

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

GOOD CAREER GUIDANCE THE NEXT 10 YEARS



SUMMARY OF UPDATES TO THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

THIS DOCUMENT

Here we share the updated Gatsby Benchmarks. Changes are highlighted, along with an explanation of what's new and what has stayed the same. We hope this helps careers leaders and others get up to speed quickly and plan for when the updated benchmarks are included in upcoming statutory guidance.



GATSBY

CONTEXT

An updated version of the Gatsby Benchmarks was published in late 2024 as part of Gatsby's report *Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years*. This was the result of two years of research and consultation, drawing on international evidence and listening to young people and the educators who have been putting the benchmarks into practice. The aim was to future-proof the benchmarks as the standard for world-class careers guidance for young people.

Our priority was to reflect the latest evidence on what best supports young people's outcomes while recognising the need for stability, in light of the benchmarks' widespread adoption and impact in recent years. The eight Benchmarks remain in place, but with key refinements to the summary descriptions and measurable criteria. For full details of this work and the evidence and good practice we uncovered, see our [full report](#).

These updates are now being embedded into government policy, with implementation in schools and colleges set for 2025. National support for implementation will be available through the [Careers & Enterprise Company \(CEC\)](#).



KEY THEMES IN THE UPDATES

Five prominent themes emerged from the evidence uncovered during our review.

Alongside the specific wording changes, we would encourage all practitioners to take this opportunity to reflect on their careers programme in light of these themes and consider how it can best meet the needs of all young people they support.

CAREERS AT THE
HEART OF EDUCATION
AND LEADERSHIP

INCLUSION AND
IMPACT FOR
EACH AND EVERY
YOUNG PERSON

MEANINGFUL AND
VARIED ENCOUNTERS
AND EXPERIENCES

FOCUSING ON THE
USE OF INFORMATION
AND DATA

ENGAGEMENT
OF PARENTS
AND CARERS

Careers at the heart of education and leadership

Careers guidance is both a whole-staff and a whole-school endeavour. We have emphasised linking careers to the school's vision and strategic plans, acknowledged the importance of staff development and included distinct responsibilities for leadership, governors, careers leaders and careers advisers.

Inclusion and impact for each and every young person

Woven through multiple benchmarks are updates that emphasise the importance of tailoring programmes to the needs of each young person. Particular attention is given to inclusion and any additional or different support that may be needed by vulnerable or disadvantaged young people and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Meaningful and varied encounters and experiences

We have emphasised the importance of flexible delivery and the need to focus on the impact of encounters and experiences on young people. The definitions of 'meaningful' have been expanded in Benchmarks 5 and 7 and a new definition added to Benchmark 6. These definitions highlight the need to offer a variety of encounters and experiences, ensure young people have time to prepare and reflect, and use technology to enhance – rather than replace – in-person activities.

Focusing on the use of information and data

We have ensured that all young people can explore all future pathways equitably. The focus is now on using information to inform decision-making. Data collection has been refocused to include aspirations and intended destinations, to help tailor support. Longer-term and sustained destinations data remain important as part of the evaluation process.

Engagement of parents and carers

Parents and carers are one of the biggest influences on young people's career decision-making. Updates embed parent and carer engagement into planning and specify the need to share information with parents and carers and to support them to use it with their children.



UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK I

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
I A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME	Every school and college should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents and carers, teachers staff, governors, and employers and other agencies .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of governors, the headteacher and the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person careers leader responsible for it. • The careers programme should be tailored to the needs of pupils, sequenced appropriately, underpinned by learning outcomes and linked to the whole-school development plan. It should also set out how parents and carers will be engaged throughout. • The careers programme should be published on the school's website and communicated in a ways that enables pupils, parents and carers, teachers staff and employers to access and understand it. • The programme should be regularly evaluated with using feedback from pupils, parents and carers, teachers and other staff who support pupils, careers advisers and employers as part of the evaluation process to increase its impact.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- We explicitly recognise the crucial role of a trained careers leader who is responsible for overseeing the school's careers programme and the important role of headteachers, governors and wider leadership in ensuring the careers programme is woven into the strategy for the whole school.
- We set out that the careers programme should be tailored to the needs of young people, underpinned by learning outcomes, sequenced appropriately and linked to the wider improvement priorities in the school's development plan.
- Careers programmes should now detail how parents and carers will be engaged throughout, as a key influencer of young people's career decisions.
- The careers programme should now be published online but also communicated effectively to key stakeholders.
- We have broadened the stakeholders required to feed into evaluating the careers programme to include careers advisers and all staff who support young people. There is greater emphasis on the purpose of evaluation – to increase the careers programme's impact on young people.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK 2

