

# Written evidence submitted by the Gatsby Foundation

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 The Gatsby Foundation (Gatsby) has a long-standing interest in career guidance. In April 2014 we published a study which identified what 'good' career guidance looks like and set out the framework of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks that secondary schools and colleges can use to improve their career guidance programme.
- 2 The Gatsby Foundation initially submitted a response to the inquiry in March 2022. As the inquiry progressed the Committee had further questions which we have addressed below.
- 3 Throughout this document, we use the term 'career guidance' to refer to all aspects of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for young people. As encapsulated by the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- 4 Some of the questions asked by the Committee refer to schools only. We have answered these questions with reference to secondary schools and colleges (including special schools) – all of the categories of institution for which the Gatsby Benchmarks are relevant.

## QUESTIONS

1. SHOULD THE BENCHMARKS BE VIEWED AS A “GOLD STANDARD” WHICH INSTITUTIONS SHOULD WORK TOWARDS, OR A MINIMUM EXPECTATION THAT ALL INSTITUTIONS SHOULD MEET? ARE THERE PLANS TO REVIEW THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS SINCE THEIR PUBLICATION IN 2014?

### THE ROLE OF THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

- 5 We believe that each and every student should experience world-class career guidance as part of their journey through compulsory education and towards a positive future. The Gatsby Benchmarks are based in international research and set out what world class career guidance looks like (see Appendix A). Since their widespread in schools and colleges from 2018, millions more young people are benefitting from rich experiences with employers<sup>1</sup> and there is growing evidence that good career guidance and implementing the Benchmarks, reduces the likelihood of students being not in education, employment or training (NEET)<sup>2</sup>, increases the uptake of apprenticeships, and most importantly has the biggest effect on those in the most disadvantaged circumstances.
- 6 The Benchmarks are designed to be challenging but achievable. We are hugely encouraged by progress of schools and colleges across the country. In some cases, institutions are meeting all eight Benchmarks<sup>3</sup> or even exceeding the criteria specified in the wording of certain Benchmarks. Careers Leaders in schools and colleges rightly adapt their careers programmes to different education settings, the needs of individual students, and changes in the labour market.

### GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE – THE NEXT DECADE FOR THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

- 7 Much has been achieved in the decade since Lord David Sainsbury first asked Sir John Holman to describe what world class careers guidance looks like. As our last submission showed, the Gatsby Benchmarks are now the bedrock of school and college career programmes.
- 8 Over this time, we have also seen impressive innovation in careers activities from schools, colleges, and employers, alongside changes to the education system and labour market – much of which was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 9 Following the publication of Sir John Holman’s recommendations to government on the future of the careers system<sup>4</sup>, Gatsby is also looking ahead to the next ten years of Good Career Guidance for young people in England. We are keen to ascertain how we can maintain the impact of the Benchmarks and assess what, if any, changes might be needed.
- 10 We are therefore embarking on a programme of analysis – capturing progress and addressing challenges associated with implementing the Gatsby Benchmarks – to ensure our work continues to deliver the best career guidance possible for young people<sup>5</sup>. Throughout 2023 we will conduct a significant programme of stakeholder engagement, consultation, and research, including working closely with Government officials, with the results published in late 2024. We would be happy to provide further updates to the Committee as this work progresses.

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<sup>1</sup> [state-of-the-nation-2019.pdf](https://www.state-of-the-nation-2019.pdf) (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations | The Careers and Enterprise Company](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/hqoami3t/state-of-the-nation-2019.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/hqoami3t/state-of-the-nation-2019.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/latest/new-recommendations-published-outlining-the-future-for-an-all-age-careers-system>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/latest/good-career-guidance-the-next-10-years-reflections-from-sir-john-holman>

## 2. WHY ARE SO MANY SCHOOLS NOT MEETING THE BENCHMARKS IN FULL? SHOULD FURTHER MEASURES BE TAKEN TO ENFORCE THEM TO DO SO, FOR EXAMPLE THROUGH OFSTED OR BY MAKING THEM A STATUTORY REQUIREMENT?

