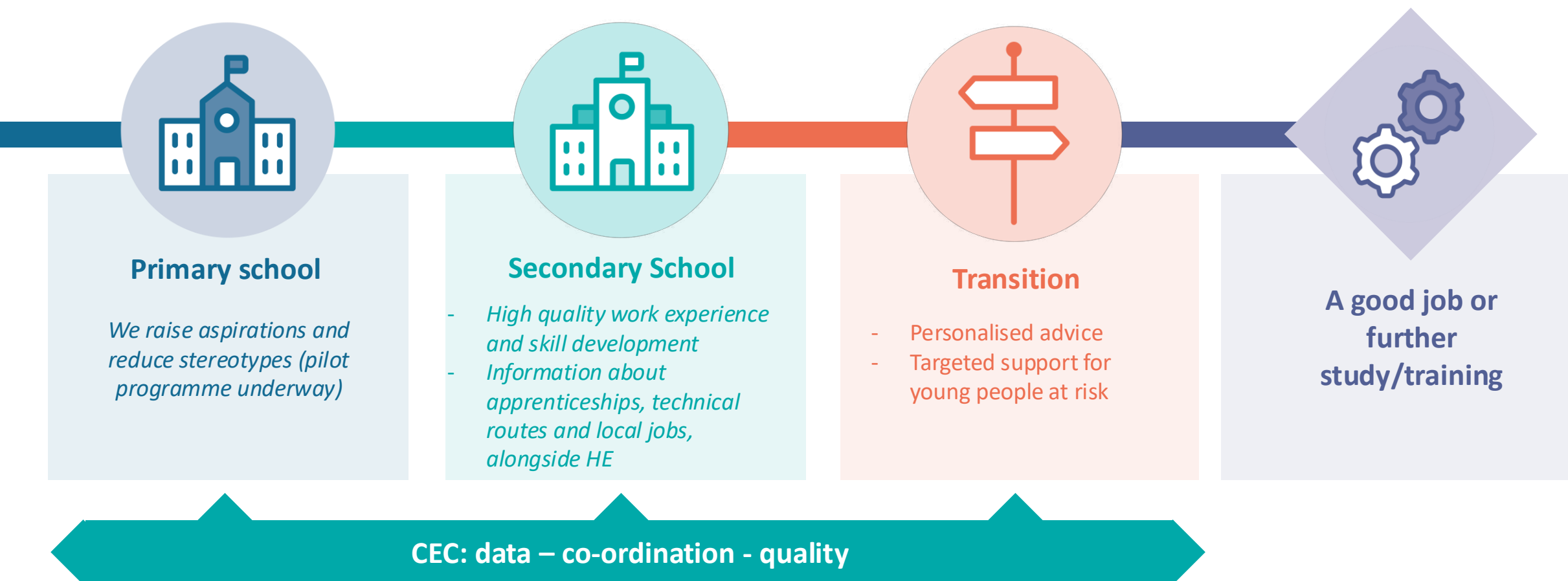


A quality first approach to careers



THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Our approach: a pathway to fulfilling work



Updated Statutory Guidance for Careers

Launched 8th May
2025

1. **Continuous improvement:** central focus, implementation of updated BMs from September 2025
2. Sets direction of travel for a “**work experience guarantee**”
3. Consolidates focus on **Provider Access Legislation** and equity of technical education pathways

What does this mean for your BM scores?

- The Gatsby Benchmarks have been **updated as part of a continuous improvement** effort to ensure career guidance remains meaningful, inclusive, and aligned with the evolving needs of young people and the modern workforce.
- The updated Gatsby Benchmark requirements along with the updated statutory guidance, implementable from September, **aim to raise standards and close gaps**, with a sharper focus on vulnerable students to ensure meaningful, tailored guidance for all.
- To match these higher standards, **the Compass evaluations have been developed** with an expert-led approach, including through a rapid pilot testing exercise with 47 institutions (covering a representative range of benchmark scores, reviewed by a statistician and national ICEGs expert) and external cognitive testing with Careers Leaders.
- Testing has identified that fully achieving each benchmark will be more challenging — creating a ‘data reset’ moment across the system, where **Gatsby Benchmark scores will recalibrate**.
- While some updated questions may take time to fully embed- especially around more meaningful definitions- many can be supported quickly through **practical guidance and resources**, helping institutions continue to make strong progress.

