

CEC Response to Curriculum and Assessment Review November 2024

What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways are working well to support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

Excellent practice exists where careers has been integrated into the curriculum.

As the national body for careers education, The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) supports schools and colleges in England to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks for good career guidance. They have been adopted nationally and are now embedded within careers education policy in England. They have been proven to be effective in improving the quality of career guidance for millions of young people and their outcomes.

92% of schools and colleges (over 4,751 institutions) now measure their careers provision using the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.

Since their adoption into statutory guidance in 2017, progress has more than doubled, from a starting position of an average score of 1.9 benchmarks to 5.8.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023-24/>

The Gatsby Benchmarks are making a positive difference to the outcomes of young people:

- Career readiness is increasing (increasing from 49% in Year 7 to 68% in Year 11)
<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/our-impact-2022-23/>
- The more Gatsby Benchmarks a school or college achieve the lower the number of young people becoming NEET
https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/zt0bgoa0/1488_destinations_report_v4.pdf

80% of schools and colleges are now fully meeting Benchmark 4 (Linking curriculum learning to careers) up from 70% in 2021/22. This is important as past CEC analysis shows a connection between increased benchmarks and improved rates of young people in employment, education or training. Excellent practice exists. Curriculum subject experts from the Academies Enterprise Trust (now LIFT) have worked with Pinewood Studios to create a suite of resources for Key Stage 3 and 4 students, which embed relevant workplace insight within maths curriculums.

https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/i1ieae2n/insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023_24-final.pdf

Resources developed for teachers include 'Filling a Film Studio, How can you maximise revenue through occupancy?'. This lesson, and others like it, highlights the relevance of core subjects and skills to a range of career paths to young people. Innovative employer led support allows teachers to enrich their curriculum lessons and widen the knowledge base of young people.

CEC has also worked with science teachers at the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and Pfizer to develop the 'Breakthrough Science' curriculum resources: <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/pfizer-breakthrough-science-curriculum-resources>

These are free digital resources for teachers and their students in KS3 & 4 and cover four key science topics from the science curriculum. Applicable across specifications, but based on the AQA GCSE Combined Science: Trilogy (8464) Specification. There are four topics: Separating techniques, acids and bases, clinical trials and testing for purity. Each lesson has both curriculum and careers learning objectives and is accompanied by a lesson slide deck and teacher guide.

CEC have developed My Learning My Future:

https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/explore/all-resources-all-one-place?f%5B0%5D=All&search_api_fulltext=pinewood&sort_bef_combine=changed_DESC

This is a suite of resources which equips subject teachers to help students see how the knowledge and skills they learn can open doors to a variety of careers. These resources show students how their subjects connect to real-world jobs and help them become more effective in the workplace.

We have over 27,000 active users of the resources, demonstrating the appetite from curriculum leaders and teachers to bring their subjects to life.

What aspects of the current a) curriculum, b) assessment system and c) qualification pathways should be targeted for improvements to better support and recognise educational progress for children and young people?

As the national body for careers education the Careers & Enterprise Company see a significant opportunity to build upon recent improvements in young people's career readiness (<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/our-impact-2022-23/>) and better meet the ambitions of business and young people through curriculum and assessment reform. Helping young people get ready for work is an important goal for any curriculum and assessment system.

Reforms to the current national curriculum could be informed, implemented and embedded, using existing DfE-funded careers education infrastructure including, data ([Compass, Future Skills Questionnaire](#)), training (for [Careers Leaders](#) and [teachers](#)) and networks (of [Careers Hubs](#)). The Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) is a unique data set which allows us to gain feedback from students on how they feel about their knowledge, skills and career readiness. Completed at five key transition points from starting secondary to post-16 study, FSQ allows us to track students' progress and evaluate the extent to which the curriculum is equipping young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence that they need to take their next steps.

<https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info>

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/fsq-insight-briefing-2022-2023/>

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/careers-leaders/careers-leader-training/>

<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/teacher-encounter-resources>

At secondary and college level, reforms to the current curriculum could:

1. Ensure learners have access to a well-planned careers programme with progressive career-related learning outcomes. Students must be well placed to transition into and out of the identified pathways by rooting them in a broader progressive educational journey. starting from year 7 and characterised by high-quality careers education. This will mean continuing to support secondary schools and colleges to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks of good careers guidance, supporting all learners to understand all options at key transition points and coordinating efficient wraparound activity, such as engagement with parents and encounters with training providers. <https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/>
2. Ensure the pathways incorporate progressive employer and enrichment support to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that will serve young people well in life and work. In 2023/24, 85% of institutions achieved Gatsby Benchmark 5 (Encounters with employers and employees); 72% achieved Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces) and career readiness improved by 19%pts between Year 7 to 11 (49% to 68%, up by 1%pt), with largest increase between Years 10 and 11 (+10%pts) <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023-24/>
3. Consider the **Re-invention of Work experience**. *Too many young people are missing out on work experience. Disadvantaged young people are more likely to miss out than others, with 69% of schools serving the largest proportion of disadvantaged young people achieving Benchmark 6 (Experiences of workplaces), compared to 78% of schools serving the smallest proportion of disadvantaged students. This matters. We believe that a reinvented work experience offer underpinned by Gatsby Benchmarks 5 (encounters with employers and employees) & 6 (experiences of workplaces) has the chance to accelerate pupils' interest and acquisition of skills that will enable them to transition into the world of work.* <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/news/reinventing-work-experience-zoe-healey-industry-and-work-experience-lead/>

