the first time now, we have destination data from the 2017-18 cohort of year 11s, so 16 year-olds. That is the lag. We have literally just published it. It shows where all young people ended up in a secure destination two terms after they left. It is encouraging because it says that there is a statistically significant relationship across 2,500 schools between the Gatsby benchmarks and being in a positive destination. That feels positive.

It is worth emphasising that we want also to understand where that positive destination leads to in the future. This would have all the same issues that Sir John pointed out, but it would be really interesting to see earnings data as a result of good careers, because that is where you want to get to, but I imagine that is a way off.

You also want a bit of short-term impact data at the school level. If you are doing some activity in year 7 and have employers in or are doing a STEM workshop, you want to know what that is doing to attitudes to those industries over time. One tool that we have that is quite helpful is a future skills survey, which allows us to track attitudes to different careers over time. That is part of the picture of impact as well.

Ryan Gibson: If it would be helpful to give a flavour of an in-school perspective, we are capturing the aspirations of our students through aspiration surveys, very similarly to how Oli described the CEC surveys. We also collect intended destinations of students as they start to think about not only their aspiration but where they are going to go next.

Because of the Gatsby benchmarks, schools now track the interventions that they are putting in place, as Oli talked about, so that we can really focus our conversations with students, in terms of careers advice, around their aspirations and intentions, and so that we can help shape, refine, challenge and support those. We then look at where our students go when they leave us; what is the actual destination? That is the immediate impact. Local authorities are really helpful there through their activity surveys. We then look at the sustained destination, and the time lag around that is the most challenging aspect for schools.

We see the data; it is reported back to schools. It also sits in IDSRs that are used by Ofsted and are accessible by school leadership teams. That data is available, and schools are acting on it. The issue at the school level is the lag in sustained destination data. Destination data as an outcome of careers education is really important.

Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall: Forgive me if this is a dumb question, but do these data, whenever you receive them or however you collect them, include people whose destinations are, frankly, not very desirable, and/or people who do not want to be found? I do not know what proportion of any student body that you are familiar with would fall into that general category, but there are some, and we tend to refer to them, rather disparagingly, as NEET. They might be in places you really do not want to go, like in the criminal justice system or homeless. How do you Hoover up those data?

Ryan Gibson: There are NEETs who are known and NEETs who are unknown. In terms of trying to Hoover up that data, to steal your phrase, we try to build connections locally with the local authority, which may be picking young people up in the justice system, in community projects or whatever it may be. Before our students leave school, we try to secure their consent so that we may keep in touch with them, because we want to build alumni and, as Sir John said, use them back in our careers programme and because we know that our current young people respond really well to our students who have just moved on.

We have the different categories of data and do everything we can to find and support those students. Some of the best-practice examples from my schools have been where our careers leader has spent time in the local college or local training provider that a student has progressed to in order to make sure that they have settled in okay. That has happened in some cases where a student has been at risk of becoming NEET. We also try to encourage our students, if they become NEET or do not go into something, to remember that we are still there to support them if need be.

Oli de Botton: I am happy to send the research through that says that you are less likely to be NEET if you are in a school with good careers guidance. To your other point, not NEET but not noticed are included in that report, and there is often a strong correlation between that and NEET, so it is really important, when you look at the destination data, that you look at absolutely all young people, so that it is as inclusive as possible. The data that we have does that, and I am happy to share it with the committee, if helpful.

The Chair: In a moment, I am going to suspend this hearing, but I would first like to say to each of the witnesses that I would be grateful if you might write to us about one issue that is interesting me, which is the age at which young people should do work experience and whether work experience should be voluntary or mandatory.

On behalf of the committee, I thank our three witnesses for their engagement today, their level of preparation and the sheer volume of information that they have given to us, which is going to prove hugely helpful to our deliberations.