### REACHING THE BENCHMARKS

- 11 To adopt and fully meet all eight Benchmarks is a significant undertaking for a school or college. Each of the eight Benchmarks consist of a series of measurable 'sub criteria' (see Appendix 1). It requires not just links with employers, setting up interviews with a careers advisor, or interrogating labour market information, but changing the culture of the institution – through appointment of a Careers Leader, backing from the senior leadership team, and year-on-year adaptation of a careers programme as part of a whole-institution planning.
- 12 The positive impact of career guidance and the Benchmarks on education outcomes, particularly student destinations<sup>6</sup>, academic performance<sup>7</sup>, and earnings<sup>8</sup> demonstrates that career guidance has a vital role to play in whole-institution improvement and deserves investment, but this takes time.
- 13 However, we are hugely encouraged that average Benchmark scores have increased from less than two Benchmarks<sup>9</sup> (1.87) in 2017 to just under 5 out of 8 Benchmarks less than five years later. *Compass*, the digital self-evaluation tool co-developed by Gatsby and the CEC, allows schools and colleges to track their progress against the Benchmarks. Data from this tool shows the degree to which each individual Benchmark is being achieved. Five of the Benchmarks are being fully or partially met by 100 per cent of schools and colleges. The remaining three Benchmarks are being at least partially met by 94 per cent of schools and colleges. This demonstrates both that significant progress is being made and that achieving the Benchmarks is possible across all types of institution.

Government funded Career Leader training and Careers Hub membership continues to be rolled across the country by the CEC. There are currently 65% of schools and colleges in a Hub, and 2,700 Careers Leaders have been trained. Data shows that both of these things accelerate progress towards achieving the Benchmarks, and the longer a school or college is in a Hub the greater the progress made. We cannot expect all institutions to have made the same progress when they have not yet had access to the same support

### BALANCING ACCOUNTABILITY AND INCENTIVES

- 14 The Gatsby Benchmarks have formed the bedrock of careers guidance as laid down in statutory guidance for secondary schools, and guidance for colleges, since 2018. This has been further strengthened by the inclusion of the Benchmarks in Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework<sup>10</sup>, and most recently through the enhanced legislation around encounters with education and training providers<sup>11</sup>. This is particularly welcome as the Benchmarks state that information be shared about the full range of providers of education and training that students may move onto, including colleges, apprenticeship providers and universities. All students deserve to find out about the full range of pathways available to them rather than having options artificially closed off for them. This does, however, represent a significant shift for many schools or colleges. Our evidence shows that school staff are most confident speaking

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<sup>6</sup> [The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)

<sup>7</sup> Motivated to Achieve: How encounters with the world of work can change attitudes and improve academic attainment. Education and Employers: <https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Motivated-to-Achieve-Final-Full-report-Embargo-6th-June-1.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Education & Employers (2011) 'It's who you meet: why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults' [https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/its\\_who\\_you\\_meet\\_final\\_26\\_06\\_12.pdf](https://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/its_who_you_meet_final_26_06_12.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [state-of-the-nation-2017.pdf \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [School inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

about A-levels and academic options, and young people recall being spoken to about A-levels far more often than any other education or training option<sup>12</sup>

- 15 Progress towards the Benchmarks has been driven by expert practitioners across education who are committed to the successful progression of their students. This expertise has been supported by government funded Careers Leaders, Careers Hubs, Cornerstone Employers, online resources, and a vibrant careers guidance community.
- 16 We consider the current balance of system drivers to be broadly right. Ofsted reinforce this view, noting that more schools have an integrated and effective careers strategy since the publication of the Careers Strategy<sup>13</sup>. However, more could be done. The system of support for schools and colleges, particularly Career Leader training and Hubs should be rolled out as quickly as possible to every school and college, and the importance of careers guidance should be embedded into the training and mindset of all senior leaders and all curriculum teaching staff.

**3. WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS SET OUT BY SIR JOHN HOLMAN IN HIS REVIEW OF THE CAREERS GUIDANCE SYSTEM IN ENGLAND (RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE DFE)? IN PARTICULAR, THE QUESTION OF ALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE COMPANY (CEC) AND NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE (NCS) AND WHETHER THEY SHOULD BE MERGED INTO A SINGLE BODY?**

- 17 Sir John Holman's principles broadly align with Gatsby's vision for improving career guidance in England. We are particularly supportive of the idea of embedding a single source of data to drive understanding about the labour market<sup>14</sup>, and quality assurance through institutions supporting each other to drive improvement.
- 18 We strongly agree with the principle that the Careers & Enterprise Company should continue with its work to support schools and colleges reach the Gatsby Benchmarks. As we have seen, the support it provides through training and Careers Hubs is vital for accelerating progress and needs to be rolled out to every school or college within the next two years.
- 19 Sir John Holman correctly identified some areas of overlap between the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), National Careers Service (NCS) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and the impact this has on effectiveness, value for money and public understanding of the support available. The overlap between the CEC and NCS is primarily through its audience (the CEC supports education institutions for young people, and the NCS's website and chat function are accessible by young people directly), but their activities and functions are not duplicated. Therefore, we agree that, as outlined in John Holman's first Strategic Principle, rather than merging these organisations, a common strategic framework and branding is needed to increase public understanding and bring more coherence to all elements of the careers system across DFE and DWP.

**4. YOU MENTIONED IN YOUR WRITTEN EVIDENCE THAT YOU WERE COMMISSIONING RESEARCH INTO THE ROLE OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD, NATIONAL CITIZENS SERVICE AND THE PRINCES TRUST. ANY FURTHER UPDATES AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THIS WORK WOULD BE HELPFUL.**

- 20 In Spring 2022, Gatsby commissioned the Centre for Education and Youth to carry out an exploratory study into the role of youth organisations in supporting the delivery of good career guidance. We also spoke to a number of organisations involved in youth work who provide non-formal or informal learning to young people.

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<sup>12</sup> School, college, and student perspectives on information shared about educational pathways: Gatsby Benchmark 7 <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/careers/pye-tait-gatsby-benchmark-7-research-into-school-and-college-relationships.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> [Building confidence, encouraging aspiration - Ofsted: schools, early years, further education and skills \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> 'Gatsby-published research maps how LMI supports career guidance'

Gatsby.org.uk. <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/latest/gatsby-published-research-maps-how-lmi-supports-career-guidance1>

- 21 We found that the landscape is hugely varied, and youth organisations face pressures in terms of time, funding and expertise, especially when career guidance is not an explicit objective for many of these organisations.
- 22 However, there is evidence that career guidance in these settings can be beneficial for young people particularly those whose full-time education is disrupted, and there is potential for youth organisations to be supported to play a greater role in career guidance. The final report has been shared with CEC to support their work around careers awareness training. Work is in the early stages, but we know that the CEC have identified youth organisations in their wider strategy as an influential audience for the most disadvantaged students. The CEC are also using insights from our study to develop resources for multi-agency staff working with young people who are Electively Home Educated.
- 23 The study has also informed Gatsby's thinking around the future of the Benchmarks, which will consider those young people not in full-time education.
- 24 This work is unpublished however we can share a summary with the Committee on request.

## CONCLUSION

- 25 The publication of the Benchmarks, alongside the commitment of schools and colleges, has already led to the largest improvement in career guidance for young people in a generation. The coherent framework that the Benchmarks provides has already resulted in; millions of young people being exposed to a wider range of potential career options; improved GCSE attainment for students whose school or college achieves a greater number of Benchmarks; and a greater likelihood of a positive education or employment destinations after leaving school. But the job is not yet complete. Government must continue to invest in establishing the buildings blocks of a world-class careers system. The training of Careers Leaders and the establishment of Careers Hubs must be rolled out at pace if all young people are to make ambitious and informed choices about their future. Changing course now would undermine the impressive progress being made across the country.

# APPENDIX A

## THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

### GATSBY BENCHMARKS FOR SCHOOLS

| BENCHMARK  | SUMMARY   | CRITERIA  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>1. A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME</b>                         | Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers and employers.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it.</li> <li>• The careers programme should be published on the school's website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers and employers to access and understand it. The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process.</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION</b> | Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options.</li> <li>• Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3. ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH PUPIL</b>                 | Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.</li> <li>• Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil, and subsequent agreed decisions. All pupils should have access to these records to support their career development.</li> <li>• Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for</li> </ul>  |

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|  |   | each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school.   |
| <b>4. LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS</b>       | All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>5. ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES</b>      | Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter* with an employer.</li> </ul> <p>*A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.</p>   |
| <b>6. EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES</b>                    | Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.</li> <li>By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>7. ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION</b> | All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter* with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and pupils.</li> <li>By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and pupils.</li> </ul> <p>*A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the student has an</p> |

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|                             |  | opportunity to explore what it is like to learn in that environment.  |
| <b>8. PERSONAL GUIDANCE</b> | Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every pupil should have at least one such interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18.</li> </ul> |

## GATSBY BENCHMARKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN COLLEGES

| BENCHMARK  | SUMMARY   | CRITERIA  |
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| <b>1. A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME</b>                         | Every college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by learners, parents, teachers, employers and other agencies.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every college should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it.</li> <li>• The careers programme should be published on the college's website in a way that enables learners, parents, college staff and employers to access and understand it.</li> <li>• The programme should be regularly evaluated, with feedback from learners, parents, college staff and employers as part of the evaluation process.</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION</b> | Every learner, and their parents (where appropriate), should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During their study programme, all learners should access and use information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options.</li> <li>• Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform</li> </ul>   |

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|  |  | <p>their support to the learners in their care.</p>   |
| <p><b>3. ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT</b></p>    | <p>Learners have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each learner. A college's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A college's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.</li> <li>• Colleges should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each learner, and subsequent agreed decisions.</li> <li>• The records of advice given should be integrated with those given at the previous stage of the learner's education (including their secondary school) where these are made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition.</li> <li>• All learners should have access to these records to support their career development. Colleges should collect and maintain accurate data for each learner on their education, training or employment destinations.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>4. LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS</b></p>  | <p>All subject staff should link curriculum learning with careers, even on courses which are not specifically occupation-led. For example, STEM subject staff should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths. Study programmes should also reflect the importance of maths and English as a key expectation from employers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout their programme of study (and by the end of their course) every learner should have had the opportunity to experience how their subjects help people gain entry to (and be more effective workers within) a wide range of occupations.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>5. ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES</b></p> | <p>Every learner should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and should include learners' own part-time employment where it exists.</p>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every year, alongside their study programme, learners should participate in at least two meaningful encounters* with an employer. At least one encounter should be delivered through their curriculum area.</li> <li>• Colleges should record and take account of learners' own part-time employment</li> </ul>  |

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|  |  | <p>and the influence this has had on their development.</p> <p>*A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the learner has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.</p>  |
| <b>6. EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES</b>                    | <p>Every learner should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of their study programme, every learner should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>7. ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION</b> | <p>All learners should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes, and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the end of their programme of study, every learner should have had a meaningful encounter* with a range of providers of learning and training that may form the next stage of their career. This should include, as appropriate, further education colleges, higher education and apprenticeship and training providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and learners.</li> </ul> <p>*A 'meaningful encounter' is one in which the learner has an opportunity to explore what it is like to learn in that environment.</p> |
| <b>8. PERSONAL GUIDANCE</b>                            | <p>Every learner should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of college staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level*. These should be available for all learners whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all learners, but should be timed to meet individual needs.</p> <p>*The college should ensure that access to a level 6 adviser is available when needed.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every learner should have at least one such interview by the end of their study programme.</li> </ul>  |