Space and time must be created within the curriculum structure to facilitate the delivery of a re-invented work experience model. High-quality work experience helps young people get ready for the world of work. When integrated into a structured careers programme - as defined by the Gatsby Benchmarks, work experience:

- Increases awareness of jobs and pathways like apprenticeships. <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/e5dhex0/cec-now-next-execsummary.pdf>
- Builds confidence in key skills like [speaking and listening, which we know from our Future Skills Questionnaire data young people say they are lacking.](#) <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/jxdbcb4g/fsq-insight-briefing-2022-2023.pdf>
- Reduces the likelihood of a young person becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) at 16 and 18. https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/zt0bgoa0/1488_destinations_report_v4.pdf <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/uh4jebzc/looking-deeper-at-destinations.pdf>

- CEC have designed a model, Equalex, a refreshed approach to work experience, that sits alongside other proven activity, designed to support two weeks' worth of high-quality work experience for every young person. The model is currently being piloted in 4 regions. **Key features of the Equalex model include:**
 - **Quality:** A multi-experience model that uses learning objectives to join activity together during a young person's time at school.
 - **Equity:** A minimum of 50 hours (two weeks' worth) of work experience - tailored days, blocked periods etc. - tracked at the learner and school level
 - **Flexibility:** Structured to support all types of school and business, including smaller employers.

At Primary level reforms to the current curriculum should consider:

1. That children develop unhelpful stereotypes and narrow their aspirations from as early as age 6. The introduction of career-related learning into the primary curriculum will be essential for standardising provision and expectations nationally and bringing them on a level with secondary provision so that pupils can successfully transition into the careers education system in secondary schools. The CEC has already done a lot of work in this space, including working with the National Literacy Trust (NLT) to include encounters with employers into Literacy learning through reading and storytelling. This approach demonstrated an increase in pupil awareness of the link between the school curriculum and the wider world and positive steps to tackling gender equality or other social barriers in the classroom – factors which support a successful onward transition.

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/words-for-work/words-work-dream-big/>

2. The introduction of career-related learning into the curriculum should be supported by employer related opportunities and experiences that maintain broad aspirations and build skills early. CEC's Primary Pilot, [Start Small; Dream Big](#) (<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/the-promise-of-primary/>), has, in only its first two waves, shown school careers provision and leadership commitment improves and teachers' careers-related knowledge and skills improves when primary schools are made part of the Careers Hub infrastructure and teachers trained in how to embed careers into the curriculum. In Wave 1, 55% included careers content in the curriculum (up from 14%) and 52% of schools had a formal written careers strategy in place (up from 10%). The CEC has also previously shown the [6 Principles of Career-related Learning](#) (<https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/file-download/download/public/231>) to be an effective best practice framework for primary level provision, that ladders neatly up to the Gatsby Benchmarks at secondary level.

In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation (class ceilings) for learners experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage?

There is a gap in career readiness between the most and least economically disadvantaged young people. The gap between students in receipt of FSM remains consistent across year groups, ranging from 2-5%pts lower than their more 'advantaged' peers.

This gap is highest for Year 11 students. Good careers provision outweighs the starting disadvantage gap by meeting young people's individual needs. Students in schools with the highest quality careers provision typically have a career readiness score 3.5%pts higher than those with poorer provision.

This is higher than the average disadvantage associated with receiving FSM, a 1.5%pt deficit.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/e5dhec0/cec-now-next-execsummary.pdf>

More recent data also shows that young people receiving FSM and girls are less confident about their career readiness skills. 86% of non-FSM students have considered which post-16 pathway might be right for them, compared to 75% of FSM students. 68% of non-FSM students report feeling confident about their next step after Year 11, compared to 58% of FSM students. 84% of non-FSM students report having a plan for their next step after Year 11, compared to 78% of FSM students.

Data collected by CEC in Summer 2024 (currently unpublished) showed that in the majority of schools and colleges, learners and parents were most frequently sourcing workplace experiences, indicating inequitable provision for young people and favouring those who have access to professional networks via family and friends.

We know that to close the disadvantage gap starting career education early is important. As longitudinal studies have shown, holding biased assumptions and having narrow aspirations can influence the academic effort children exert in certain lessons, the subjects they choose to study, and the jobs they end up pursuing (<https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/file-download/download/public/231>). CEC's 2019-21 DfE backed [Primary Fund](https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/file-download/download/public/231) file:///C:/Users/LesleyThain/Downloads/1491_Primary%20Fund%20Evaluation%20Report_Final_1.pdf found that including careers in learning for KS1 and 2 pupils had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress across the curriculum to a high/very high extent. This suggests that by not including careers into the primary curriculum as at secondary, there is a missed opportunity for learners. (<https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/file-download/download/public/564>).

In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers to improving attainment, progress, access or participation which may disproportionately impact pupils based on other protected characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity)?

Young people receiving FSM and girls report particular challenges. 58% of FSM students feel confident about their next step after Year 11, compared to 68% for non-FSM. By Year 11, only 51% of FSM girls feel sure about their ability to talk about their skills during interview, 15%pts lower than

their non-FSM male peers (66%) and 9%pts lower than FSM boys (60%). Girls are also 8%pts less likely to know how to find out how much they could earn in different types of jobs.

Good careers provision improves students' career readiness and can outweigh the disadvantage associated with being in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). Our previous analysis on 2022/23 data found that a student in a school providing the highest quality career provision (as measured by achieving all eight Gatsby Benchmarks) would typically have a career readiness score 3.5%pts higher than a student in a school achieving only one Gatsby Benchmark. Such provision is estimated to more than compensate for the average disadvantage associated with being in receipt of FSM (who typically have a 1.5%pts lower career readiness score than students not in receipt of FSM):

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/14cdf1b/cec-now-next-report.pdf>

Girls, regardless of their Free School Meals status, self-report being less optimistic and confident about their futures compared to boys. They also report significantly less independent interaction with sectors they are interested in. This trend is most pronounced among Year 11 FSM girls: only 35% have made contact with people who work in jobs that interest them, considerably lower than for non-FSM (45%) and FSM boys (43%).

Girls in Year 11 are also less likely to self-report feeling comfortable discussing their skills in interviews. Only 51% of FSM girls feel confident in their ability to talk about their skills during interview, 15%pts lower than their non-FSM male peers (66%) and 9%pts lower than FSM boys (60%). These disparities show the challenges girls, especially those eligible for FSM, face in developing their career readiness and understanding of sectors they might want to work in.

CEC is working with employers to deliver workplace experiences, which can provide a range of opportunities for young people to develop and test essential skills including speaking and listening skills. For example, Astrea Academy Dearne's workplace experience programme enables students to apply for a role and be interviewed by an employer, before taking part in mentoring sessions with the employer to complete a work-related project. We see positive outcomes from this innovation, with 76% of students who took part in this programme reporting that their speaking skills had improved, and 73% felt more confident about being ready for the world of work.

Girls are also 8%pts less likely to know how to find out how much they could earn in different types of jobs. In 2023, the UK average gender pay gap was 14.3%, increasing to 18.9% for female employees of private sector companies. If girls enter the workforce less aware of how much they can earn, they may well be less likely to aim for careers in higher-paying sectors. The enduring, corrosive effect could contribute to maintaining the wage disparity over time.

High quality careers education has the power to impact young people's industry understanding and interests. Analysis of student data shows that improved career readiness is strongly linked to improved alignment with the labour market. Students with the highest career readiness (responding positively to all questions) were more than twice as likely to have ideas about the industries they want to work in. These interests were both less likely to be influenced by gender-bias (e.g. girls were keener to choose engineering) and less likely to be in over-subscribed sectors:

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/14cdf1b/cec-now-next-report.pdf>

(these findings are due to be published by CEC towards the end of November)

In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any barriers in continuing to improve attainment, progress, access or participation for learners with SEND?

Through our networks and our Inclusion Community of Improvement we understand there are a range of challenges that young people with SEND face. These include:

- The lack of available supported apprenticeships which young people can access, and the effects of undertaking a supported apprenticeship on their benefits entitlement.
- Non-achievement of English and Maths, particularly for those young people without an EHCP means non-completion of their apprenticeship or study programme which can be a barrier to progression.
- Lack of appropriate progression routes due to lack of funding for Entry level quals in Post 16; young people end up in a cycle of entry level or level 1 courses with no real progression routes.
- Parental engagement and their sometimes-limited aspirations for their young person
- Travel can be a barrier to access suitable provision that meets the needs of the young person.
- A limited curriculum offer for SEND young people in mainstream provision and support available e.g. access to a teaching assessment
- Lack of sufficient funding to support young people with SEND
- Employers perceptions of young people with SEND and therefore lack of employer support during and on transition leading to lack of opportunities – linked to employer confidence and understanding around SEND
- Changes to traineeship offer – these were well utilised by SEND YP in preparation for apprenticeship and relevance now not available as widely meaning YP are pushed into routes they may not be ready for
- Waiting lists for diagnosis meaning appropriate support not in place
- Lack of Careers Advisors qualified to work in SEND settings

In the current curriculum, assessment system and qualification pathways, are there any enablers that support attainment, progress, access or participation for the groups listed above? [e.g. socioeconomically disadvantaged young people, pupils with SEND, pupils who are otherwise vulnerable, and young people with protected characteristics]

Understanding the motivations, barriers and aspirations of young people and tracking their variance over time is an imperative to inform a system that works for them.

The Careers & Enterprise Company created the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) to measure the career readiness of students at points of transition across secondary education. It is a student self-completion questionnaire that measures students' career readiness at key transition points across

secondary education. The data, aggregated across schools, provides national insight into student perceptions and how they compare according to stage of learning, student background and school characteristics.

During the 2023/24 academic year, over [230K young people \(insight-briefing-update-on-student-career-readiness-in-2021-22.pdf\)](#) reported on their industry interests, skills development, and career readiness which helps **track how the UK's skills and training system is equipping increasing numbers of people with these skills.**

This is an opportunity to mobilise the collective voice of students and use their insights to point to areas of progress and to where more support is needed to drive positive outcomes.

Special schools perform well against the Gatsby Benchmarks due to flexibility in curriculum, and through their preparation for adulthood curriculum deliver many of the skills needed. Special schools approach is more centred towards preparation for life beyond schools, and is more tailored and personalised to individual students' needs. The preparation for adulthood curriculum content enables young people to be better prepared for life. Young people with SEND in mainstream would benefit from a similar approach, as this allows the young person to make progress in line with ability and takes into account holistic young person.

Special schools are well engaged in Careers Hubs - 81% of SEND institutions participate.

Special schools are outperforming mainstream against Gatsby Benchmarks (5.6 in 2022/23 as compared with 5.5 national average). In particular, SEND schools achieve more than mainstream schools against:

- o GB3 (Addressing the needs of each pupil) (+15.4%pts),
- o GB6 (Experiences of workplaces) (+9.4%pts)
- o GB7 (Encounters with further and higher education) (+13.7%pts)
- o 25.5% of SEND institutions fully achieved 8 GBMs, as compared with 19.4% of all institutions.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/3grczffq/insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-2022-2023.pdf>

To what extent does the content of the national curriculum at primary level (key stages 1 and 2) enable pupils to gain an excellent foundation in a) English and b) maths? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim? [Please note, we invite views specifically on transitions between key stages in section 9.]

CEC's 2019-21 DfE backed [Primary Fund found](#) (<https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/file-download/download/public/564>) that including careers in learning for Ks1 and 2 pupils had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress across the curriculum to a high/very high extent. As part of the project, pupils were asked how important they thought maths, English and science were for getting a good job when they were an adult. Maths and English were deemed to be the most important for future careers. Notably, the percentage of students who reported they felt science to be 'very important' increased from 45% in the baseline survey to 54% in the endline survey. This indicates that the programme may potentially have had some impact on perceptions of this subject.

CEC's work with the National Literacy Trust (NLT) on their 'Words for Work' (WfW) programme demonstrated an increase in pupil awareness of the link between the school curriculum and the wider world and positive steps to tackling gender equality or other social barriers in the classroom. Impact of a current pilot to develop and deliver training to 150 teachers on how to use the literacy curriculum (which includes speaking) to teach careers and vice versa is still being measure, but we understand from early insights that participants are starting to reflect on integrating literacy skills and careers across the curriculum, particularly focusing on oracy skills.

CEC has a longstanding partnership with the PSHE Association. PSHE is a vehicle for skills development and career-related learning, especially at primary level

(<https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/1860%20-%20Primary%20CRL%20Evidence%20Review%20-%20v9%20%28002%29.pdf>)

- PSHE education lessons are, according to inspection and monitoring evidence, the most effective model for providing time for comprehensive career-related learning and allowing pupils to explore a wide range of careers, including those they may not have considered or known about before (Career Development Institute, 2018).
- This is supported by a recent Ofsted review which states 'Most schools used personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education as dedicated time for direct input on careers guidance'. To this end, career-related learning enhances, and is also enhanced by, other topic areas in PSHE education. For example, learning about risk including taking positive risks; teaching pupils the balance between caution and opportunity when exploring career options, and relationship and communication skills; teaching vital components of success in the workplace, and financial education; building skills to enter the labour market and contributing to broader macroeconomic benefits (Hooley & Dodd, 2015).
- Research also suggests that developing children's sense of meaning and purpose in life, which it has been found children as young as 9 years old can experience, is related to better mental health and wellbeing (Shoshani & Russo-Netzer, 2016). Career-related learning, combined with other elements of PSHE education, has the potential to support pupils' sense of meaning and purpose.
- Delivering career-related learning through PSHE education also provides an opportunity for a deeper exploration of self-awareness – a social and emotional skill which research (including Goodman et al, 2015) has shown is a predictor of a range of adult outcomes, such as life satisfaction and wellbeing, labour market success, and good overall health. It also develops pupils' understanding of their strengths, interests, and values. This learning is key in supporting pupils to make informed career choices when they are older, based on their aspirations and personal attributes.
- It is also essential to develop pupils' understanding of the workplace, as well as the knowledge, skills and attributes that employers need, and that pupils themselves require, to navigate and compete in today's labour market (Skills for Jobs, Department for Education (DfE), 2021). This could have a strong impact not just for individuals, but for the whole economy.
- The DfE report - PSHE Education: A Review of Impact and Effective Practice (2015), states that 'PSHE education provides an opportunity to provide or enhance skills such as perseverance, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, self-management, self-respect, teamwork, locus of control, time and stress management' which, according to the 2017 Sutton Trust 'Life Lessons' report, are highly valued by employers.
- A 2011 study by Demos, showed that such skills are more important in determining life chances at age 30 than academic qualifications. Businesses want such skills too. As Neil

Carberry, former CBI Director for People and Skills, puts it: “the right attitudes and attributes in people such as resilience, respect, enthusiasm and creativity are just as important as academic and technical skills”.

To what extent does the content of the a) English and b) maths national curriculum at secondary level (key stages 3 and 4) equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for life and further study? Are there ways in which the content could change to better support this aim?

Maths and English are not just subjects but important tools to understand and interpret the world accordingly. Practical application of maths and English linked to real world challenges, for example through oracy, is a powerful way of supporting the development of competence. There is opportunity for teachers to work with employers to co-design curriculum content so young people can understand the up-to-date application of the Maths and English they study. This could be accompanied by student [site visits](#) to consolidate learning.

<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/aet-and-pinewood-careers-maths-resource>

As mentioned earlier in our response , Gatsby Benchmark 4 (**Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers**) supports teachers to demonstrate the true value of their subject in the real world. Through our ‘My Learning My Future’ we have worked with employers and educators to create high quality, impactful resources: [AET and Pinewood: Careers in Maths Resource | CEC Resource Directory](#) and [AET and Tesco: Careers in English resources | CEC Resource Directory](#)

When Gatsby Benchmark 4 fully achieved by a school or college, we see the following:

- Teaching staff highlighting the relevance of their subject to the work of work and careers
- Learners being supported to understand how knowledge and skills developed in their subjects help people gain entry to, and be more effective workers within a wide range of occupations
- Teaching staff creating meaningful learning experiences linked to curriculum topics in partnership with employers

To what extent do the current maths and English qualifications at a) pre-16 and b) 16-19 support pupils and learners to gain, and adequately demonstrate that they have achieved, the skills and knowledge they need? Are there any changes you would suggest that would support these outcomes?

It is important to remember that the qualifications themselves are just one component of a holistic education that supports pupils and learners to gain, and adequately demonstrate that they have achieved, the skills and knowledge they need. Outside of the qualification there are examples of good practice such as ‘[AET and Pinewood: Careers in Maths Resource | CEC Resource Directory](#) and [AET and Tesco: Careers in English resources | CEC Resource Directory](#)’, where English and maths is being contextualised to the world of work and supporting learners to develop and demonstrate these skills in a way that employers value’

It is important to support learners to gain and adequately demonstrate they have achieved the skills, and this is and can be done in myriad ways. Qualifications are doing this, but other vehicles exist.

Contextual oracy is one way, but this does not always require a qualification - key is that skills are being developed and the method of demonstration has currency with young people, education institutions and employers.

Are there particular curriculum or qualifications subjects* where: a) there is too much content; not enough content; or content is missing; b) the content is out-of-date; c) the content is unhelpfully sequenced (for example to support good curriculum design or pedagogy); d) there is a need for greater flexibility (for example to provide the space for teachers to develop and adapt content)? Please provide detail on specific key stages where appropriate. *This includes both qualifications where the government sets content nationally, and anywhere the content is currently set by awarding organisations.

Within all subject areas it is important that there is space for both teacher development and practical application of learning. The Gatsby Benchmarks recommend multiple employer encounters across all key stages, we know when these are well planned, have clear learning outcomes and are linked to subject areas these are most impactful.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/14cdf1b/cec-now-next-report.pdf>

To what extent does the current curriculum (including qualification content) support students to positively engage with, be knowledgeable about, and respect, others? Are there elements that could be improved?

Employers say their work in schools and colleges is helping them develop new talent pipelines (83% agreeing overall, 91% for Cornerstone Employers) and supporting more young people to take up careers in their industry (86% overall, 91% for Cornerstone Employers). Around four in five say it's encouraging young people to apply for roles in their business (78% overall, 86% for Cornerstone Employers), and a similar proportion (75% overall, 82% for Cornerstone Employers) say their engagement is bringing in new apprentices.

Through our Teacher Encounters project, a visit to Arup gave teachers the opportunity to interact with a range of employees as well as develop an understanding of how science skills can be used in a professional context. As well as learning about Arup's apprenticeship and internship programmes, teachers were also given practical tasks which demonstrated how careers could be incorporated into science lessons. As a result of the programme, both the teachers and Arup increased their networks and developed new activities and approaches. This included new school trips for students to Arup's facilities, embedding careers education in science lessons, and encouraging teachers to engage with transferable skills such as teamwork, report writing and presentation skills.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/evaluation-of-the-teacher-encounters-programme/>

In which ways does the current primary curriculum support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for life and further study, and what could we change to better support this?

Many areas of the primary curriculum provide opportunities for teaching pupils the skills and knowledge they need for life and further study, for example relationship and communication skills as part of the PSHE curriculum.

When trained in how to link learning to the world of work, primary schools embed careers into the curriculum (41% increase in teachers on W1 of CEC's primary pilot reporting that CRL had been included in the school's curriculum following training and support from Careers Hubs).

Consequently, pupil's knowledge about the future improves:

- 43% increase in teachers saying their school helps pupils explore changes in the future world
- 37% increase in those saying their school supports pupils to explore a wide range of careers.
- 28% rise in teachers saying their school supports pupils to challenge assumptions about the correct jobs for them
- 36% increase in those saying they help students understand how stereotyping affects the workplace.
- Improvement in pupils' general understanding of the world of work was evident in a 6% increase in average scores for 'learning about different jobs other than those of my family/carers'.
- There were positive signs from parents that children were talking more about careers at home and showing increased understanding of the subject. A third of parents (33%) said they were having more conversations with their child about the world of work. A third of parents also believed that their child's understanding of the world of work had increased as a result of the pilot.

In which ways do the current secondary curriculum and qualification pathways support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for future study, life and work, and what could we change to better support this. Which ways does it support:

The secondary curriculum and qualification pathways allow young people to study a wide range of subjects before choosing post-16 pathways which tend to have a narrower, more specialised focus. Gatsby Benchmark 4 (Linking curriculum learning to careers) encourages all subject teachers to link curriculum learning with careers, even on courses that are not specifically occupation-led. Through this work students are supported to understand the application of learning through teachers contextualising teaching points within careers, future opportunities and the world of work. CEC have developed modules to support careers awareness amongst subject teachers but this could be strengthened if DfE consider how to incorporate careers education into different levels of teacher training, including for primary school teachers, looking at every level including initial teacher training and Early Career Frameworks, National Professional Qualifications and CPD.

By ensuring all young people have access to a well-planned careers programme with progressive career-related learning outcomes they will be well equipped to develop the skills and knowledge

they need for future study, life and work. This will mean continuing to support secondary schools and colleges to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks of good careers guidance, supporting all learners to understand all options at key transition points and coordinating efficient wraparound activity, such as engagement with parents and encounters with training providers.

<https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/>

Reforms to the current national curriculum could be informed, implemented and embedded, using existing DfE-funded careers education infrastructure including, data ([Compass](#), [Future Skills Questionnaire](#)), training (for [Careers Leaders](#) and [teachers](#)) and networks (of [Careers Hubs](#)). The Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) is a unique data set which allows us to gain feedback from students on how they feel about their knowledge, skills and career readiness. Completed at five key transition points from starting secondary to post-16 study, FSQ allows us to track students' progress and evaluate the extent to which the curriculum is equipping young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence that they need to take their next steps.

<https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info>

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/fsq-insight-briefing-2022-2023/>

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/careers-leaders/careers-leader-training/>

<https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/teacher-encounter-resources>

The curriculum and assessment review could ensure the pathways incorporate progressive employer and enrichment support to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that will serve young people well in life and work. In 2023/24, 85% of institutions achieved Gatsby Benchmark 5 (Encounters with employers and employees); 72% achieved Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces) and career readiness improved by 19%pts between Year 7 to 11 (49% to 68%, up by 1%pt), with largest increase between Years 10 and 11 (+10%pts)

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023-24/>

Consideration must also be given to the **Re-invention of Work experience**. Too many young people are missing out on work experience. Disadvantaged young people are more likely to miss out than others, with 69% of schools serving the largest proportion of disadvantaged young people achieving Benchmark 6 (Experiences of workplaces), compared to 78% of schools serving the smallest proportion of disadvantaged students. This matters. We believe that a reinvented work experience offer underpinned by Gatsby Benchmarks 5 (encounters with employers and employees) & 6 (experiences of workplaces) has the chance to accelerate pupils' interest and acquisition of skills that will enable them to transition into the world of work.

Space and time must be created within the curriculum structure to facilitate the delivery of a re-invented work experience model. High-quality work experience helps young people get ready for the world of work.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/news/reinventing-work-experience-zoe-healey-industry-and-work-experience-lead/>

Equalex is a new approach, that sits alongside other proven activity, designed to support two weeks' worth of high-quality work experience for every young person.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/equalex/>

In which ways do the current qualification pathways and content at 16-19 support pupils to have the skills and knowledge they need for future study, life and work, and what could we change to better support this?

The path a young person takes into post-18 education or study (or not) is informed by many factors. Paths into further technical study or apprenticeships in particular are complicated and require a number of conditions. The CEC's publication '[Conditions for transition](#)' sets out eight factors that are needed for a young person to take up vocational study. They are:

- Employer need
- Employer willingness to offer opportunity
- Access to relevant training options
- Conversion rate of interest to take up
- Promotion of options
- Existing skills levels match requirements for next step
- Understanding of routes
- Enthusiasm for occupations with opportunities

This review could create the opportunity to further meet these conditions. In particular, enthusiasm for occupations with opportunities (as young people are able to explore more diverse options), existing skill levels match the requirements for next step (as English and maths skills are improved) and employer willingness to offer opportunity (so long as employers are given sufficient confidence in the currency of the new qualification).

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/ga5ps5hx/conditions-for-transition.pdf>

To what extent does the current primary curriculum support pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum? Should anything change to better support this?

Research has shown that children fix their stereotypes and narrow their aspirations from as early as age 6. The introduction of career-related learning as a formal part of the primary curriculum is a gateway to supporting pupils to study a broad and balanced curriculum and successfully transition between primary school and the careers education system in secondary schools. There has already been progress in this area: <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/cdqft04h/insight-briefing-1-the-promise-of-primary.pdf> AND <https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/file-download/download/public/564>

A commitment to career-related learning as part of the primary curriculum could be considered with support to implement through:

- the [6 Principles of Career-related Learning](#) (<https://primaryplatform.careersandenterprise.co.uk/file-download/download/public/231>) as the tested effective best practice framework for primary level provision, that ladders neatly up to the Gatsby Benchmarks at secondary level.

- continued training and support for primary teachers to balance the curriculum with careers learning and skills development through the Careers Hubs and teacher encounters with employers.
- employer encounters for pupils in primary schools to bring learning to life, supported by local Careers Hubs and with standards set at national level.

Do you have any explanations for the trends outlined in the analysis and/or suggestions to address any that might be of concern?

https://consult.education.gov.uk/++preview++/curriculum-and-assessment-team/curriculum-and-assessment-review-call-for-evidence/supporting_documents/Curriculum%20subject%20trends%20over%20time.pdf

How can we improve learners' understanding of how the different programmes and qualifications on offer will prepare them for university, employment (including apprenticeships) and/or further technical study?

High quality careers education in school or college is essential to support young people's understanding of and access to future opportunities.

The Gatsby Foundation have very recently published their report 'Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years' along with an updated framework for the Gatsby Benchmarks. The updated framework and guidance ensure that careers provision is responsive to individual learner needs, with an increased focus on the use of information and data to ensure that young people can explore all future pathways equitably. Within Benchmarks '5 Encounters with employers and employees', '6 Experiences of the Workplaces' and '7 Encounters with Further and Higher Education' Gatsby have clarified the definition of meaningful to ensure the delivery of high-quality encounters. Students experiences through these benchmarks complement the provision of careers and labour market information (LMI) accessed and used within Benchmark 2, ensuring young people are able to make informed decisions about their future pathways.

We look forward to seeing the updated framework adopted by government and included in updated statutory guidance from Spring. This will ensure that there is a renewed focus on ensuring a high-quality careers provision for each and every young person.

CEC's 44 Careers Hubs have been shown to drive up standards of careers education against the Gatsby Benchmarks. Being part of a Careers Hub, completing Careers Leader Training, using the Compass + digital tool and supporting young people to complete the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) are all associated with higher benchmark scores. Attainment against the Gatsby Benchmarks also increases the longer an institution has been part of a Careers Hub.

- For schools and colleges in a Careers Hub since September 2018, average achievements against the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks was 6.26 in 2023/24, compared to 3.76 for those not in a Careers Hub and 5.32 for those who have joined a Careers Hub since September 2022.
- On Benchmark 2 (Learning from Career and Labour Market Information) 84% schools and colleges in a careers hub fully achieved this standard, compared to 43% not in a careers hub.

- On Benchmark 5 (Encounters with employers and employees) 86% of institutions in a careers hub fully achieved, compared to 59% not in a hub.
- On Benchmark 6 (Experiences of workplaces) 72% of institutions in a hub fully achieved compared to 48% not in a hub.
- On Benchmark 7 (Encounters with Further and Higher Education) 58% of institutions in a hub fully achieved compared to 34% not in a hub.

[insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023_24-final.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-for-2023_24-final.pdf)

It is a statutory requirement for every school or college to have a named careers leader in place. Careers Leaders are responsible and accountable for the leadership and management of the overall programme of career guidance in the school or college. The Careers & Enterprise Company offer a comprehensive suite of training and CPD for careers leaders and the wider education workforce from executive leaders to teaching staff. We would encourage all teaching staff to engage in the training to ensure they are supported to signpost students to the most appropriate information and support. <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/the-digital-hub/schools-special-schools-colleges-and-itps/>

We have also seen the benefits of our Teacher Encounter programme which helps educators understand workplace skills – and the pathways to jobs e.g. Apprenticeships. It has also given teachers the confidence to connect curriculum content to the world of work. . Our evaluation report <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/evaluation-of-the-teacher-encounters-programme/> finds Our evaluation report <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/evaluation-of-the-teacher-encounters-programme/> found strong evidence of support for teacher encounters amongst both teachers and employers. Three main outcomes were identified:

1. The teacher encounters programme had a positive impact on teachers and employers.
2. They increase the confidence and capabilities of teachers to have constructive careers conversations with students.
3. They improve the quality, quantity and impact of employer engagement with education.

To what extent is there enough scope and flexibility in the system to support learners who may need to change course?

If a young person has had access to high quality careers education and advice, they are most likely to make career decision that are right for them, therefore reducing the need to change course. Where young people score higher career readiness they are more likely to make choices more aligned with labour market <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/v2mfbt3l/right-students-right-jobs.pdf> We know that the provision of good career guidance and high scores on Gatsby Benchmarks drive career readiness.

Girls and young people receiving FSM are less "career ready (CR)" than their peers and this matters because they make less aligned choices <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/fsg-insight-briefing-2022-2023/>

There is therefore a valid case for an enhanced offer of careers education and advice for those young people deemed as disadvantaged.

Are there additional skills, subjects, or experiences that all learners should develop or study during 16-19 education, regardless of their chosen programmes and qualifications, to support them to be prepared for life and work?

The Gatsby Benchmark framework sets out what good career guidance looks like for students in Key Stage 3 &4 and in post 16 education. Young people should have access to a high-quality benchmark offer that includes a wide range of experiences including encounters with employers, FE and HE and apprenticeship providers. In addition to this, all learners should have the opportunity to participate in high quality work experience.

Insights from our Future Skills Questionnaire show that important skills young people need to thrive in the workplace dip in the early years of secondary school. By age 16, despite considerable catch-up in other skills, young people rate themselves lower on speaking, listening, leadership and teamwork – human skills that employers say are essential.

We would therefore advocate for a programme of essential skill development such as Skillsbuilder to be embedded within all programmes of study. <https://www.skillsbuilder.org/>

How can the curriculum, assessment and wraparound support better enable transitions between key stages to ensure continuous learning and support attainment?

The Careers & Enterprise Company Effective Transitions fund, backed by £2 million funding from JP Morgan Chase aimed to deliver targeted support and build the evidence base on effective careers education for disadvantaged young people at points of transition.

The objectives were to:

- Deliver targeted transition support to enable disadvantaged young people in Key Stage 4 to achieve sustained engagement in high-quality post-16 destinations.
- To build the evidence base of effective interventions for the target group by understanding the impact of long-term targeted support on achieving quality sustainable destinations.

Based on learning from the pilot identified in this report, the programme will now be expanded, backed by a further £2.5 million from JPMorganChase.

The pilot programme targeted disadvantaged young people, many of whom were at most risk of not remaining in education or training on leaving school, due to the barriers they face. It was implemented by 10 of our Careers Hubs.

The pilot set out to test what types of support worked best in breaking down barriers faced by disadvantaged young people, so they could move on to a sustained post-16 destination.

More than 1,000 young people facing barriers (e.g. living in high deprivation areas, mental health, low school attendance, exclusion) were part of the programme. Many faced multiple barriers.

The key findings are that, due to the impact of the programme, the post-16 education choices and life chances of the young people were significantly improved:

- 94% successfully transferred to college or training on leaving school at 16.

93% in the programme were in a sustained destination following the initial transition into 16-18 study, comparing very favourably with 87.8% of disadvantaged young people and in line with the 93.9% of all young people. The IES report says there is strong evidence that young people will continue to sustain their studies as more than 90% are happy with their choices, the subjects that make up the course and the places they are studying.

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/news/disadvantaged-school-leavers-have-their-post-16-education-choices-and-life-chances-boosted-with-2-million-support-programme/>

The Careers & Enterprise Company have worked with Careers Hubs to establish what the key enabling factors are regarding transitions for young people onto Apprenticeship and Technical Education (ATE) pathways, and their relative impact.

The path a young person takes into post-18 education or study (or not) is informed by many factors. Paths into further technical study or apprenticeships in particular are complicated and require a number of conditions. The CEC's publication '[Conditions for transition](#)' sets out eight factors that are needed for a young person to take up vocational study. They are:

- Employer need
- Employer willingness to offer opportunity
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This review could create the opportunity to further meet these conditions. In particular, enthusiasm for occupations with opportunities (as young people are able to explore more diverse options), existing skill levels match the requirements for next step (as English and maths skills are improved) and employer willingness to offer opportunity (so long as employers are given sufficient confidence in the currency of the new qualification).

<https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/conditions-for-transition-supporting-young-people-onto-apprenticeships-and-technical-pathways-a-regional-analysis/>

How could technology be used to improve how we deliver the curriculum, assessment and qualifications in England?

We know that employers place a significant premium on employability skills as well as core academic and technical skills. A single digital learning account which is accessible to young people and shareable to employers which records achievement within minors and majors but further allows for the badging of skills (for example those in the [Skills Builder Universal Framework](#)

<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/universal-framework>) could be a transformative mechanism to boost equity in transitions and both actual and perceived career readiness.

For example, employers as active partners in the learning journey could identify which essential skills they most need and craft work experiences and placement opportunities to build them. CEC's existing digital systems of Compass and the Future Skills Questionnaire have the potential to be built out to link to or incorporate the digital learning account. The CEC's infrastructure could also provide a model of quality assurance for these activities ensuring the currency value of these wider activities is high for businesses, young people and wider influencers such as parents. However, such a tool can only be effective if there is dedicated time baked into the curriculum for the development of and reflection on skills and attributes.

The Careers & Enterprise Company created the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) to measure the career readiness of students at points of transition across secondary education. It is a student self-completion digital questionnaire that measures students' career readiness at key transition points across secondary education. The data, aggregated across schools, provides national insight into student perceptions and how they compare according to stage of learning, student background and school characteristics.

During the 2022/23 academic year, over 100,000 students from 574 institutions completed the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ), making it one of the most extensive surveys of its kind in the country. This is an opportunity to mobilise the collective voice of students and use their insights to point to areas of progress and to where more support is needed to drive positive careers outcomes.

Do you have any further views on anything else associated with the Curriculum and Assessment Review not covered in the questions throughout the call for evidence?

Today in England, there is near universal adoption by schools and colleges of the [Gatsby Benchmarks](https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/browse-category/gatsby-benchmarks) <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/browse-category/gatsby-benchmarks>, the framework which defines world-class careers education. And there is a relationship between Gatsby Benchmark achievement and positive destinations for young people. This is [twice as strong in schools with the highest number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/zt0bgoa0/1488_destinations_report_v4.pdf) (FSM) https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/zt0bgoa0/1488_destinations_report_v4.pdf. There is also a 17% increase in apprenticeship uptake for those schools with full benchmark achievement.

Young people themselves are reflecting [progress over time](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1027406/Young_people_s_experiences_of_careers_information_advice_and_guidance.pdf) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1027406/Young_people_s_experiences_of_careers_information_advice_and_guidance.pdf and increases in 'career readiness' and pathway awareness as a result of improved support.

Dedicated EEP time offers an important opportunity to build on this evidence and create space for activity which build young people's skills for work and life.

To broaden and deepen the progress made in careers education the following could be considered:

- Mainstreaming careers into school and college life by supporting teachers, including in appropriate aspects of the curriculum, through teacher training and employer partnerships. <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/evaluation-of-the-teacher-encounters-programme/>.

- This work could include an emphasis on skills pathways like higher technical qualifications and apprenticeships where awareness may be lower – a teacher Tapp survey in 2022 found only 26% of teachers felt confident advising students about how to find an apprenticeship. <https://plmr.co.uk/2022/08/new-plmr-education-report-teachers-experiences-of-and-attitudes-towards-universities-and-apprenticeships/>
- Ensure pupil feedback about ‘career readiness’ is utilised to the same extent as employer insight to inform a system of mutual benefit.
- Sustain efforts to connect young people and [teachers](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/teacher-encounters-tools-and-resources/) <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/teacher-encounters-tools-and-resources/> to the world of work, nationally and locally.
- Link enrichment to the Careers infrastructure. There are lots of enrichment providers in the system who could be better organised to improve career readiness for young people (including provider encounters, workplace experiences and specific skills building activities). Development might include a common set of standards for enrichment and data collection via the digital Compass + tool.
- Support further activities to catalyse high quality industry encounters and models of effective work experience for post-16 pupils and teachers at scale.
- Formally include career-related learning in the primary curriculum to smooth the transition between primary schools and the careers education system in secondary schools.