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
2 LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION	<p>Every All pupils, and their parents and carers, teachers and staff who support pupils should have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options, and labour market opportunities. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers may require different or additional information. They All pupils will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During each Key Stage By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about careers, pathways and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options or next steps. • Parents and carers should be encouraged, and supported to access and use information about careers, pathways and the labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children for pupils in their care.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- We specify that teachers and all other staff supporting young people should have access to good-quality, up-to-date information about future pathways, study options and labour market opportunities. They are key careers influencers and are now explicitly recognised alongside parents and young people.
- We clarify that young people with SEND and their parents and carers may require different or additional information.
- Young people will still need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.
- We have retained the expectation for good-quality, up-to-date labour market information (LMI) to be accessed and used by young people, but this should now be during each Key Stage, rather than by the age of 14.
- We now refer to decisions on next steps, in addition to study options.
- We emphasise the importance of supporting parents and carers to access and use information, rather than just encouraging them to do so. This will help schools develop their two-way relationship with parents and carers and ensure young people receive more consistent support with their decision-making.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK 3

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
<p>3 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH PUPIL: YOUNG PERSON</p>	<p>Pupils have different careers guidance needs at different stages. Careers programmes should help pupils navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression. In addition, opportunities for advice and support need to should be tailored to the needs of each pupil, including any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils, young people with SEND and those who are absent. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge misconceptions and stereotypical thinking, showcase a diverse range of role models and raise aspirations. • Schools should keep systematic records of the participation of pupils in all aspects of their careers programme, including the individual advice given to each pupil, and any subsequent agreed decisions. • For pupils who change schools during the secondary phase, information about participation and the advice given previously should be integrated into a pupil's records, where this information is made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition. • All pupils should have access to these records and use them ahead of any key transition points to support their next steps and career development. • Schools should collect, and maintain; and use accurate data for each pupil on their aspirations, intended and immediate education, and training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school. to inform personalised support. • Schools should use sustained and longer-term destination data as part of their evaluation process and use alumni to support their careers programme.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK:
BENCHMARK 3
Continued

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion have now been embedded across all eight benchmarks, rather than just in Benchmark 3.
- Schools should help young people navigate their concerns about any barriers to career progression they may experience.
- We have retained the requirement that staff should work together to ensure opportunities across the careers programme are tailored to the needs of each young person. We now state that this includes any additional needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, young people with SEND and those who are absent.
- Alongside challenging stereotypical thinking as an important element of good careers guidance, we have added the need to challenge misconceptions and showcase a diverse range of role models, including alumni.
- Record-keeping has been enhanced. We have added the need to track young people's participation in their entire careers programme, as well as the individual advice given to them. Young people should access and use these records to support their career development and ahead of key transition points. If young people change secondary school, records should be shared where possible.
- We have broadened the approach to destination data, placing greater emphasis on schools collecting, maintaining, and using a wider range of data – including aspirations, intended destinations, and immediate destinations – to inform personalised support for each young person.
- The collection of destination data for three years after young people leave school has been replaced with a focus on the use of sustained and long-term destination data as part of the evaluation process.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK 4

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
4 LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS	<p>As part of the school's programme of careers education all teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM Subject teachers should highlight the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of STEM subjects the knowledge and skills developed in their subject for a wide range of career pathways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the age of 14 Every year, in every subject, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects knowledge and skills developed in that subject helps people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers. • Careers should form part of the school's ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support pupils.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- We clarify that linking curriculum learning with careers should be part of the school's overall programme of careers education, that takes place both within subject lessons and across the wider curriculum and timetable.
- All subjects and courses (rather than just STEM subjects), every year, should now contain opportunities to learn about links into different careers.
- We recognise the role of subject teachers in highlighting the progression routes for their subject and the relevance of the knowledge and skills developed to a range of future career paths.
- Careers should now form part of the school's ongoing staff development programme for teachers and all staff who support young people.



UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK 5

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
5 ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES	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 activities opportunities , including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, and could include pupils' own part-time employment where it exists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter* with an employer.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- Changes to the wording of Benchmark 5 are minimal, but we have expanded the definition of what constitutes a 'meaningful' encounter. For example, the definition makes it clear that encounters should focus on the skills valued in the workplace, including recruitment processes and what it takes to be successful. Encounters with employers of different sizes and specialisms (including the self-employed) are now expected, and activity should also reflect trends in the labour market regionally and nationally. There should be sufficient time for young people to understand and prepare for the encounters beforehand, and to reflect afterwards on what they have learned.
- Young people's own part-time employment, where it exists, can now be taken into account as an encounter provided the same threshold of 'meaningful' is met.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK:
BENCHMARK 5
Continued

DEFINING 'MEANINGFUL' IN BENCHMARK 5:
ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

A meaningful encounter gives the young person the opportunity to learn about what work is like, what skills are valued in the workplace, their recruitment processes and what it takes to be successful. Throughout a careers programme, young people should encounter employers of different sizes and specialisms, including the self-employed, that reflect trends in the labour market, regionally and nationally. These encounters could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual, where appropriate. Both the young person and employers should be supported to prepare for the encounter. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