Compass evaluation update

August

The upcoming Compass evaluation completion deadline (31 August) is the final opportunity to capture a full decade of progress, from as many institutions as possible, before the data system resets.

September

In the period between September 2025 – half-term October 2025, a comprehensive programme of support including guidance and resources will be available to Hubs, schools and colleges to support preparation for the completion of the updated Compass evaluation.

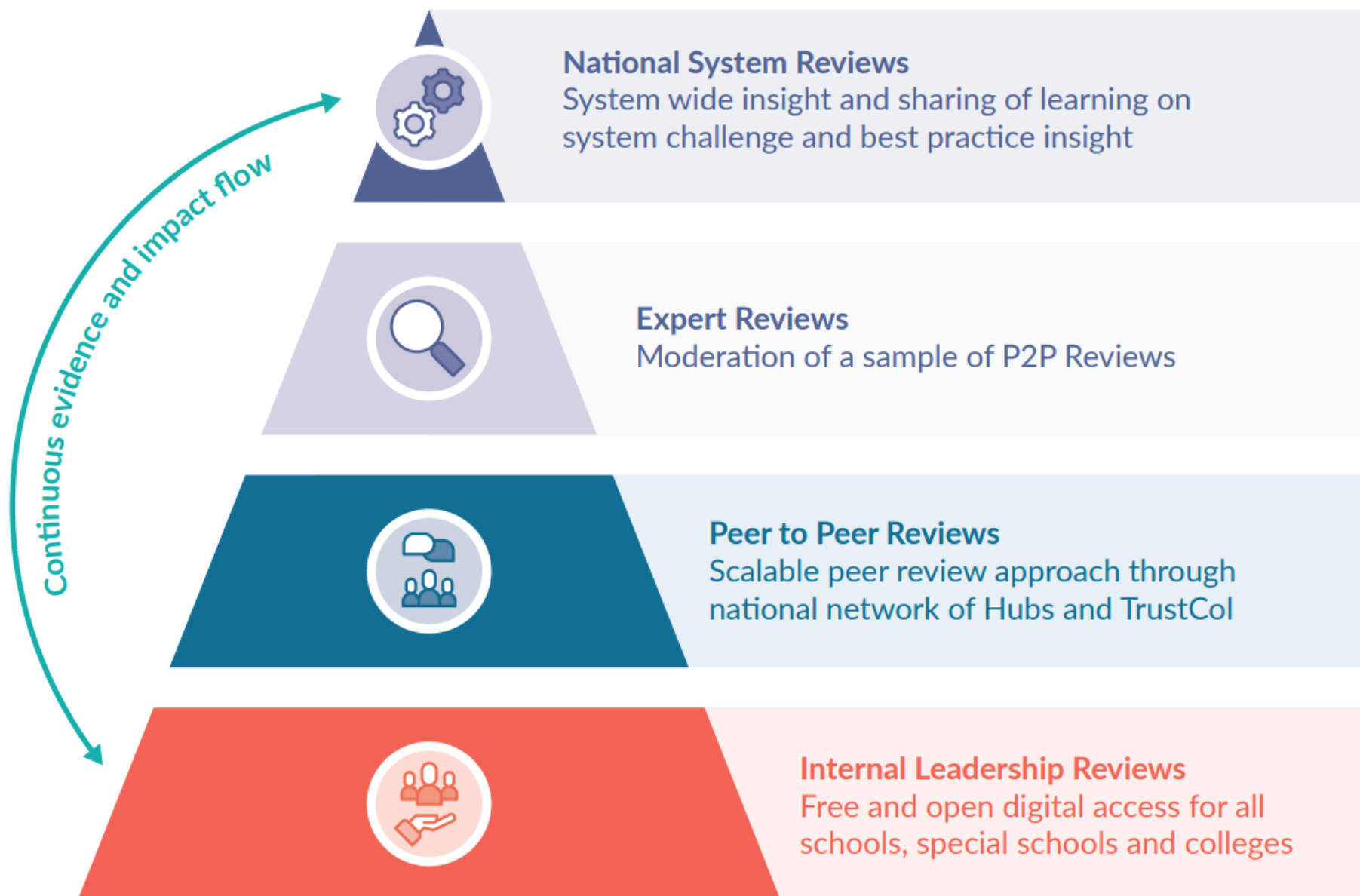
October

The new Compass evaluation will be available from October half term in both Compass and Compass+. Compass evaluation completions (from October 2025) will establish a new baseline and identify areas to prioritise support and target resources to build confidence across institutions.

Separately, from May 2025, additional questions have been added to the Benchmark 6 section of Compass evaluations to establish a national baseline to support measuring progress against the future work experience guarantee policy. These questions do not contribute towards an institution's Gatsby Benchmark score.

**Connecting careers to school and
college improvement and priorities**

Standardised continuous
improvement and quality
assurance of careers
across the system



Theme 1

Careers Leadership, vision and intent, and planning for development (Benchmark 1)

1.1 Careers leadership and distributed leadership of careers	There is a named Careers Leader.	<p>There is a named Careers Leader who has completed – or is in the process of completing – appropriate Career Leader training.</p> <p>Their role is clear within the staffing structure, and they have sufficient time to fulfil their responsibilities.</p>	<p>Leadership of careers includes a trained Careers Leader with line management at senior leadership level.</p> <p>Additionally, there is sufficient capacity and resources to deliver a strategic careers development plan.</p>	<p>Careers leadership is supported with specific training and is embedded across the staffing structure and within school or special school development planning. Systems and processes support a shared responsibility for delivery of careers across the school or special school, enabled by clearly defined roles and responsibilities.</p>
1.2 Leaders' vision and intent for careers	There is a school or special school vision that refers to preparing learners for their future.	<p>The school or special school vision includes specific reference to preparing learners for their future. There may be a related vision specifically for careers. The vision, <u>intent</u> and priorities for the development of the careers provision are shared with the senior leadership team, governors and staff.</p>	<p>The vision(s) informs the priorities for the development of the careers provision as well as relevant sections of the whole school or special school development plan.</p> <p>Senior leaders, governors and staff understand the vision, <u>intent</u> and priorities for the development of the careers provision.</p>	<p>The vision(s) shapes the priorities for the development of the careers provision and informs all relevant areas of the school or special school development plan.</p> <p>Senior leaders, governors and staff understand and are accountable for achieving the vision, intent, and priorities of the careers provision, in alignment with wider school or special school priorities.</p>

External evaluation of moderated peer-to-peer reviews

“There was strong evidence of long-term impact across the entire cohort of the institutions that took part in Careers Impact System peer-to-peer reviews in the 2021-22 academic year”

Chrysalis Research

Evidence of:

- *Increased education leader involvement in careers*
- *Greater focus on distributed leadership of careers*
- *Better understanding of how careers can support institutional improvement and development*
- *Improved clarity and focus of importance of learning outcomes*
- *Improved use of monitoring and evaluation tools*

equalex

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Modern work experience

Modern Work
Experience | The
Careers and Enterprise
Company

“Implementing 2 weeks’ worth of work experience

Our vision is that 2 weeks’ worth of work experience will be based on the following set of principles, building on the benchmark 6 definition of meaningful.

Two weeks’ worth of work experience should be broken down into:

- one weeks’ worth of work experience activities in years 7 to 9
- one weeks’ worth of work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11

Experiences should be aspirational and inspirational, giving young people the opportunity to access a wide range of career opportunities, aligned to their interests and talents, local skills needs and national growth sectors. Opportunity should go beyond the horizons of their immediate friends and family.

They should be co-designed and delivered in partnership with schools and involve two-way employer-pupil interaction.”

From Statutory Guidance – 8TH May 2025



What is the value of modern work experience?

Modern work experience will help young people to make informed choices and improve career readiness and employability by offering multiple, variable and targeted experiences throughout their education journey.



What is modern work experience?

A programme of modern work experience should:

- Prioritise young people who are missing out and provide targeted support
- Include experiences that are employer-led in their design
- Enable meaningful relationships between the employer and young person
- Start early, allowing access to multiple, different industries and occupations
- Be underpinned by learning outcomes, to ensure a progressive high-quality approach
- Offer meaningful experiences as defined in updated Gatsby Benchmark 6

equalex: A progressive approach

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Apply & Demonstrate



Investigate & Explore



Introduce & Inspire



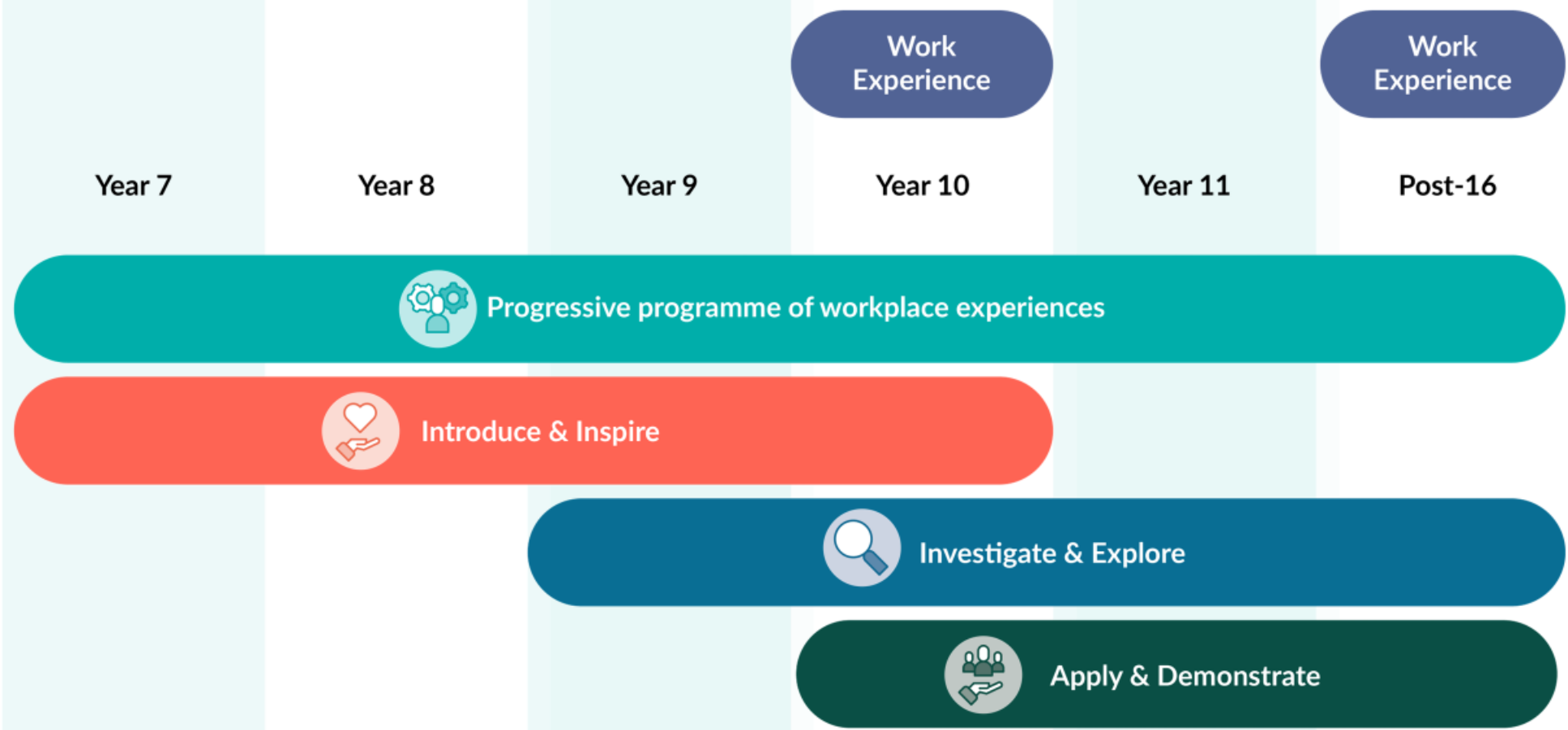
Low volume,
high depth

High volume,
low depth

Why take a progressive approach?

Traditional

equalex

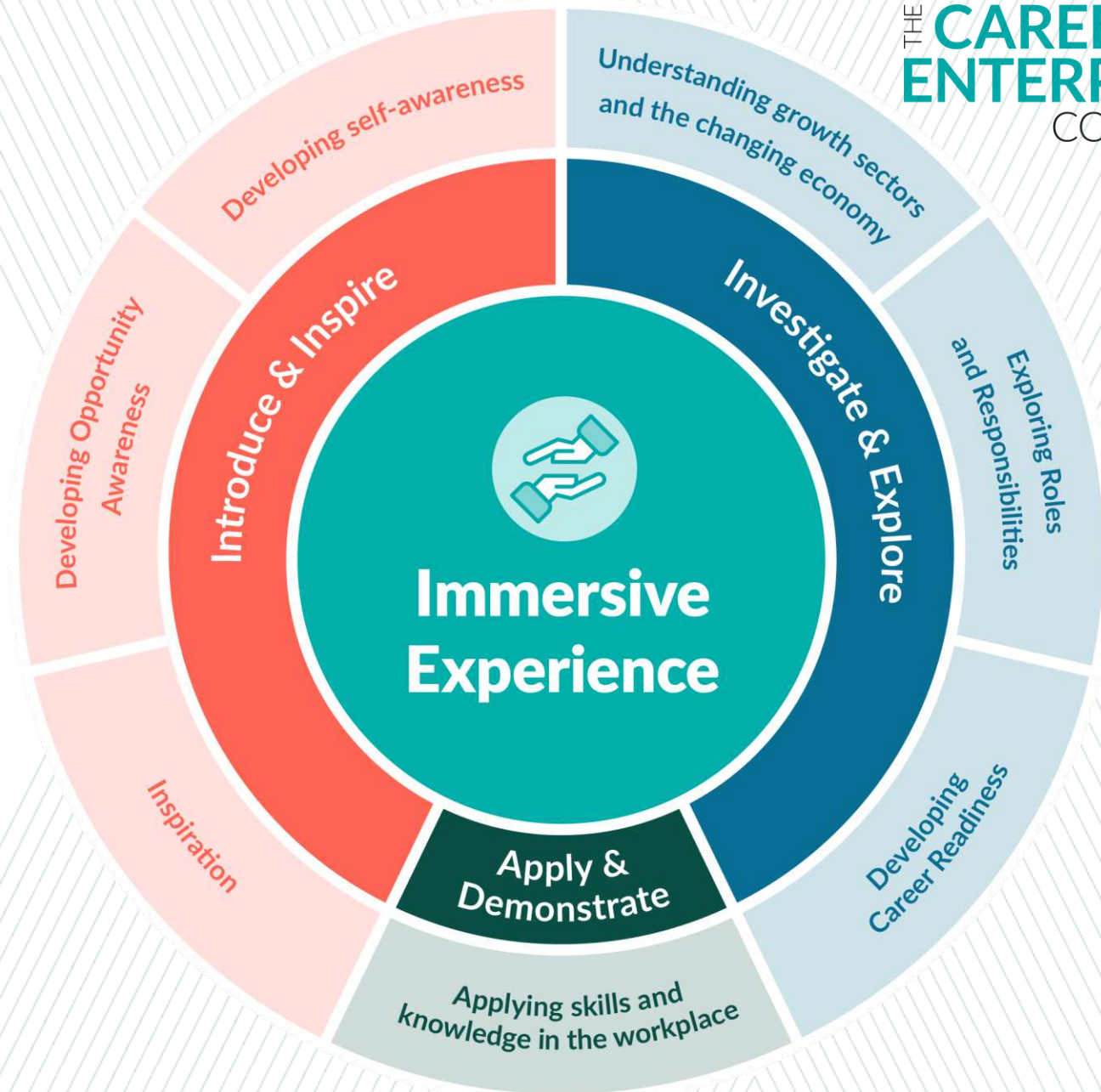


The equalex Learning Outcomes:

To meet the equalex quality standard for experiences of the workplace, students must have the opportunity to meet and evidence the learning outcomes across all 3 core themes.

We encourage innovation regarding delivery of this framework and have not provided guidelines on how the outcomes must be achieved.

Each of these learning aims and outcomes *could* be achieved via experiences of the workplace, but some can be mapped against other areas of a progressive careers programme (see learning outcomes & objectives doc).



**Full set of
equalex learner
objectives:**

**Launched on
16th June!**

[equalex learning outcomes and
objectives framework - v1.pdf](#)

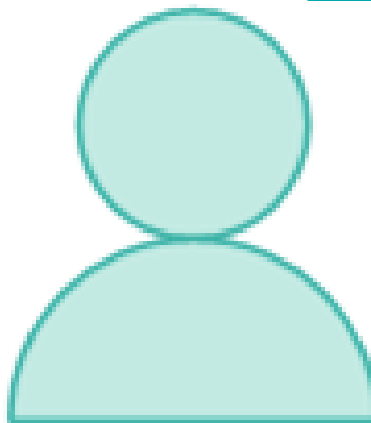
End of Year 11 – Sam's profile

Knowledge

- **Awareness of pathways** into a career in the digital industry and the roles associated with those pathways
- Has used the knowledge gained to help make **informed decisions** about their transition thinking through the range of options available to them at Post 16 and Post 18
- **Increased confidence** around their own skill set and how this can best support them in the future workplace

Behaviours

- Developed an **understanding of workplace culture** and how this differs across different sectors
- Developed **positive workplace behaviours** through multiple experiences
- **Feels confident** in making **positive informed decisions** regarding their **future options**



Skills

- Can **self-advocate** and **articulate the sector skills** they have developed to support future choices
- Equipped with the **skills** to support them in making a **successful transition**
- **Developed skills and qualifications** relevant to their chosen pathway through employer experiences and projects
- **Sees the relevance** of skills from their curriculum learning and qualifications to their future options

At the end of year 11, Sam;

- **Understands pathways and opportunities**
- **Realises own potential**
- **Sees the relevance of curriculum to workplace**
- **Has agency in own skills development**
- **Has improved careers readiness scores**
- **Has a line of sight to the future**

How does it all fit together?

Key components to drive quality





From
policy
ambition
to practice

Schools – reflect, plan, deliver

- Step 1** – Undertake an Internal Leadership Review (particularly theme 5 for work experience) and embed Future Skills Questionnaire into school culture
- Step 2** - Implement updated Benchmark 6 effectively. Access and use the tools and support CEC have provided for you
- Step 3** - Map your current year 7-11 provision, where and how do learners access workplaces across the curriculum and through year groups
- Step 4** - Identify gaps in your current provision. Use the equalex framework to highlight areas for improvement
- Step 5** – Work with leaders to develop a curriculum plan which aligns to a set of structured high quality learning outcomes to build employability and career readiness for all years/stages and all learners
- Step 6** - Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater – build on proven elements rather than starting from scratch
- Step 7** – Assess resource needs; what partnerships and support are needed to develop a progressive, high-quality, inclusive programme which is employer-led
- Step 8** – Take a breath and remember this is a longer-term ambition, progress against BM6 is the starting point

Thank you