A meaningful encounter will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and the young person
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the young person
- have opportunities for two-way interactions between the young person and the employer
- be followed by time for the young person to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through the encounter

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK 6

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
6 EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES	Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplaces 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"> By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one meaningful experiences of a workplaces; additional to any part-time jobs they may have. By the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further such meaningful experience; additional to any part-time jobs they may have.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- We have pluralised pre-16 experiences of workplaces, rather than specifying a minimum requirement of at least one, highlighting the value of progressive experiences throughout a young person's time in education.
- Similarly to Benchmark 5, we have added a definition of 'meaningful' to ensure experiences have, for example, a clear agreed purpose, extensive two-way interaction, and suitable preparation and reflection time.
- Experiences can take many forms, including through visits to workplaces, work shadowing and/or work experience. We clarify that virtual experiences can complement but not wholly replace in-person experiences for any young person.
- The definition of 'meaningful' clarifies that meaningful part time work can be considered as part of a young person's careers programme.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK:
BENCHMARK 6
Continued

DEFINING 'MEANINGFUL' IN BENCHMARK 6:
EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES

A meaningful experience gives the young person the opportunity to explore what it is like to work in that environment, what skills are valued in the workplace, their recruitment processes and what it takes to be successful. This could be achieved through visits to workplaces, work shadowing and/or work experience. Throughout the careers programme these experiences could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual, where appropriate. Both the young person and employers should be supported to prepare for the experience. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with SEND.

A meaningful experience will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and the young person
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the young person
- involve extensive two-way interactions between the young person and employees
- include opportunities for young people to meet a range of different people from the workplace
- include opportunities for young people to perform a task set by the employer or to produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace
- include the employer providing feedback to the young person about their work
- be followed by opportunities for the young person to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through their experience

Schools, colleges and independent training providers (ITPs) can take into account any part-time work a young person may have, if it genuinely offers them a meaningful experience.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK 7

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
7 ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including This includes both academic, technical and vocational routes. This should incorporate and learning in schools, colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), universities and in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter^{s*} with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers ITPs. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and learners/trainees. By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university to higher education should have had at least two visits to a university higher education providers to meet staff and pupils learners.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- Terminology has been updated to better reflect the education and training landscape, with independent training providers (ITPs) now listed as a provider type, and technical education now explicitly referenced.
- Benchmark 7 for schools now specifies that young people should have encounters with the full range of provider types by age 16.
- The definition of what constitutes a 'meaningful encounter' with providers of further and higher education and training has been expanded. For example, encounters can be in-person or a combination of in-person and virtual. Encounters should be sequenced throughout the careers programme so that a young person can build up a clear picture of what is available to them and explore what it is like to develop and succeed in different environments. Young people should be provided with information about recruitment and selection processes, the qualifications providers offer, and the careers these could lead to. There should be the opportunity to meet both staff and learners.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK:
BENCHMARK 7
Continued

DEFINING 'MEANINGFUL' IN BENCHMARK 7:
ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

A meaningful encounter gives the young person the opportunity to explore what it is like to learn, develop and succeed in that environment. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and learners/trainees. Throughout a careers programme, encounters should be sequenced so that a young person can build up a clear picture of opportunities available to them. Experiences or encounters could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual and could include providers delivering sessions in a school, college or ITP, as well as young people visiting the provider. Young people and providers should be supported to prepare for the encounter. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with SEND.

A meaningful encounter will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the provider and the young person
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the young person
- involve a two-way interaction between the young person and the provider
- include information about the provider, such as their recruitment and selection processes, the qualifications that provider offers and the careers these could lead to
- describe what learning or training with the provider is like
- be followed by opportunities for the young person to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through the encounter.

UPDATES BY BENCHMARK: BENCHMARK 8

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY	CRITERIA
8 PERSONAL GUIDANCE	<p>Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews meetings with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These meetings should be available for all pupils whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed scheduled to meet their individual needs. The careers leader should work closely with the careers adviser, SEND coordinator (SENDCO) and other key staff to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded in the careers programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every pupil should have at least one such interview personal guidance meeting with a careers adviser by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview meeting by the age of 18. Meetings should be scheduled in the careers programme to meet the needs of pupils. • Information about personal guidance support and how to access it should be communicated to pupils and parents and carers, including through the school website.

SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES

- The word 'interview' has been replaced with 'meeting' to better reflect the style of sessions with a careers adviser.
- We have specified that meetings should be scheduled in the careers programme to meet the individual needs of young people.
- Key staff (including careers leaders, careers advisers, and SENDCOs) are now encouraged to work together to ensure personal guidance is effective and embedded into the wider careers programme.
- In schools, as previously in colleges, all young people should have a personal guidance meeting by age 18, in addition to their meeting by age 16.
- The arrangements for personal guidance should now be published on the school's website and communicated to young people and their parents and carers, to help them make the most of the opportunity.

The CEC is preparing further guidance on implementing the updated Gatsby Benchmarks.

For more information and to read the full report, go to gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk

