Personal Guidance Fund Evaluation

Final Report

Publication information

Acknowledgements

About the International Centre for Guidance Studies

iCeGS is a research centre with expertise in career guidance and career development. The Centre conducts research, provides consultancy to the career sector, offers a range of training, and delivers a number of accredited learning programmes up to and including doctoral level.

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Executive Summary

Since the transfer of responsibility for career guidance to schools /colleges, a range of approaches to delivering personal guidance have been utilised in schools and colleges in order for them to meet the statutory requirement of implementation of the Gatsby benchmarks[1]. In their report for The Careers & Enterprise Company, Everitt, Neary, Delgardo and Clark (2018) concluded that five key points need to be in place for effective personal guidance (space & time; preparation & feedback, effective interviewing; professionalism and integration) but that 'the evidence on personal guidance remains a work in progress'. The Careers & Enterprise Company recognised the importance of this of this work, developing the Personal Guidance Fund which aimed to support the development of innovative, cost-effective models for delivering personal careers guidance in schools and colleges.

Evaluation aims and objectives

The evaluation focused on identifying effective approaches with the intention of improving practice beyond the fund. The report considers:

1. The effectiveness of different approaches.

2. Working with different beneficiary groups.

3. The impact of personal guidance on students.

4. The impact of training on staff and school/college career guidance.

5. Key learning regarding scaling up, sustainability and best practice.

Methodology

Three different methods were used to answer the objectives:

1. **Desk research** involving analysis of monitoring and narrative reports and evaluation reports produced by programme providers for The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC).

2. **Qualitative data** that was collected in semi-structured interviews, focus groups and online data collection tools from:

   - Programme providers, N^2 = 16
   - Programme deliverers:
     - Careers advisers qualified to Level 6 or 7 , N (number of interviews)= 15
     - Employability workers qualified to Level 4, N = 1
   - School/college staff (includes Careers Leaders and SLT), N = 9
   - Students aged 16 years and up, N = 40

3. **Survey data** that was collected by iCeGS using a bespoke survey (N=139) and using the CEC Future Skills survey from 418 students.

The effectiveness of approaches[3]

The key approaches deployed across the programmes were triage, integration, group work and use of digital tools, and were often used in combination to complement one to one personal guidance.

The key impacts of **triage** were:

- Students being referred to the individual best able to help them.

- Strong working relationships between careers advisers and school/college staff.

The key impacts of **integration** were:

- Raised profile of career guidance across the school/college and an increased understanding of personal guidance and its benefits.

- Students being better prepared to engage with personal guidance.

- Strong working relationships between careers advisers and school/college staff.

- Increased knowledge of careers and pathways and increased confidence in students.

The key impacts of **group work** were:

- A positive reaction to taking part in the programme from students, especially younger students (Years 7-9).

- Students being better prepared to engage with personal guidance.

- Increased knowledge of careers and pathways and increased confidence in students.

The key impacts of **digital tools** were:

- It enabled more meaningful personal guidance

- Interventions with students who were better prepared for the session.

- It made better use of personal guidance resources focusing them on students where and when they were needed.

- Digital tools enabled use of an important source of data about the needs of young people.

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2. N means sample size

3. The six approaches outlined in the What Works in Personal Guidance report are: triage, group guidance, whole school integration, digital tools, non face-to-face guidance (by telephone or online video conferencing) and monitoring and evaluation. This summary focuses on the four most commonly used across programmes.

Monitoring and evaluation was not as widely observed but where it was done well it was noted that it supported the programme providers ability to continually develop and improve the programme and the school to be able to see what impact was observed in relation to the cost of the programme.

Beneficiary groups

Programmes targeted disadvantaged students, students with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)** issues, younger students and parents.

The key features of the programmes working with these students were to create a more tailored and personalised programme that comprised of multiple sessions of an appropriate length of time. This helped to build familiarity, rapport and trust between student and adviser.

The key outcomes for disadvantaged students were:

- Increased self-confidence.

- A better understanding of their own skills and strengths.

- A better understanding of pathways and careers generally, and of those that may be appropriate for them.

The key outcomes for younger students were:

- Increased self-confidence and well-being.

- Increased awareness of career options now and in the future.

The key outcomes for students with SEND and SEMH were:

- Increased self-awareness, particularly of strengths and skills.

- Increased awareness of the range of post-16 and post-18 options available.

Parents learned about careers and pathways and were able to learn about their own children's likes, strengths and skills.

Impact of personal guidance on students

- Students of all ages and from all target groups responded overwhelmingly positively to the programmes.

- Findings from both qualitative data and quantitative data indicated that students' learning, across all programmes, coalesced around four themes:

  - learning about self (strengths and skills).

  - learning about careers generally (present and future) or specifically (such as medicine and health care).

  - learning about pathways (apprenticeships, college, university and the range of different courses).

  - learning career management/employability skills (personal effectiveness such as resilience, career readiness and employability skills such as teamwork, leadership, creativity, problem solving and resilience).

- There were changes to students' attitudes and behaviour, particularly increased confidence, motivation, determination and engagement in school/college, as well as a decrease in stress and anxiety. Many students were able to describe intended destinations and often these were directly or indirectly related to taking part in the personal guidance.

Impact of training on staff

Advisers received training to Level 4, 6 or 7. Advisers who received training talked of:

- Developing a professional identity.

- Being able to reach a wider range of students.

- Increasing their skill set and being more able to support career exploration.

School and college staff reported that training resulted in:

- A raised profile of career guidance provision across the school/college.

- Teaching staff being better able to make links between curriculum and careers (Gatsby Benchmark 4).

- Staff being better able to support students in career decision-making because of increased knowledge of careers and LMI and increased confidence.

- Schools/colleges working strategically to improve their careers programme.

Key learning

Key learning about different approaches was:

1. **Group guidance**, whilst not a replacement for one-to-one personal guidance, is an effective approach for preparing students for personal guidance and for delivering feedback. It can be particularly effective in introducing younger students to careers guidance and the careers adviser.

2. **Integrating personal guidance** into the wider career guidance programme and across the school is a key step in changing the culture of a school/college because it increases understanding of the value of careers guidance in staff and students and moves careers from a peripheral to a core activity.

3. **Digital tools** can be used to support interview content, help students prepare for personal guidance and facilitate integration of career guidance across the whole school, however it is important that the school's infrastructure supports their use.

4. **Triage** can be implemented effectively in schools / colleges as well as colleges and works well when used in a programme with digital tools. It is particularly effective for ensuring that all students receive the right kind of help - especially those who outwardly might not be perceived as being in need - from the most appropriate person. It requires that a wider range of staff have some training to promote understanding of careers guidance but this also helps to promote careers guidance from a peripheral to a core function.

Key learning identified from the evaluation about delivering personal guidance in general included the following:

1. Time is an important consideration. Recruitment of advisers, programme design and inception requires careful consideration and needs to be implemented well ahead of actual delivery.

2. When programme providers and careers advisers are working with schools/colleges, consideration needs to be given to the following:

   a. Time out of class is easier to facilitate with shorter sessions.

   b. IT infrastructure in schools/colleges needs to be reviewed to ensure compatibility with the proposed activities/programme.

   c. Providers need to be prepared to be flexible/adaptable in how the programmes are delivered in different schools or colleges.

   d. Securing support from senior leaders from the start of the project ensures greater success.

3. Communication between programme staff and school/college staff needs to be prompt in order for programmes to be set up and delivered effectively.

4. Training for school/college staff can help them to recognise and utilise the added value that a careers adviser brings; in addition to supporting the school to meet Gatsby Benchmark 8, they can work with the careers leader and contribute to the achievement of most, if not all, Benchmarks through their knowledge, skills and networks.

5. Integrating the careers adviser into the school by introducing them to each year group and to staff facilitates many of the positive impacts noted throughout the evaluation.

6. The school/college needs an appropriate budget to resource careers guidance.

7. The provision of a dedicated space facilitates the:

   a. creation of a defined identity for all careers guidance provision and for the careers adviser.

   b. ability of students to seek help when they need it – this is enabled when the students know where and when to find the adviser.

8. Providing personal guidance to younger students, who tend to be enthusiastic and receptive, helps to integrate careers more effectively for all students.

Recommendations

For Careers Leaders

1. Communicate promptly with programme providers and careers advisers.

2. Recognise and utilise the added value that a careers adviser brings; in addition to supporting the school to meet Benchmark 8, they can work with the careers leader and contribute to the achievement of most, if not all, Benchmarks through their knowledge, skills and networks.

3. Integrate the careers adviser into the school by introducing them to each year group and to staff. For students this increases familiarity, trust and openness. For staff this:
   a. Opens channels of communication between staff with key roles such as SENCOs pastoral support, form tutors and heads of year. This facilitates identification of support needs and intervention.
   b. Helps teaching staff understand the value of career and personal guidance for students.
   c. Offers another level of support in helping them link careers to the curriculum in their lessons.

For Senior Leadership teams

1. Your school/college needs an appropriate budget to resource careers guidance. Be clear with providers about your budgets and think about how investing in digital tools and engagement with younger students could enhance the return on investment of personal guidance.

2. Take responsibility for organisation and coordination of the programme, the adviser and the students attending appointments.

3. Provide a dedicated space because:
   c. It creates an identity for careers and for the careers adviser.
   d. It allows students to seek help when they need

For providers and careers advisers
Set-up of a new programme of personal guidance

1. Ensure that time is planned in for recruitment and induction of careers advisers because this can be a protracted process, especially in shortage areas. Recruitment is often most successful when timed around academic years.

2. Ensure that staff have a clear understanding of commitments and personal investment required in gaining qualifications and are provided with support.

Working with schools and colleges

1. Have a clear rationale for the programme and demonstrate how it fits with school/college's existing strategic priorities.

2. Secure support from senior leaders from the start of the project.

3. Clarify commitments. Service level agreements can help formalise expectations.

4. Hold launch events to communicate project purposes and engage key stakeholders - these might introduce key staff from different organisations, promote networking and offer advice on how to plan, coordinate and deliver programmes.

5. Plan activities and training as far in advance as possible to ensure time is available within the timetable.

6. Remember that time out of class is easier to facilitate if it is for shorter sessions run multiple times.

7. Check that the IT infrastructure in schools/colleges will support the activities/programme you want to run.

8. Be flexible/adaptable in how the programmes are delivered in different schools or colleges.

9. Identify career champions and/or integrate some delivery into form time to promote the programme and drive integration and eventually culture change within schools/colleges and move careers guidance from a peripheral to core activity.

10. Create and cultivate networks to provide forums for sharing practice and disseminating learning.

11. Offer school/college staff training to promote awareness and understanding of career guidance, personal guidance and the programme. This also helps to build in sustainability.

12. Provide triage training as part of induction training for all new staff within the college environment. This also helps to build in sustainability. Personal Guidance Fund Evaluation – Final Report careersandenterprise.co.uk 64

Engaging parents

1. Make use of social media and encourage the school/college to work with you.

2. Offer a range of modes of delivery to provide beneficiaries (parents and students) with the option that works best for them.

3. The timing and frequency of events must be carefully considered to fit with parent availability.

Monitoring and evaluation

1. Clarify the aim of your programme, the intended outcomes and the activities/changes needed to achieve that. A theory of change is a worthwhile development when investing resources such as time and money and the CEC are currently developing a toolkit to support this endeavour.

2. Think about evaluation before you start delivering – consider collecting data before, during and after the programme. Some evaluation activities such as assessing career readiness, employability skills and career management skills can be built into the programme elements.

3. Explore current data that may be collected already and how this may be repurposed to assess impact.

4. Develop robust monitoring and evaluation that can contribute to evidencing impact, developing insight into what works to improve programme effectiveness and provide support for future

Conclusions

1. The Careers & Enterprise Company's Personal Guidance Fund was used effectively by both Phase 1 and Phase 2 providers to meet targets in recruitment of schools/colleges, deliver training to advisers and school/college staff and deliver personal guidance programmes to students.

2. Staff in schools and colleges, students, and parents responded favourably to the programmes. Students in each of the targeted groups offered positive feedback and demonstrated beneficial outcomes, notably learning about self, careers, progression pathways and career management skills.

3. Increasing the number of interactions between targeted students and careers advisers supported effective personal guidance as it increased trust, rapport and openness. Interactions such as group guidance and assemblies helped prepare students for personal guidance.

4. Approaches which were delivered particularly effectively were whole school integration, triage and the use of digital tools with some effective use of group work to support preparation for personal guidance.

5. Despite providers being able to articulate the aims of their programmes, and in some cases more specific impacts in the short, medium and long-term, programme providers' evaluation strategies to capture evidence for these impacts needed development. Support to help them develop Theories of Change (including KPI's and baseline measures) before embarking on programme delivery would be helpful.

6. The fund might be strengthened by providers being given more time to develop their programmes and identify long-term impacts, and by supporting schools/colleges to make staff available for training.

1 | Introduction

Personal guidance within the Gatsby Benchmarks

The Good Career Guidance report published by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation (2014) presented a researched and evidenced approach to careers provision through the Gatsby Benchmarks. This was in response to the transfer of responsibility for career guidance to schools and colleges following the Education Act 2011 (Great Britain, 2011). In December 2017, the Government released the new Careers Strategy: Making the Most of Everyone's Skills and Talents (Department for Education, 2017). This outlined the direction of travel for career guidance and positioned it as a driver of equality of opportunity. The aim is for 'all young people in secondary school and college to receive a programme of advice and guidance that is stable, structured, and delivered by individuals with the right skills and experience' (p.18). Importantly the Careers Strategy places the Gatsby Benchmarks at the heart of the government's approach to careers provision in schools and colleges.

The term career guidance is used by both Gatsby and the Careers Strategy to describe the full range of career-related interventions which support students to make choices and to develop their career thinking. Gatsby's conclusions were translated into the eight Benchmarks of which Benchmark 8 is concerned with 'personal guidance'. This is defined by Gatsby as usually taking the form of a 'one-to-one interview with a careers adviser who may or may not be a member of staff' (Holman, 2014, p.30) but who should be qualified to QCF level 6 in career guidance and development. The Gatsby Benchmarks also recommend that every student should have one personal guidance interview by the age of 16 and the opportunity for a further interview by age 18.

Evidence on personal guidance

Since the transfer of responsibility for personal guidance to schools/colleges, a range of approaches to delivering personal guidance have been utilised. These include employing careers professionals in schools/colleges, contracting external providers and working across clusters of schools for commissioning purposes. The Career & Enterprise Company's (CEC) 2020 report on careers guidance in English school showed that 63% of schools completing Compass (the CEC's free Gatsby Benchmark auditing tool for schools and colleges) were fully achieving Benchmark 8 with a further 29% partially achieving it. Of schools who joined a Careers Hub[4] in 2018, 72% had fully achieved Benchmark 8 (Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020).

In their report for the Careers & Enterprise Company, Everitt, Neary, Delgardo and Clark (2018) explored the effectiveness of the current approaches to delivering personal guidance and to present evidence-based ways forward. The report drew on case studies, expert interviews, studies from schools and colleges and on wider literature, which examined personal guidance in other settings, such as higher education. The What Works report outlined evidence that demonstrated the impacts of personal guidance, which were associated with a range of short and long-term impacts on an individual's:

1. Personal effectiveness e.g., self-awareness and self-esteem.

2. Career readiness e.g., career planning and decision making.

3. Educational outcomes e.g., improved attendance and attainment.

The What Works report delineated five themes, or lessons for practice, which underpin effective personal guidance:

- **Integration** – of personal guidance into a broader career guidance programme.

- **Space and time** – personal guidance requires the advisers to have appropriate spaces to work in and sufficient time with students.

- **Preparation and feedback** – students need to be prepared for personal guidance sessions and supported to implement the decisions and actions that occur as a result.

- **Interview content** – the interviews themselves need to be well run and adopt evidence-based approaches.

- **Professionalism** – it is important the personal guidance interview is undertaken by a professional and expert practitioner.

Everitt et al. (2018) concluded that 'the evidence on personal guidance remains a work in progress' and the Careers & Enterprise Company recognised the importance of this, going on to develop the Personal Guidance Fund.

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4. A Careers Hub is a group of of schools and colleges in a dedicated area who work together to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks. Collaborating with business partners, the public, education and voluntary sectors, they help deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks and improve careers outcomes for young people (www.careersandenterprise.co.uk)

2 | The fund, programmes and evaluation approach

The Fund

The Careers & Enterprise Company established the Personal Guidance Fund which was shaped by the What Works report (Everitt et al., 2018). The fund aimed to support the development of innovative, cost-effective models for delivering personal careers guidance in schools and colleges. Funded projects have been used to develop evidence on what constitutes successful, affordable, scalable and innovative delivery of personal guidance. £2.5 million has been awarded in grant funding across two phases:

- Phase 1 commenced in September 2018 and aimed to scale and expand existing delivery models or provide additional training and development opportunities for staff. Five programmes were funded in Phase 1.

- Phase 2 commenced in September 2019 and focused on developing new activities by building on the company's research themes and the What Works report. A further thirteen programmes were funded in Phase 2.

The individual programmes in Phase 1 and Phase 2 are described in more detail below in Tables 1 and 2.

Phase 1 & 2 programmes – Aims, activities, target groups, numbers reached

Phase 1 focused on developing the personal guidance profession by training existing workforce and training new advisers and wider staff. The aim of Phase 2 was to test innovative approaches to improving quality and efficiency, one of which focussed specifically on parents[5]. The thirteen Phase 2 programmes targeted students more explicitly including specific groups: students with SEND or with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) issues, students at greater risk of becoming NEET and younger students (in Years 7-9).

Table 1 Phase 1 funded programmes and characteristics

Provider name	Programme aim(s)	Main activities	Themes	Target group
Achieving for children	Improving Key Stage 4 personal guidance provision for those with SEND	• Enhanced personal guidance for all students with SEND (with or without an Education Health & Care Plan or statement). • Training for school staff (careers advisers and SENCOs), existing advisers, and Preparing for Adulthood teams.	• Professionalism • Interview content • Preparation and feedback	• Students with SEND • School staff
Adviza (1)	Upskill existing careers advisers from Adviza	• Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme • Certificate in Coaching	• Professionalism	• Careers advisers
Career Connect	Developing a Personal Guidance Community to support, improve and develop practice.	• Programme of CPD for careers advisers • Consultancy on supporting the Personal Guidance Community. • Advice on career strategy planning (e.g. Compass and Tracker data) • Mentoring for school careers staff • Support for cohort management, planning and assessment of student need, digital resource use support • 6hrs careers interventions per pupil and a further 6hrs for disadvantaged pupils.	• Professionalism • Preparation and feedback	• Schools • Careers advisers • Students

Association of Colleges (AoC)	CPD for careers advisers and related college staff to implement a triage personal guidance model.	• Up skill college careers advisers to Level 6 • Support Careers Leaders to develop in-house CPD for triage support • Deliver triage training and support to curriculum staff	• Professionalism • Integration	• Careers advisers • Colleges • Curriculum staff
Adviza (2)	Careers understanding for parents.	• 4 x 90 min evening sessions for parents and children. • Training for Level 6 Adviza advisers to run sessions.	• Integration	• Parents • Careers advisers

Table 2 Phase 2 funded programmes and characteristics

Provider name	Programme aim(s)	Main activities	Themes	Target group
University of Bath	Test the Pathway planner programmes ability to underpin effective triage within schools and ensure all students receive sufficient amounts of personal guidance.	For students • pre guidance workshop • personal guidance • use of a triage tool and CareerPilot • follow-up For schools: • strategic support to integrate personal guidance with careers programme.	• Integration • Preparation and feedback • Professionalism • Interview content	• Students from Y11 and Y12 but option to work with Y9, Y10 and Y13
Minsthorpe Community College	Roll out the Encompass Careers Alliance to create a blueprint for other schools to employ.	Create team of professional careers advisers (train advisers and teachers). Co-ordinate drop down days for student activity in schools. OUTSET[6] days for teachers.	• Professionalism	• Careers advisers
4Y PUK	Implement/expand existing provision to meet BM8	• Providing more careers advisers • Trialling different models • Training existing career staff • Improving careers leadership • Embedding digital tools	• Professionalism • Integration	• Schools and careers advisers
Sussex Learning Network	Extending reach to ensure all students have access to the information and support they need to make informed choices about their future	• Personal guidance interviews pre and post 16 • Wrap around interventions • Up skill careers advisers • Support schools at strategic level • Use digital tools	• Integration • Preparation and feedback • Professionalism • Interview content	• Students, but with added benefits for careers advisers and schools

6. Drop down days are days set aside in a school calendar for activities built around a specific theme, for example careers education. OUTSET days are CPD opportunities for teachers who spend the day in another organisation, perhaps learning about the different job roles and career opportunities within it.

Career North (FAME)	Build capacity from KS3 to ensure all students have a 1 to 1 by age 16 and another by age 18 (minimum) but preferably 2+ by 16 and 3+ by 18.	Begin guidance at Y7; build capacity through Pupil Career Champions and Teacher Career Champions; introduce group guidance (and train careers advisers to do this)	• Integration Preparation and feedback	• Students
Derbyshire EBP	Widen the impact of high-quality personal guidance to a wider audience via a whole school approach.	Every learner benefits from 1 interview at Y9,10,11 and post 16. Also targeted are Y7 & 8 with support and skills preparation	• Space and time • Preparation and feedback • Effective interviews • Professionalism	• Students from Y9-11 but also potentially Y7 & 8 and Y13.
MY Trust	Improving personal guidance and careers guidance for students with SEN	• Development of differentiated programme of 1 to 1 interventions • Use of digital tools • Inclusion of parents • High-quality CPD for careers and curriculum leads and • Transition support from Y10 to 11 and 11 to Y12.	• Space & time • Preparation & feedback • Integration • Interview content • Professionalism	• SEN students in Y10 and 11
Bedford Borough Council	Reduce NEETs	• Identify students at risk of becoming NEET using RONI tracker • Deliver tailored programme to each young person	• Professionalism	• Disadvantaged students especially those at risk of becoming NEE
EKC Group	Development of the Achieving for Children Programme from Phase 1 for children to develop a number of specialist roles within the EKC Group guidance community to focus on pathways available to students with EHCPs.	• Train EKC Group practitioners • Train teaching staff and those delivering learning support • Work with other providers to share learning	• Integration • Preparation & feedback	• Practitioners and college staff working with students with EHCPs

Career Connect	Intensive personal guidance for those with social, emotional and mental health needs	• Delivery of Aspirational, Inspirational and Motivational activity (AIM).	• Interview content • Space and time	• Students with SEMH
Doncaster Chamber	Bespoke personal guidance of 1 session pre 16 and 1 session post 16 with wrap around activity and interactions.	• Widen social mobility networks; • Strengthen collaborative personal guidance networks • Up skill careers advisers • Maximise use of digital tools • Deliver focussed support from employers.	• Integration • Space & time • Professionalism	• Disadvantaged students in KS4 and 5
Aspire-igen Group	Integration of personal guidance into whole-school career guidance programmes.	• Training staff to Level 6 • Guidance for parents • Group guidance for a whole-year cohort • Individual personal guidance for a whole-year cohort	• Professionalism • Space & time • Preparation & feedback • Effective interviews	• Existing staff • Recruited L4 people • Y9 and 10 students
Westminster Kingsway College	Link impartial careers adviser key interviews to work experience and the course interview for level 2 and 3 college students.	• Key interview with each student	• Integration	• Level 2 and 3 students in college.

Fund reach

> **Programme providers largely met or exceeded their targets for recruitment of schools/ colleges and for delivery of training and one-to-one personal guidance sessions, despite the impact of Covid-19.**

Programme providers set targets for four main types of activity: delivering personal guidance; recruiting schools/colleges; up skilling advisers (to Level 4, 6 or 7 or by delivering other CPD to already qualified advisers); CPD for school/college staff (predominantly in raising awareness of career and personal guidance and the use of specialist tools). Table 3 below displays the overall targets for programmes in both Phases against actual delivery, highlighting that for each type of activity, targets were exceeded. This was particularly the case for training school and college staff; more than double the number of staff were trained compared to original targets.

Table 3 Personal Guidance Fund Targets

Activity	Target number	Actual number
Number of students receiving at least one session of one-to-one support	34,653	39,908
Number of schools and colleges worked with	163	199
Number of careers advisers up skilled	133	156*
Number of school and college staff trained	1080	3410

* 115 of these were trained to QCF Levels 3, 4, 6 or 7, the remainder undertook other forms of CPD.

There were five programmes which did not meet their target for personal guidance sessions. The primary reason for this was Covid-19 which increased difficulty in accessing parents and students, although one programme had some drop out due to relocation by students. Fourteen programmes met or exceeded their targets for working with schools/colleges with those who did not attributing this to school dropout. Fourteen programmes met or exceeded their targets for up skilling careers advisers; where targets were not quite met this was due to advisers dropping out from training or moving to different organisations. Programmes typically met or more often exceeded targets for training school/college staff.

Evaluation aims, methods and data sources

The International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the Personal Guidance Fund (both Phase 1 and Phase 2 programmes). The evaluation began in August 2019. Originally due for completion in November 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in funded programmes extending their delivery and the evaluation similarly being extended, until March 2021.

The overarching aim of the fund was to develop effective models of personal guidance. The evaluation focused on identifying effective approaches with the intention of improving practice beyond the fund. The evidence on implementation and impact helps us to form a view on which approaches were effective. The remaining sections of the report consider:

1. The effectiveness of different approaches.

2. Working with different beneficiary groups.

3. The impact of personal guidance on students.

4. Impact of training on staff and school/college career guidance.

5. Key learning regarding scaling up, sustainability and best practice.

A mixed methods approach was utilised to ensure that all the data needed to answer the objectives was captured. The three key methods used were:

1. **Desk based research** using data provided by the CEC (including monitoring data regarding targets and activities, and narrative reports on progress submitted by providers to the CEC) and student self-completion questionnaire data and programme providers including student self-completion questionnaire data ('Future Skills') collected by three programme providers pre- and post-programme, covering personal effectiveness, career readiness, and essential skills.[7]

2. **Student online self-completion measures**. The first measured what students had learned and the impact of Covid-19 on their experiences of the personal guidance programmes (see Appendix 1). The second was a qualitative data collection tool which replaced focus groups which we were unable to conduct (see Appendix 2). This survey was open only to students aged 16 or over and asked them to reflect on how they experienced the programme, whether the session of personal guidance was long enough and met their needs, their views of the careers adviser, what they had learned about themselves and future options and careers, if there had been impacts on their motivation, engagement and attitudes towards school/college, and the extent to which the personal guidance had shaped their decisions regarding next steps. This data was analysed using thematic analysis within NVivo.

3. **Semi-structured interviews** capturing information on programme managers' understanding of different aspects of their programmes, programme deliverers (typically careers advisers) views of the delivery process and school/college staff views of the programme and its initial impacts on staff and students.
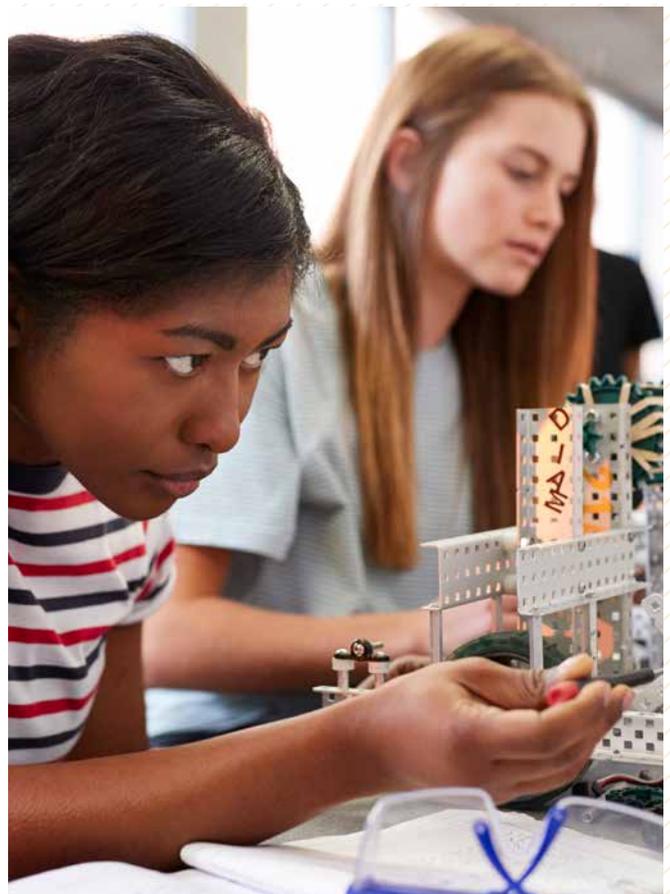
Participants

The participants who contributed to this research are described in Table 4.

Table 4 Evaluation participants

Participant	Methods used	Number
Programme providers	Semi-structured interviews	16
Programme deliverers: • Careers advisers (level 6 or 7 qualified) • Employability workers (level 4 qualified)	Semi-structured interviews	15 1
School/college staff	Semi-structured interviews	9
Students:		
Aged 11-15 years	Quantitative survey (iCeGS)	16
Aged 16+ years	Quantitative survey (iCeGS) Future Skills survey Qualitative data collection tool	139 263 40

3 | Effectiveness of different approaches

Whole school integration, triage and the use of digital tools were the most widely adopted approaches with a smaller number of providers also exploring group guidance. Providers adopted these approaches effectively but integration was particularly effectively adopted. Triage and integration were particularly useful for supporting preparation & feedback.

This section considers the approaches to delivering personal guidance across the fund: triage, group guidance, whole school integration, digital tools, non face-to-face guidance (by telephone or online video conferencing) and monitoring and evaluation. It highlights the elements which were most effective. Five of these approaches form the basis of the accompanying case studies where details about individual programme rationales, activities and costs are explored in depth - the focus here is on identifying the key features, successes, challenges, innovations and impacts related to each approach.

Triage

Triage in a careers setting is using information about young person's career requirements and decisions to decide what support that young person requires and who the best person is to give that support. A triage interview does not constitute personal guidance. A number of programmes within the fund built in triage processes as a way of identifying those most at need of support and ensuring that each young person received all the time and level of support they needed from an appropriately qualified adviser.

Triage is a common model of guidance targeting used in colleges where there are many students and different staff roles to provide different levels of support including course tutors, personal or progress tutors who deliver employability skill development (and can often

be qualified to level 4 in careers) and level 6 or above qualified careers advisers. The AoC, within the Personal Guidance Fund, worked with staff from 12 colleges to map out and create a framework to use with curriculum and support staff within their institution. These were tailored for each college but typically included:

1. Training for college staff to introduce the Gatsby Benchmarks and careers work and address common queries and questions.

2. Identification of students who were in danger of dropping out of their programme.

3. Signposting of students to the right support provision within the college.

4. Engagement of, and preparation with, students to ensure better attendance at personal guidance interviews.

A triage model was delivered in schools by one programme provider, its key features being:

1. The use of an online programme to explore options and identify the level of support required for each young person.

2. Training for school staff to use the online programme and support with preparation and feedback/follow up sessions.

3. A personal guidance session lasting between 20 and 60 minutes, depending on the identified support requirements.

4. Opportunity for less formal follow-ups and drop-in sessions.

Key successes were the embedding of personal guidance into the wider careers programme and integration of careers across colleges and schools as increased awareness, knowledge and understanding for staff. Although most respondents received 30 minutes or less in their personal guidance interview, 75% of respondents reported that they had the right amount of time and only 25% felt they needed more. In the CareerPilot, University of Bath programme (which used a triage approach to identify different student needs before one-to-one guidance), over 84% were satisfied with the time of their personal guidance session. Their evaluation report concluded that this satisfaction with time was:

> " .. averaged across all levels of guidance (20, 30 and 60 minutes combined), but there was little difference between the three levels of guidance. This strongly suggests that all three guidance intensities were effective at meeting student needs and that this is likely to be attributable to both the robustness of process and the validity of the Pathway Planner[8] in supporting the allocation of guidance according to student need. It was however clear that careers advisers flexed the timings of the sessions if a student needed them to do so.

Programme evaluation report

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8. Pathway Planner is a three stage model and online tool offered by CareerPilot within their triage model of personal guidance provision. https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/adviser-zone/pathway-planner-tool-gatsby-benchmark-8

Implementing triage using digital tools in schools was an innovative approach in itself - whilst triage is a common practice in colleges, overt triage systems are not necessarily a feature in schools where student numbers are smaller.

Key challenges were ensuring staff had the time and availability to access training; this was particularly evident in colleges. Also problematic in colleges was record keeping - many of the colleges wanted to improve their record keeping and integrate personal guidance interventions into the customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

Impacts and outcomes of adopting a triage approach in colleges include more appropriate referrals, sometimes there were increased numbers of referrals as more staff were able to identify issues and knew where to direct students. In other cases, the number of referrals had decreased but were more appropriate.

Other outcomes identified included students being more informed about their opportunities, fewer UCAS forms being returned to students for additional work, and there was a greater understanding about the work of the college career teams.

> "
> I also used it as a really good opportunity to introduce curriculum team members to the Gatsby Benchmarks and the changes in the careers agenda over the last two years
>
> **Careers adviser**

> "
> One of the things that I think has really helped is it's actually lessened some of the referrals, because in some cases the people who were talking to staff were just after information, they weren't after guidance and they are now equipped to give them that information and advice which is good.
>
> **Careers adviser**

The data has suggested that additional support is needed by students but that the limited resources that colleges have are being better used in the colleges forming part of the AoC project. One college, for example, provided initial interviewing skills to support staff and have built in peer observations to support them in developing their skills (these staff did not deliver personal guidance). Many of the colleges have developed resources specifically for colleagues to support triage such as flowcharts of the process and briefing documents with useful web links. One college also delivered the training to members of the governing body, which was very positively received and contributed to raising the importance of the service.

Schools that used the online programme underpinning a triage approach found it a useful tool to support students in accessing personal guidance. It was particularly beneficial to those lacking a clear progression pathway:

> **The Pathway Planner has been a huge support in determining the best guidance for our pupils. It has allowed me to target guidance and resources to individual students and best support them going forward.**
>
> **IAG Coordinator**

How was using triage an effective approach?

1. It distributed responsibility for careers more widely than the traditional careers team. Staff had a more extensive skills set and knowledge about careers and the Gatsby Benchmarks as well as being more cognisant of student needs, how to help students and to signpost/refer as necessary.

2. It ensured that students with issues were picked up early and signposted to the most appropriate support.

3. Students had access to ongoing support rather than just a one-off intervention.

4. Preparation and follow-up were integrated within the programme so students were better prepared and derived greater benefit from personal guidance.

The aspects of triage which may have been less effective were the reduction of time for interviews for a small number of students. Students in some programmes were offered shorter time slots for personal guidance if categorised as ready for their pathway. For some this may not have been enough (although the majority of respondents to the survey and online data collection tool indicated that their session was adequate). A feedback loop may improve the targeting of triage.

Integration

Integration refers to personal guidance (for targeted groups such as students with SEND or for all students) being integrated into the wider careers programme via a whole school approach such that all students engage with careers education, information, advice and guidance. These approaches aim to ensure all students are supported in learning to understand career and labour market information and in making informed decisions to ensure their career guidance is as impactful as possible.

The key features of whole school integration are:

1. Working with multiple year groups (typically starting with Years 7-9) using age appropriate activities such as using digital platforms to learn about self and careers, group guidance, assemblies, career conversations and one-to-one personal guidance.

2. The use of a digital platform by all students and staff which usually includes Labour Market Information (LMI), information on pathways into careers and which permits development of individual profiles for saving thoughts, reflections, action plans and progress.

3. The training of school/college staff to help embed careers across the curriculum, understand careers and use digital platforms. It may even include training staff to Level 6 in career development practitioner qualifications.

Most programmes within the fund supported the integration of personal guidance into a broader careers programme and indeed more widely across the school by introducing personal guidance to different year groups. Three programmes addressed integration specifically. There were innovative approaches used within these programmes, particularly in working with younger students (for example years 7-9) in small groups, short one to one career conversations or in the case of Derbyshire EBP a large group theatre performance. As is discussed below in the section on working with younger students, key successes were engaging younger learners who responded very positively, and working across the school because it resulted in a careers adviser being present regularly in school.

Key challenges were engaging all staff and helping them understand the importance of careers and personal guidance in relation to the curriculum, and having access to a quiet and appropriate space for sessions to take place in. This was particularly important where programmes offered drop-in sessions because students need to know where they can find the adviser.

Students, staff and advisers involved in these programmes responded positively. Student feedback and staff observations demonstrated increased awareness of careers and pathways and increased confidence.

"

The awareness of their options has increased...they know what their options are.

Teacher

One other important outcome was the re-engagement of those students who were disengaged or at risk of dropping out and/or becoming NEET. This was achieved by talking about their options in a manner and environment that was suited to their needs and abilities, by making careers something that was adopted as a part of everyday school life and a topic that was relayed to parents. Careers advisers noted the importance of not only ensuring that the students gained knowledge, but that they left their educational setting going into further education, employment or training.

The careers advisers and employability workers expressed how the programmes have also benefited the work that they are able to carry out in the schools and colleges.

The careers advisers also described how the programme has benefitted them professionally and the advice that they have been able to provide.

> **A big part of what we do is making sure none of the Year 11's are at risk of becoming NEET, so we have met every single Year 11 and each of them has an action plan.**
>
> **Teacher**

> **I see my Careers Leaders more often and we have much more involvement.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

> **I have more meetings with SLT as well and it certainly feels like we have been embraced and we've come to be part of the fabric of the school.**
>
> **Employability worker**

> **It has encouraged me to be more reflective and to ensure I have the correct sort of setting.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

How was integration an effective approach?

1. Level 6 careers advisers spent more time in school because of increased interactions with a wider range of age groups. This allowed students to become more familiar with the advisers and develop rapport and trust. The students were more able to rely on advisers if they needed careers guidance or information. Staff recognised that students benefitted from having a reliable support system and students enjoyed the interaction and impartiality that advisers brought.

2. Working with students on all different levels throughout their time in their educational setting encouraged them to start thinking about their career decisions from a young age. This increased their knowledge and understanding of careers, the labour market and potential progression routes. In turn this helped them form aspirations and increase their confidence and motivation. It also meant that personal guidance in the later educational stages was more focused on guidance and less focused on providing careers education, information and advice.

3. Engaging teaching and support staff and enabling them to realise the importance of careers and personal guidance, and the value it had for the students and for the classroom, helped to build a whole school approach where careers became embedded.

Aspects of integration which were less effective were those which attempted to engage parents - although two programmes reported some success in working with parents this was, overall, the aspect of these programmes which was less successful.

Digital tools

Digital tools were used within the programmes of the Personal Guidance Fund in two key ways:

1. As digital platforms for students and staff to use for individual record keeping, career and labour market information, monitoring, identification of those at risk/triage and evaluation (this supported whole school integration as well).

2. As digital tools to support personal guidance sessions.

As is discussed above, the use of digital platforms supported the integration of personal guidance into a wider programme of career guidance and did so successfully. For example, in Aspire-igen's programme, the Start Profile platform offered staff the opportunity to learn about career guidance, the Gatsby Benchmarks and personal guidance and students were able to explore career and labour market information with the option to record their responses to personal guidance experiences alongside other experiences of work in school. The Careerpilot platform was also used successfully by the University of Bath programme, providing the opportunity for students to explore their developments, progression and subject information throughout the school curriculum (i.e. assemblies, tutor time and curriculum lessons). Since engagement with the platform was primarily in school, all students who attended were able to use the platform and take part in personal guidance - it is unknown whether students whose attendance was more sporadic engaged to the same extent, but evaluation reports from the programme indicated that more Year 11 students had firm post-16 destinations after taking part.

Staff were trained to use the CareerPilot platform, deliver sessions to Year 11 and 12 students and work with advisers to implement a triage system which included a one-to-one personal guidance session (with a Level 6 qualified careers adviser), informal conversations and follow-up support. Using the digital platforms in this way was innovative for a school context and created a funnel shaped referral process which more effectively moved students towards career guidance when it was needed. It enabled them to make better use of the adviser when they did access career guidance.

Other programmes made explicit use of digital tools to support their personal guidance sessions with students with SEND to enable communication and understanding for different levels of learning ability and for those without a preference for verbal communication. Although using digital career platforms to support career related learning was viewed as a form of innovation, such platforms have been available for use in schools for decades (Cascaid for example has been in use in schools since 1970). The innovation might rather be described as the use of the platforms to integrate personal guidance into the wider careers programme and across the whole school.

Key challenges in the use of digital tools were ensuring that the students had access to computers and/or the internet within the activities. Not all schools were able to provide the necessary facilities for the programmes to be delivered as well as they might have been. Those providers who communicated and worked with schools more closely to set up programmes and tailor provision were less likely to encounter this problem.

Using digital tools enabled personal guidance to be better embedded into the careers programme and integrated across the whole school, it increased the knowledge and understanding of career guidance in staff, it helped identify those who had the greatest need for personal guidance and it helped a much wider range of students be fully prepared for their one-to-one personal guidance session(s) and make further progress within interviews.

"

I know how useful students found your careers meetings; they were always so positive when I asked them how they went - to the point when others in the tutor group wanted to bring their appointments with you forward as they were envious of the advice given.

Teacher

"

From not knowing what to do at the start and not wanting to go to sixth form it [the programme] has helped me massively.

Year 11 student

The programmes helped staff identify young people who they thought were well prepared and ready to make a decision but in actual fact needed more support by using the Triage Tool.

"

The SLT and Careers Leaders have said it has really helped with the 'grey' students - the students they thought were completely sorted, bright and able, and what the triage showed is that they're not really. Sometimes the kids that have more choices than anybody else can be most in need.

CareerPilot manager

How was using digital tools an effective approach?

1. It enabled more meaningful personal guidance interventions with students who were better prepared for the session.

2. It made better use of personal guidance resources focusing them on students where and when they were needed.

3. Digital tools enabled use of an important source of data about the needs of young people.

The data captured doesn't provide information on whether students became more digitally literate as a consequence of engaging with these programmes; this would be a fruitful area for further study.

Group guidance

Small group guidance sessions were used in several programmes. The CDI (Career Development Institute) recommends that group guidance is no more than 3-4 students, should be delivered by a qualified careers adviser and should not preclude participants from attending a one-to-one personal guidance interview (The CDI, 2020). It may best be used to explore and develop self-awareness, self-determination and self-improvement rather than serve as a proxy for personal guidance since it is likely that members of the group will all have unique needs that require individual sessions (The CDI, 2020).

Within the Personal Guidance Fund, small group guidance was used in several programmes as part of a wider offer. Delivering guidance in small groups offered a time and cost effective approach.

The key features of programmes using group guidance were:

1. Using it with younger students, particularly those in Year 7 and Year 8.

2. Using it to introduce personal guidance and prepare students for a one-to-one.

3. Using it to provide career education and information, particular labour market information.

4. Using it to develop personal effectiveness, for example motivation, resilience and confidence through tailored activities.

5. Using it to develop individual student plans.

Group guidance was particularly successful with younger students who viewed the group setting as 'safe' and were less likely to feel self-conscious - this was not necessarily the case for older students however who did occasionally find this context more difficult to be open in. Group guidance in itself was an innovative approach to opening up career related learning to students. Key challenges in delivering group guidance were related to liaising and communicating effectively with the school

to ensure that there was an appropriate space and that the students were available.

Students taking part in group guidance responded positively and enthusiastically to the programmes.

> **"**
>
> **It was amazing they are so supportive and helpful.**
>
> **Year 8 student**

Programme deliverers reported similar observations and that multiple interactions helped develop relationships between adviser and student.

> **"**
>
> **I think the group sessions worked really well, they were very informal, the students just seemed to really open up and were very honest with me and they had nice discussions with each other about what they wanted to do and one of them would say "I think you'd be really good at that" and you know, it was lovely.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

There was evidence of learning by students around awareness of a wider range of pathways and careers, including future careers. In addition to increased knowledge, students also reported increased confidence in making decision.

Furthermore, the advisers believed the students had improved understanding of the relationship between school and their futures.

> **It has opened my mind to other possibilities.**
>
> Year 9 student

> **It has helped me to understand how different jobs need different skills and what job opportunities are available for when I'm older.**
>
> Year 8 student

> **It helps them understand more about why they're doing different curriculum subjects - "why do I have to do this I'll never use it" - trying to give them that context, I've made it specifically part of the career guidance because I think it helps give it a little bit of structure.**
>
> Careers adviser

How was using group guidance an effective approach?

1. It offered students the opportunity to become familiar and interact with careers advisers and career guidance in the safety of a group setting.

2. It allowed students to engage in a longer programme of learning and experience multiple sessions which offers time and space for preparation, reflection and feedback and allowed the careers adviser time to help more disadvantaged learners deconstruct or overcome barriers.

Group guidance may be less helpful when working with older students who can feel constrained by the presence of peers if the topic of discussion is too personal.

Telephone/online guidance

Telephone/online guidance refers to personal guidance being delivered one to one but by telephone or online using video conferencing applications. Students responding to the iCeGS quantitative survey were asked about their experiences of online/telephone personal guidance during lockdown (N=155). Over 75% either preferred online/telephone provision over face-to-face or felt it was no different because the online aspect permitted screen sharing so differed little and the telephone calls were well handled. Two individuals preferred the online to face-to-face guidance because they felt it was easier to open up. Reasons given by those who did not like online/telephone provision were:

- It was an unfamiliar experience.

- It did not feel as if it was as personalised.

- They did not feel that answers could be expressed correctly.

Those respondents who experienced both online and telephone guidance were asked which they preferred (N= 24). Four respondents indicated they preferred the telephone with one stating they were more able to converse and explain themselves on the phone.

How was telephone/online guidance an effective approach?

1. Advisers could screen share and display information visually, use images and videos which they were not necessarily able to do in face to face sessions.

2. Students felt telephone/online could be less intimidating and less stressful than face-to-face whilst retaining the personalised aspect.

3. Parents were able to sit in on sessions and take part in the career development journey.

4. It increased the availability of careers advisers to students who needed repeat or follow up sessions.

There were challenges however in delivering personal guidance via telephone or online during lockdown. Firstly, there were issues of safeguarding and data sharing which meant programme providers and advisers could not usually contact students directly, at least not without permissions and consent from the school and parents. This was handled in different ways; advisers in one programme were able to go into school and contact students over the telephone from there, using the schools contacts and systems. In other cases, permissions were sought from parents and sometimes a parent or school staff member was present during the session too. A second challenge was students not attending appointments - this was problematic in face-to-face delivery but even more so without teachers/tutors to coordinate attendance.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation enables providers and schools/colleges to understand what works, for whom, why, and in which contexts. Monitoring is the systematic observation and recording of the progress or quality of an intervention or programme over time. Evaluation is conducted to establish whether that intervention or programme works - does it meet its objectives? How does it meet its objectives? Is it worthwhile?

Key features of monitoring and evaluation are:

1. Uptake and delivery targets with close monitoring of these figures over time.

2. A Theory of Change or logic model which identifies anticipated outcomes and impacts and is drawn up before delivery commences.

3. Reliable and valid data collection methods to measure outcomes and impacts which can be built into delivery.

4. Collecting data from the people taking part in the programme including the deliverers, stakeholders and recipients to support formative evaluation.

Programmes within the fund kept precise records of engagement by schools/colleges and engagement by students/parents for the different activities involved using their own systems. However, although several of the programme applications had articulated outcomes for their programmes, evaluation was clearly a challenge for many programmes. The majority of programmes designed their evaluation strategies and methodologies after programme delivery had commenced rather than when the programme was being devised. It was clear that for most programme providers evaluation was not particularly well understood, either in terms of value or in terms of methods. This may be the reason why evaluation was not planned ahead of delivery.

Only one programme communicated an explicit Theory of Change to underpin their programme in their application and this included methods of how to capture evidence of impact. A Theory of Change describes a programme's activity and intended outcomes whilst providing a rationale for why those activities will result in those outcomes. The two key benefits to developing and using a Theory of Change is that it offers an evidence-based approach to designing programmes (i.e., helps you identify what will work, for whom, when and in which contexts) and supports evaluation activities by explicitly describing what outcomes you need to measure. The Derbyshire EBP programme was based upon a Theory of Change developed by the entire team. They monitored student attendance at all their scheduled sessions and recorded this in a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet collated the type of intervention, what was achieved during the intervention and actions to take place before next intervention. Each student had their own record, and this collated their skills progression and tracked their personal achievements.

To evaluate impacts, the Derbyshire EBP built in baseline and post-programme measures for each element of their programme, making use of internally designed (and tested) tools and national frameworks to monitor the distance travelled by students. These matched the specific aims of the different aspects of the programme delivered in each year group. Additionally, the Derbyshire EBP collected feedback from students and school staff about their experiences of the programme and what they think worked well and were aiming to capture attainment at Progress 8 and GCSE by school and NEET post 16 per school data from the Department of Education.

How was monitoring and evaluation an effective approach?

1. It permitted programme development and refinement.

2. It supported scaling up of delivery.

3. It aided in the identification of training needs.

4. It provided evidence of impact and can therefore assist in deciding where to distribute resources.

5. It created student individual records which they could use to track their own progress and identify next steps, facilitated reflection and served as a useful record for personal guidance 1 to 1's throughout their academic journey.

4 | Working with beneficiary groups

In working with students with SEN support, SEND and SEMH, increasing the number of interactions, tailoring programmes for individuals and developing the interviewing skills of advisers helped these programmes be successful. The programmes encouraged the students to be able to open up and develop their own sense of their strengths and skills.

This section reports on how programme providers worked with different beneficiary groups: younger students, students with SEND and SEMH concerns, disadvantaged students and parents. This section describes the key features of programmes, also considering successes, innovations, challenges and impacts. Details on specific programmes of activity and costs can be found in the accompanying case studies.

SEND and SEMH

The four programmes which worked specifically with these groups of students typically shared a number of features:

1. Training of careers advisers to develop their knowledge of the additional or special needs of these groups of students, for example training in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

2. Training for support and teaching staff in careers guidance for students with SEND or SEMH.

3. Multiple, but shorter, guidance sessions with a qualified careers adviser for students before Year 11 to support these students in building rapport, trust and familiarity, and to support those who can struggle to concentrate for longer periods of time.

4. The use of adaptive/assistive technologies, particularly for those students whose preference is non verbal communication.

5. Engaging parents /carers to share with them information and advice about the full range of pathways available to their young person.

6. Support with preparation for transition.

Including families in the guidance process was seen as a key success. The challenges in delivering these programmes were not specific to this group of students, rather they centred around the young person attending the appointment (particularly after lockdown).

The reactions from students and parents who engaged in the sessions to the personal guidance sessions were positive. Programme provider evaluation reports indicated that parents particularly appreciated learning about the full range of progression routes and opportunities available for their children in their locale. Students were able to explore themselves, what they could offer and where they could go next.

Careers advisers delivering the programmes reported reduced anxiety, increased self-confidence, raised aspirations and increased awareness of skills, abilities and strengths among students.

At the school/college level, the programmes have supported existing personal guidance work, and more generally integrated career guidance across the school or college, helping them to achieve several of the Gatsby Benchmarks alongside Benchmark 8 (personal guidance).

> **I think they [young people] have learned a number of things. That they do have a voice and that people are listening to them. They've learnt that there is a lot more out there than they thought there was. They've learnt that they are of value.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

> **I think it is more integrated, and I think one of the things it has done is brought an active careers element into both the mainstream and supported learning.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

How have the programmes with students with SEND or SEMH been effective?

The four programmes which worked specifically with these groups of students typically shared a number of features:

1. By delivering multiple sessions of shorter length, careers advisers found it easier to keep the student focussed. Some students with SEND or SEMH can struggle to concentrate for a session as long as 45-60 minutes, so, short sessions, delivered several times over the course of a term, can engage them more effectively. Multiple interactions, and working with students before Year 11, as with all students, also helped to facilitate interview effectiveness because there was increased rapport.

2. Specialist training supported careers advisers in delivering effective interviews with these students, some of whom presented complex and varying needs. Additional resources such as visual tools facilitated communication, not least because many students did not have a preference for verbal communication.

3. Sessions focused solely on the student, without input from others, was an important first step in supporting the student to develop their own voice and decision-making skills.

4. The externality of the careers adviser helped the SEMH students feel they could be open, seeing the adviser as a confidante and a support.

5. Working with parents /carers offered a point of contact for them, provided reassurance that their child was being properly supported, allowed the parents to reinforce the careers advisers' messages and helped with transitions.

One provider noted that although they had invested in digital tools to support interviews with students working at different levels, students did not need the highest level of support.

Disadvantaged students

Tailoring programmes for more disadvantaged students, working with them at an early age and increasing their self-awareness helped these programmes to be effective. Students demonstrated increased self-awareness, increased career and labour market knowledge, improved personal effectiveness and skill development.

Programmes working specifically with disadvantaged students aimed to help these students overcome the different barriers to education and career development that they could face. The key features of these programmes were:

1. Identification of students aged 11-14 in the target group, for example those at greatest risk of becoming NEET, using indicators such as reduced attendance, exclusions, free school meal entitlement, looked after child and low attainment.

2. Intensive programmes of career related support, tailored to the individual needs of each young person through personalised packs which included activities and resources, which include a strong focus on personal guidance.

Programme providers and careers advisers themselves reported that tailored provision was successful, students also reported that personalised provision was appreciated. Although students at risk of becoming NEET can share things in common, the constellation of risk factors can vary between them, meaning that the issues and barriers faced by each young person may be unique.

Challenges faced were not unique to working with this group of students; rather they centred around ensuring there was appropriate space and that the students attended.

Students reported a range of learning about themselves and their future options:

"

There are lots of ways to achieve, I didn't realise that there were so many options.

Student

I learnt about skills I didn't know I had.

Student

I learnt that I can open up my choices, and widen my options for the future.

Student

Observations from careers advisers delivering the programme and school staff who interacted with students daily indicated that the majority of students responded positively and engaged with the programme. Some also demonstrated a more positive attitude in school and in class, and most evidenced better self-awareness, particularly in understanding their attributes and how those could be viewed and used positively. Finally, many students demonstrated more self-confidence and a smaller proportion demonstrated changes in career aspirations in short-time frames.

Feedback from school staff indicated that they had a better understanding of the components of quality career and personal guidance.

How have the programmes working with more disadvantaged students been effective?

1. Using the RONI (Risk of NEET Indicator) tool helped to identify those students most in need.

2. Working with younger students was beneficial because they were often more receptive to intervention.

3. The multiple sessions allowed the student to develop a positive relationship with the adviser, become more likely to open up and have the opportunity to discuss a range of life scenarios which they may be struggling with.

4. The coaching approach adopted by the adviser in the sessions encouraged the students to take responsibility for resolving their problems and to become more resilient, self-reliant and independent.

5. Dedicated, one-to-one time for vulnerable students who lack this attention in other areas of their life was important. Students placed considerable value on being singled out for one-to-one attention for a positive reason.

6. Qualified advisers skilled in advanced interviewing and coaching techniques were able to support the students to deal with a range of life problems as well as career related learning.

Younger students

Younger students (in Years 7 - 9) were introduced to professional careers advisers and engaged in a variety of different activities within these programmes. The students responded positively and often demonstrated greater receptivity than their older counterparts. Outcomes noted were increased student self-confidence and self-awareness and positive relationships with the adviser which could encourage more effective personal guidance in later years.

Two programmes were specifically directed at introducing career and personal guidance to students from Years 7-9. The key features of these programmes were:

1. Multiple interactions using a range of modes including all year assemblies, small group guidance and one-to-one personal guidance.

2. Inclusion of pastoral elements of support during the programme and a stronger focus on personal effectiveness development (for example developing resilience).

3. Integration of the careers adviser into and across the school with increased accessibility.

Successful innovations included nominating and training a group of students and staff to act as 'career champions' (which involved promoting 'careers' to other staff and students) and creating CEIAG in a box (a physical repository of information, resources and tools to support the giving of careers education information, advice and guidance) for the school to keep, and staff to use in class in the future. Other successes included increasing parental engagement via informal 'coffee and cake' sessions and using form time to introduce the advisers. This latter feature meant that form tutors and advisers were able to develop better working relationships and share information about students which enabled more effective support for them. The challenges that were described pertained to having a regular and appropriate space to conduct sessions in as described earlier.

Reactions from all students were positive; both advisers and students reported that the students found it helpful, supportive and enjoyed having someone that would listen to them. Five key successes were identified:

1. Careers advisers noted that the younger students were quick to form relationships with the adviser.

2. The majority of students indicated they had greater awareness of a wider range of pathways and jobs including jobs of the future. Students also reported feeling better equipped to make decisions about their future and advisers felt they were better able to understand the link between school subjects and careers.

3. Observations from school staff and advisers suggested the programmes helped to reduce anxiety and improve confidence.

4. The personal guidance advisers enjoyed the opportunity to work with younger students because they could learn about the individual, develop a rapport and relationship and create a number of action plans to track progress before personal guidance sessions in later years take place.

5. There were several positive outcomes for the school:

   a. A raised profile of careers across the whole school. Teaching staff had an increased understanding of the purpose and value of career guidance generally, and personal guidance specifically.

   b. Improved partnership working between teaching staff and personal guidance advisers led to teaching staff understanding how personal guidance could be used to support students who may be struggling with various barriers to engagement and attainment. It also increased feedback to teaching staff from advisers about those students who may need additional support.

   c. Advisers were able to provide resources and share learning with teaching staff to support with Gatsby benchmark.

How have programmes working with younger students been effective?

1. The providers believed that working with younger students who had not yet formed rigid beliefs about their futures meant they were more open to learning about careers.

2. The less formal environment created by personal guidance advisers who are not seen as authority figures, whose roles are dedicated towards careers and support and who have professional interviewing skills was effective in encouraging younger students to develop trust and rapport with them. Advisers from both programmes explicitly focussed on younger learners described their separateness from the school as critical to building trust and creating a safe place for these younger students where they would 'open up' and feel able to develop themselves.

3. Identifying strengths, skills and useful attributes early on helped the younger student to develop confidence and a better understanding of opportunities, existing skills and developmental requirements, as was reflected in feedback from school staff, the careers advisers and the students.

4. It increased interaction between teaching staff and advisers which cemented the advisers into the school structure, communication and culture providing staff with increased knowledge and capacity to support their students.

5. Starting the process early helped to personal guidance and become something students were familiar with.

Parents and Carers

Within the Personal Guidance Fund one programme focussed specifically on engaging parents and four included engaging parents as one of their activities. There were two main approaches to engaging parents. The first might be considered as informal, consisting mainly of 'drop in' sessions, delivered within a wider programme of activities with students as the primary beneficiaries. The second approach was formal, comprised of two or more structured sessions aimed primarily at parents, with their children as secondary beneficiaries. The focus here is on the latter approach (although many of the informal sessions covered similar topics such as labour market information, future careers and progression pathways) whose key features were:

1. Two to four sessions, at least one of which was for parents only, taking part outside of school hours (early evening).

2. Information about labour markets, future careers and progression pathways.

3. Helping parents understand their influence on their children's career decision making and how they can best support them in this process.

4. Developing a shared understanding of the young person's interests and skills.

5. Personal guidance for the student.

This programme was offered as both a set of face-to-face sessions and online, however, there was no take up of the online programme (pre Covid-19). Following the lockdown, all delivery was forced online, and it is difficult to tell how parents might now engage with a series of online sessions. Take up of face-to-face sessions met targets but was lower than the providers had hoped. Indeed, the providers have restructured the programme for future delivery to fewer sessions, in a bid to make attendance more convenient for parents and boost recruitment.

Although take-up was a little lower than hoped for, among those who did attend, feedback was positive. The programme provided a space for parents and their child to sit down outside of their usual home/school/work environment and have conversations with each other specifically about careers.

> I think it was quite powerful really just for them to have the chance to talk to each other, to learn about themselves, learn about each other, think about careers and the future and the roots and steps that they would need to take in order to get there. It is just opening up those opportunities to think and talk.
>
> **Careers adviser**

By creating this space, parents were able to complete a range of activities which helped them learn about their child's interests, aspirations and skills.

> **it was interesting to see those conversations between the parent and the young person and how they were asking the young people 'do you think you're good at that'. You know it's that kind of questioning that was really nice to see and really interesting.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

The space also provided an opportunity for parents to absorb a range of information (i.e. potential pathways) and ask questions about careers. This provided parents with the knowledge to have more informed career conversations with their child.

> **There were a lot of questions and they particularly liked having that information and that practical information and knowledge.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

The format of the programme encouraged intergenerational learning as parents were able to work and learn collaboratively with their child. The students were able to learn about their parents/carer's own career experiences while the parents were able to learn about their child's interests, aspirations, strengths, weaknesses etc. Careers advisers noted that:

> **The fact that it's not just the young person trying to express what they want to do any why, it is them both being on that journey of exploration and gaining that knowledge together. I just think it is really powerful that they can talk and share together, from an equal standpoint.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

The programme was also successful in preparing students for their one-to-one guidance interview as it encouraged them to start the process of thinking about their interests, skills, strengths etc. beforehand.

"

> **I think the sessions helped them to start the thinking process and that of course in turn helps you in the interview. They already know the routes, they already know and have been thinking about the types of careers they're interested in, their skills, their strengths, I think it really helped the interview situation.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

As well as preparing the students for their one-to-one guidance interview the programme also increased their confidence and ability to talk about themselves with their parents and their guidance interviewer.

"

> **I definitely felt there was an increased confidence, an increased ability to be able to talk about who they were and their strengths and you had kind of moved forward a bit more.**
>
> **Careers adviser**

How have programmes working with parents/carers been effective?

1. It provided space and time for parents and their child to have conversations specifically about careers.

2. Parents were able to complete a range of activities which helped them learn about their child's interests and aspirations. Many parents felt better-equipped to support and engage with their child as a result of this programme .

3. The programme provided an opportunity for parents to learn about the labour market and key decisions that their child has to make which equipped them with the ability to have more informed career conversations with their child.

4. The programme prepared students for their one-to-one guidance interview.

Scheduling too many sessions and running a programme entirely online (before Covid-19) was not effective.

5 | Impact of personal guidance on students

Data captured from programme providers, careers advisers, careers leaders, teachers and students demonstrated that all programmes received positive reactions from most, if not all students. The data demonstrated there was significant learning about careers and labour market information, pathways and options and career management and employability skills across students in all programmes. Students reported being more confident in their career decision making and current studies, many also reported feeling more positive, determined, motivated and focused. Personal guidance had supported many students to make decisions about their future careers and their next steps.

This section considers the impact on students of participation in the Personal Guidance Fund programmes generally, as opposed to the impacts from specific approaches or on specific target groups (this is described above).

First we describe the sources of data used to evidence impact. We then look at the following levels of impact:

1. Reactions to the programmes and advisers.

2. Learning - changes in knowledge and awareness.

3. Attitudes and behaviour - changes in attitudes, skills, school/college behaviour and aspirations/intended destinations.

Data sources

Both qualitative and quantitative data have been used to evidence impact. Table 4 outlines the type and number of participants involved, the methods used and who collected the data.

Reactions

The iCeGS quantitative survey captured information on the nature of sessions undertaken by respondents, the majority of whom took part in more than one kind of activity. There were 7 different kinds of activity:

1. One-to-one sessions with a careers adviser.

2. Small group sessions with a careers adviser.

3. Using an online/digital tool or piece of software.

4. Completing activities or having conversations with advisers which helped developed personal skills such as resilience.

5. Completing activities or having conversations with advisers which helped develop employability skills such as communication.

6. Encounters with employers, employees or apprentices.

7. Working with a careers adviser to draw up an action plan.

Participants had typically engaged with their careers adviser at least twice, with a smaller group actually engaging with them more than four times. Most respondents had personal guidance interviews lasting approximately 20 or 30 minutes with 17% having approximately 45 minutes and 10% having approximately one hour.

Students of all ages and from all target groups overwhelmingly responded positively to the programmes – nearly all students responding to iCeGS data collection (N=195) or completing programme provider evaluations (N =1226) indicated favourable reactions. Programme provider evaluations reported extremely high levels of student satisfaction – in the Doncaster Chamber of Commerce evaluation report it was 100% (N=108). 90.5% (N=698) of students taking part in the Careerpilot programme by the University of Bath felt it was useful, 94% (N=420) of MY Trust participants found that being part of the project had helped them, and 97% stated that they would recommend to others to take part in a similar project for support. Over 80% (N=155) agreed or strongly agreed in the iCeGS survey that they enjoyed the programme. In the qualitative data the primary description offered by students was helpful, supportive and enjoyable.

Thematic analysis of the online qualitative data collected by iCeGS (N=40) and data collected by programme providers (N=43) showed that when asked about their experiences the most prominent theme was 'helpful' with 95% of responses using the words 'help', 'helpful' 'beneficial' or 'useful'. Explanations for why the programmes were perceived to be so helpful are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Respondents' perceptions of what made sessions helpful

Themes	Example quote
Learning about individual options and opportunities	"It definitely helps to know the options available and to be told that there are different routes if your grades aren't right for your course."
Supported decision-making	"The best thing was talking to somebody who was knowledgeable and could help me decide what I wanted to do and how to achieve it."
Making plans	"The careers adviser was able to help me make a plan which helped me realise what I wanted to do."
Information about specific careers	"The most useful part of the conversation was how long you have to train for to be a nurse or a GP."
Broadening horizons	"The careers programme helped me look at careers that I never would have thought of."
Talking about dreams, aspirations and the future	"That I could express my future dreams."
Clarified options/focused thinking	"It put into perspective exactly what I need to achieve to get where I want to be."
Having someone who is genuinely interested	"Having someone to talk to who would go out of their way to help you and find stuff out."
Personalisation	"The individual meetings to discuss pathways tailored to me were great."

Programme providers and careers advisers noted that students were typically enthusiastic about taking part in the programmes, particularly when they had been introduced to the programme and understood the nature of a one-to-one personal guidance session. Younger students were especially enthusiastic and open to embarking on their career development journeys. Parents, despite take-up being lower than anticipated, in Adviza's workshops also responded favourably, with the informative nature and interactive aspects being singled out for praise.

Interview data from careers advisers indicated they perceived themselves as treated as confidantes and this was also reflected in the data from students. This may have been a consequence of the interviewing skills advisers have, it may reflect the less formal nature of the relationships that advisers felt they had with students (compared to those that teaching staff typically have) or it could reflect the fact that their roles are dedicated solely to the provision of career and personal guidance whereas teaching staff typically hold other (sometimes conflicting) roles.

Data from one provider and from the qualitative iCeGS survey provided an understanding of the other descriptions of careers advisers - supportive, knowledgeable and helpful were most frequently cited, followed by kind, nice and able. Respondents also indicated they found the advisers to be non-judgmental and good listeners.

Learning

Findings from the different sources indicated that students' learning, across all programmes, coalesced around four themes: learning about self; learning about careers generally (present and future) or specifically (such as medicine and health care); learning about pathways and learning career management/ employability skills.

Learning about self

Many of the programmes included activities which helped students develop their understanding of self. Students taking part in the MY Trust programme (targeted at young people with SEND) either strongly agreed or agreed that they had learnt about themselves (94%, N=420). Respondent's strengths and skills featured most prominently in learning about self. Over 40% of respondents indicated they had learned a lot about their skills and strengths in the iCeGS survey (N=155) with a further 40% indicating they had some learning. Personality, likes and dislikes also evidenced some learning but to a lesser extent than skills and strengths (see Figure 1).

This pattern was replicated in the qualitative data captured online by iCeGS and by some providers (see Table 7). There were 39 explicit references to having learned about their own skills or strengths (N=107). Fewer respondents indicated learning a lot about their personality, likes and dislikes. There was an increased understanding of what careers might be a good fit amongst respondents. In the Adviza parental workshops there was significantly increased awareness of their children's interests and career development journey.

Figure 1 Learning about skills and strengths & personality, likes and dislikes
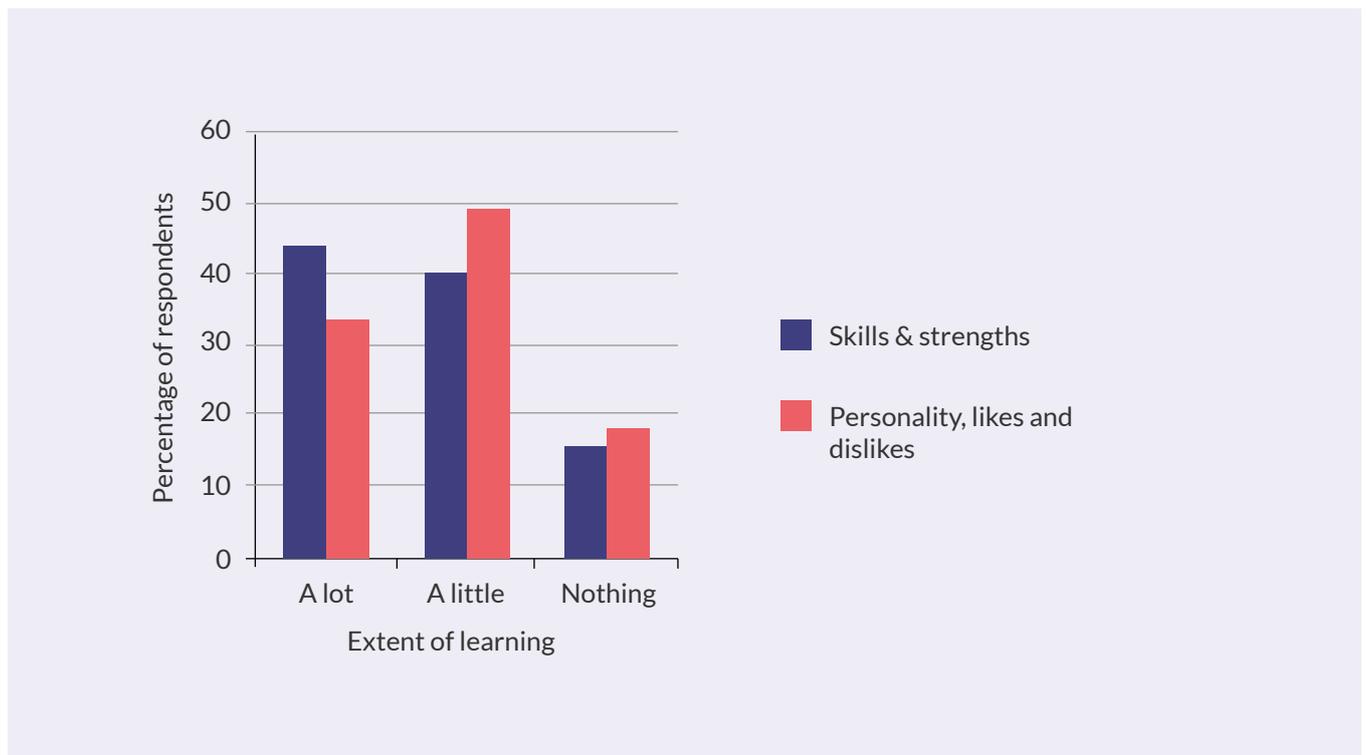
(N=155; iCeGS survey)

Table 7 Respondents' perceptions of learning about self (N=146; data captured by iCeGS and programme providers)

| Themes	Example quote
Strengths and skills	"I learned that I have more job-related skills than I thought I did."
Interests, likes and dislikes	"What I was actually interested in."
What careers/pathways might be a good fit	"I learnt that I would like to work with helping community's due to the talks my year group have had with multiple careers speakers."
What careers/pathways would not be a good fit	"I found that education for another 3/4 years at uni wouldn't be for me."
What skills or attributes need to be developed in the future	"Being adaptable. It's something I want to work on."
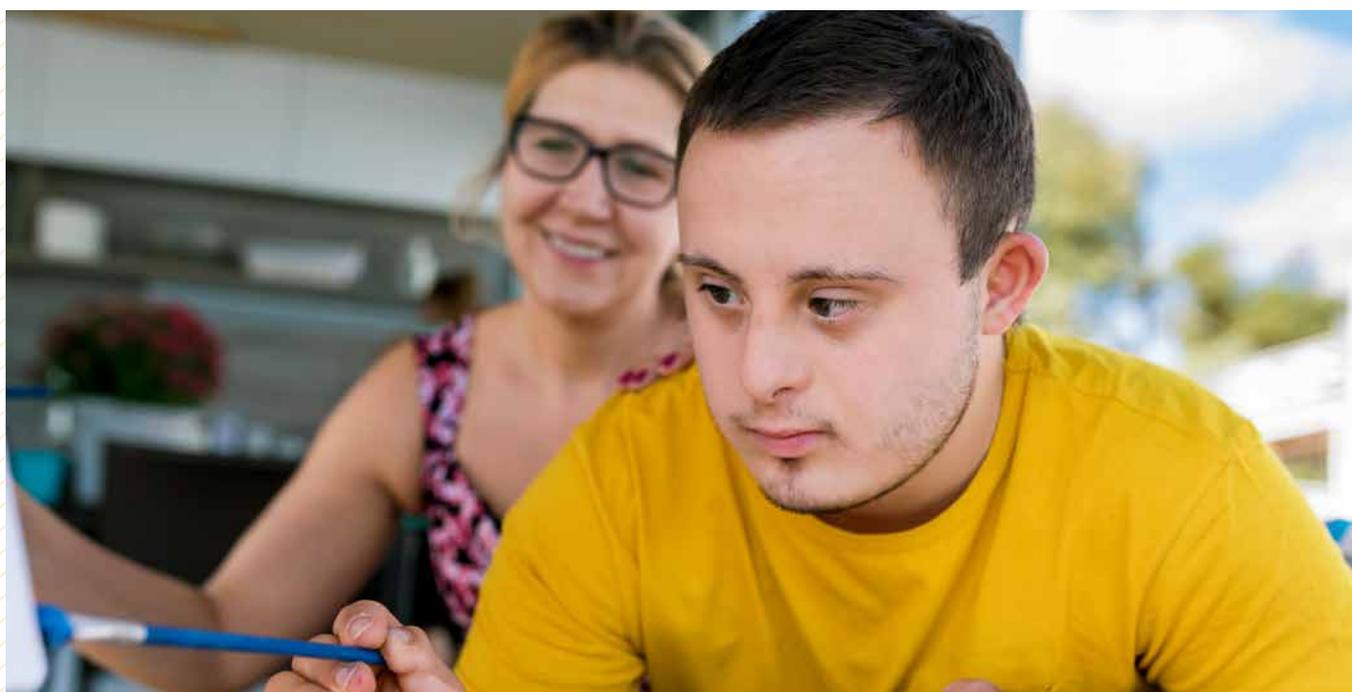
Learning about careers

In the iCeGS quantitative survey for 16+ (N=139), respondents were asked if they learned about current jobs and careers, jobs and careers in the future and about jobs they might like to do. Responses indicated that most respondents learned a lot about jobs and careers currently available and about jobs and careers that would be likely in the future (see Figure 2). Of the remaining respondents most indicated they learned a little rather than learning nothing.

Qualitative data (N=64; comprised from iCeGS online data collection and qualitative feedback collected by programme providers) followed a similar pattern but offered more detail on what exactly respondents had learned (see Table 8). The primary learning point was the wide variety of careers available with respondents indicating they now knew they had many options, followed by an improved understanding of which careers the respondents were interested in.

Figure 2 Learning about careers and jobs
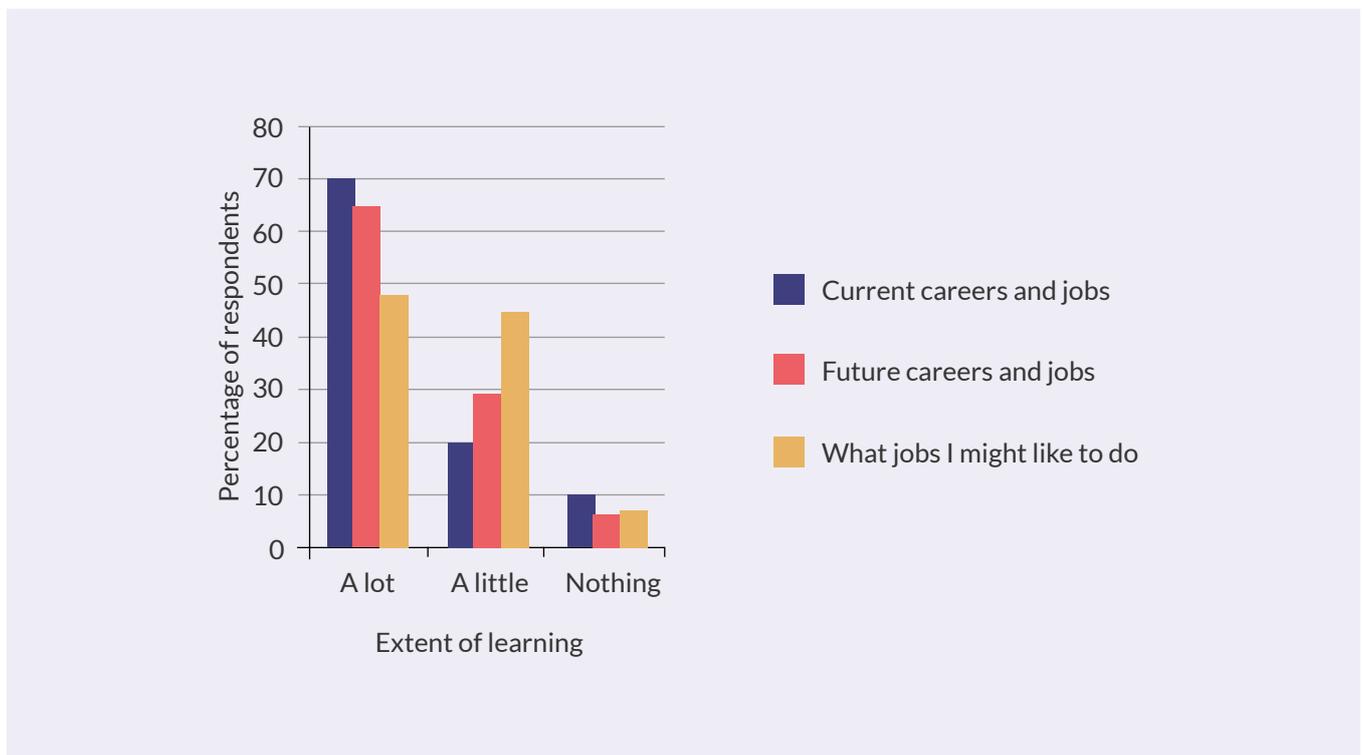
(N=139, data captured by iCeGS)

Table 8 Respondents' learning about careers

Themes	Example quote
The large number of possible careers/options	"One thing that I have learnt today are the different types of jobs and job opportunities in different job sectors."
Skills required for different jobs or careers	"I learned what a biomedical scientist is and what skills are needed for that job."
The importance of real-world work experiences and personal skill set in accessing a career	"People from all backgrounds (with degrees, no GCSE's etc) can proceed to a high career status and that education doesn't cap potential."
Future careers	"There will be a lot of different jobs in the future."
Need for resilience in achieving your career	"I'm not dumb, I just need to push myself and not give up."
'Hidden' careers in subjects	"There are a lot of different job opportunities within the field of accountancy."
The importance of qualifications in accessing a career	"I need to get qualifications and will need to make a CV."
How to get help	"I know where to look to find out information about different job roles I am interested in."

Programme provider evaluations also identified widespread career learning:

- Parents (N unknown) who attended sessions in Adviza's programme learned about the changing world of work, the labour market and how quickly that evolves.

- 89% of students (N=108) in Doncaster Chamber of Commerce programme were more aware of opportunities available to them.

- 94% (N=420) of participants in the MY Trust programme, stated they were now aware of different careers and how to research them and that they were clear about what they need to do (93%).

- Over 95% of participants (N=689) in the Careerpilot programme by the University of Bath felt the programme had helped them explore possible career choices.

Learning about pathways

Two-thirds of students reported that they learned a lot about next steps after school or college (Figure 3). Fewer respondents (60%) learned a lot about how to progress into the job or career they were interested in. Less learning took place in relation to how to do an action plan although 41% learned a little about this and 30% learned a lot.

Figure 3 Learning about pathways and planning
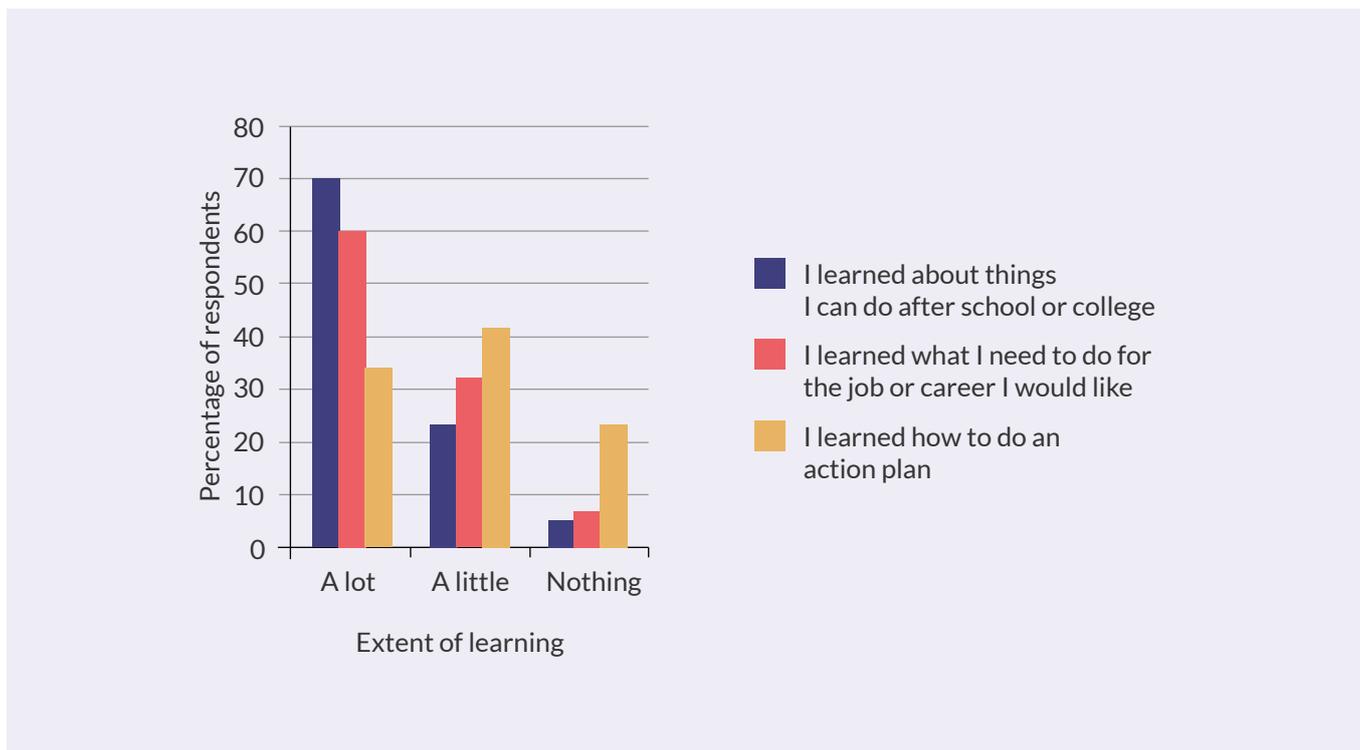
(N=139, iCeGS survey)

Qualitative data (N=63 collected by iCeGS and by programme providers) reflected these findings with the highest number of references being made to learning about the wide range of options and pathways available (see Table 9). Slightly fewer responses referred to learning about specific pathways. Several respondents described learning about different options in more detail and referenced pathways such as university, college and apprenticeships. There was some evidence that specific details about these different pathways were learned as well as some increased understanding of skills and attributes needed to make those next steps. Feedback from parents taking part in the Adviza workshops demonstrated the learning that had taken place regarding post-16 options. Careers advisers in the MY Trust programme believed that the students had learnt that there were other options than 6th form or college, the importance of back up plans, how to research career options and use labour market information for their chosen career path and that it's okay to be unsure but the importance of being able to research their options.

Table 9 Respondents' learning about pathways

Themes	Example quote
The variety of options and pathways into careers	"There are lots of ways to achieve, I didn't realise there were so many options."
Pathways into specific careers	"That the subjects I am taking would lead me on to take a medical or possible sports science course at university abs that's where I would like to go."
University isn't the only option	"I could go to university or I could do an apprenticeship."
Learned about apprenticeships	"There are many options such as apprenticeships."
Learned about university	"I learned that university can be affordable even if you don't earn much."
Enhancing your ability to make those next steps	"I have learned that I can improve my chances when applying for roles by engaging in extra curricula activities and this shows dedication."
Patience and flexibility in decision-making	"I do need to decide what I want to do but it's ok to change your mind."

Learning about career management/ employability skills

Students taking in three of the programmes completed the CEC's Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) (Tanner, 2020)[9] and the Student Career Readiness Index (e.g. Hanson, Moore, Neary & Clark, 2021) before and after the programme. The FSQ assesses three main kinds of skills:

1. Personal effectiveness

2. Career readiness (using the Student Career Readiness Index)

3. Employability/essential skills

Personal effectiveness

As Figure 4 displays, there were increases in the percentage of respondents agreeing with each item pre programme compared with post programme.

Figure 4 Personal effectiveness: percentage agreeing with items pre and post programme (N=263)
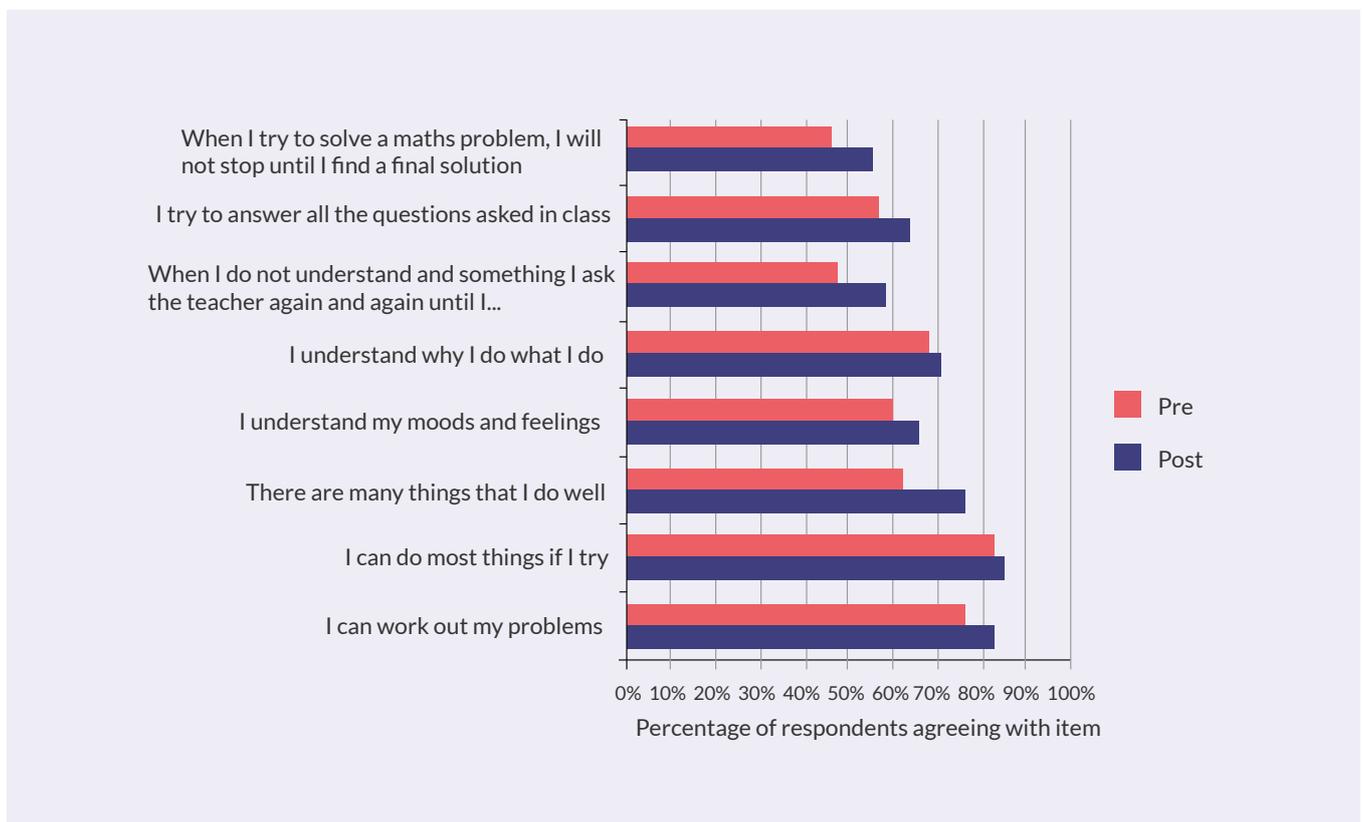

9. https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/young-peoples-career-readiness-and-essential-skills-201819

A paired samples t-test was used to compare pre-programme total personal effectiveness scores to post-programme scores. Mean total personal effectiveness score pre-programme was 21.80 (SD=4.00) compared with 22.75 (SD=4.66) post-programme. This difference was statistically significant (t = -4.209, p = 0.000) and can be described as a small effect size (Cohen's d = 0.2).

Career readiness

There were sizable increases in sixteen of the twenty-one items in the Student Career Readiness Index (SCRI) section, as displayed in Figure 5, with many being twenty percentage point increases. Total career readiness scores were calculated from summing responses to all 21 items in the scale (N=263). Mean career readiness pre-programme was 49.64 (SD=10.85) compared with mean career readiness post-programme which was 55.68 (SD=11.73). A paired samples t-test revealed that this increase in mean career readiness was statistically significant (t = -11.205, p = 0.000) and that the effect size of this increase was medium (Cohen's d = 0.69).

Figure 5 Percentage of respondents agreeing with career readiness items pre- and post-programme (N=263)
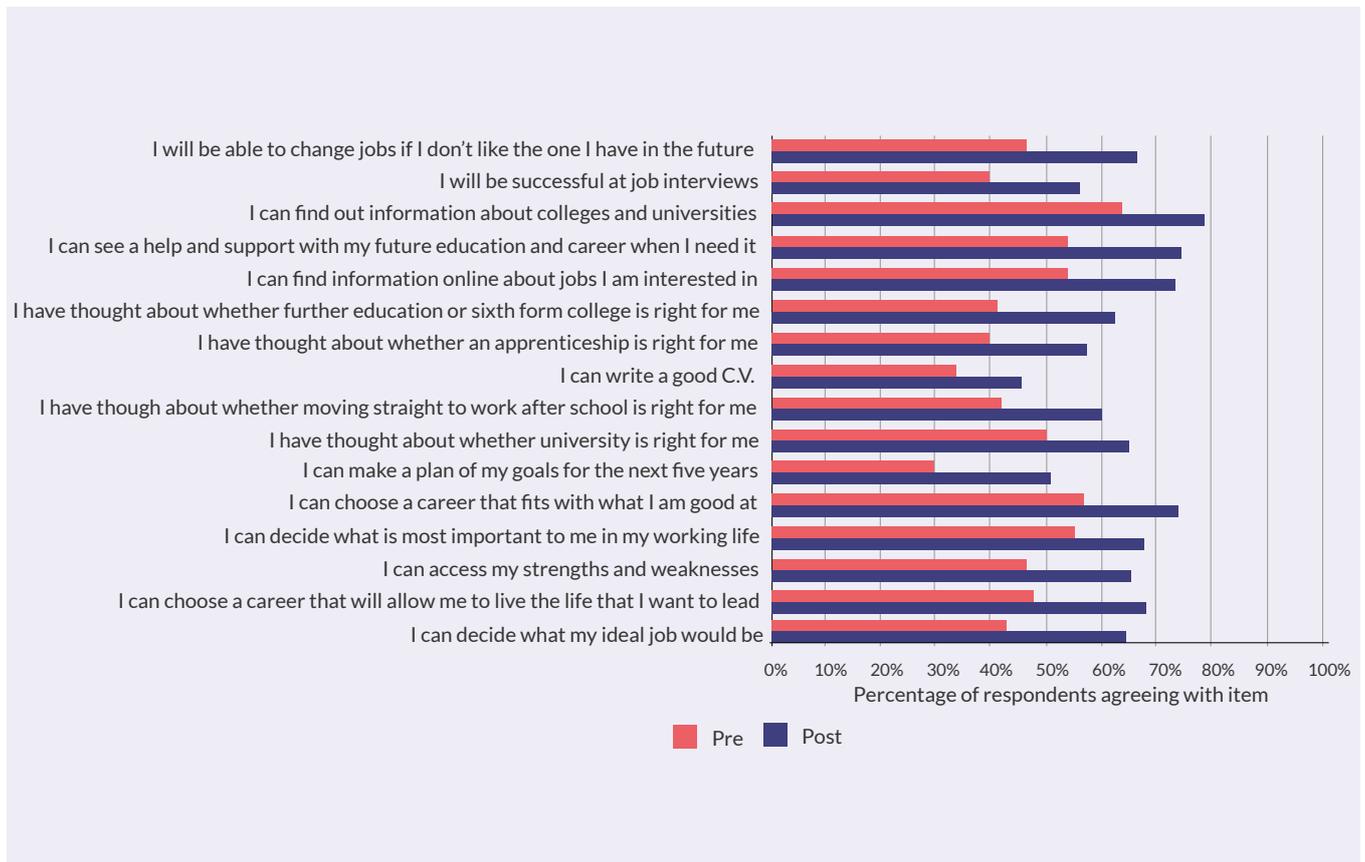
A paired samples t-test was used to compare pre-programme total personal effectiveness scores to post-programme scores. Mean total personal effectiveness score pre-programme was 21.80 (SD=4.00) compared with 22.75 (SD=4.66) post-programme. This difference was statistically significant (t = -4.209, p = 0.000) and can be described as a small effect size (Cohen's d = 0.2) .

Employability skills

The FSQ has 19 items assess employability skill development which map directly onto six of the eight domains of the Skill Builder framework[10]:

1. Creativity
2. Problem solving
3. Listening
4. Speaking
5. Teamwork
6. Leadership

Respondents (N=193) agreed with these nineteen statements more often post-programme than pre-programme (with the exception of one item asking about teamwork), as displayed in Figure 6 - each of the six domains therefore showed increases between pre and post programme. Total employability scores were calculated from summing responses. Mean score pre-programme was 70.13 (SD=13.49) compared with a mean score of 73.16 (SD=12.38) post-programme. A paired sample t-test showed that this increase was statistically significant (t = -2.444, p = .015) however Cohen's d indicated the effect size was small (d = 0.17.)

Figure 6 Employability skills pre and post programme (N=195)

10. https://www.skillsbuilder.org/

Qualitative findings

Qualitative data (N=40) suggested that there was an overall improved understanding of career management and employability. The most prominent theme related to career planning with respondents stating that they had learned it was important not to rush decision-making, there were many options, and it was ok to take your time and change your mind.

> **Always consider all the options and be patient.**
>
> **Student**

> **That I need to decide what I want to do and it's always okay to change your mind.**
>
> **Student**

Respondents also commented on understanding that grades were only part of what employers look for, so it was important to ensure they 'stood out' by drawing on hobbies and work experience to evidence the transferable skills they possessed.

> **Certain areas are highly subscribed to and there is a lot of competition when applying so you must stand out both academically and as a person.**
>
> **Student**

Specific attributes and skills which were described were ambition, resilience, independence, proactivity, teamwork, CV writing and searching and applying for jobs.

Attitudes and behaviour

This section considers whether hat students have learned from personal guidance changed their confidence, motivation, attitudes towards school/college and engagement in class. It also includes intended destinations.

In the quantitative survey we asked respondents the extent to which they agreed with several items which assessed whether they felt more confident at school/college and about their future, more resilient, more able to make decisions about their future, more independent and more motivated to attend class, engage and do well at school/college (see Table 10). In each case 80% (N=139) or more agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 10 Changes in behaviour (N=139)

Item	Percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing
I am more confident in my ability to be successful in my future career	86%
I am more confident in my ability to be successful at school or college	86%
I am more able to make decisions about myself and my future	87%
I am more able to keep trying even when things are hard	88%
I am more independent	80%
I am more motivated to come to class and take part	82%
I am more motivated to learn and do well at school or college	86%

Qualitative data from the iCeGS online data collection tool reflected these changes as well as changes in anxiety and stress (see Table 11). Increased self-confidence/self-belief was the most prominent theme followed by increases to motivation and effort. There were a smaller number of references to feeling more positive, being more focused, being more resilient and feeling less stressed or anxious.

Table 11 Respondents' perceptions of changes in attitude, attendance and engagement (N=40)

Themes	Example quote
Increased confidence and self-belief	"The adviser just made me believe that I was capable or the future I want- made me believe more in myself."
Motivation, determination and effort	"I've put so much more effort into my work, doing extra work where I can and attending extra lessons to secure my knowledge."
Reduced anxiety and stress	"Thanks you for your help. I thought I was the only one who was worried at school, but you've helped me to understand that many people think the same as me."
Increased resilience	"I am more resilient now."
More positive	"Yes I am more positive and more hopeful."
Increased focus	"I've become more focused and willing to learn."

Improved mental health and well-being was well evidenced in the evaluation report of the Derbyshire EBP's programme which used the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale (SWEMWBS). Their report indicated there were marked increases in several aspects of mental well being in Year 7 students (sample size unknown):

- Optimism

- Feelings of usefulness

- Relaxation

- Ability to deal with problems,

- Think clearly

- Be close to others

- Make decisions

Changes in students were noted by school staff. For example, MY Trust noted in their evaluation report that:

"

Schools were able to identify behaviour changes due to the project.... One school stated that behaviour had changed and that they were more interested in their studies as they could see the end goal; that students became more involved in their own planning and decision making, as well as feeling less anxiety; another school felt that their students were more confident as they were now able to have an open conversation about their futures.

Programme evaluation report

Careers advisers who talked with us and who fed into their own programme evaluations also noted changes in attitudes, particularly with respect to motivation:

> **Careers Advisers reported that they have seen a change in all students as a result of this programme, with them being more self-confident and more motivated about their careers. Even the students with the lack of aspirations appear more confident and motivated.**
>
> **Programme evaluation report**

Few of the programme providers captured data on intended destinations – one exception was the CareerPilot programme by the University of Bath who made use of intended destination data captured in one school they worked with. Here, all of the Year 11 students who had participated had a clear plan for after Year 11. The school believed that:

> **... this was different to the wider Year 11 cohort and a direct result of student involvement in the project.**
>
> **Programme provider evaluation report**

The Derbyshire EBP evaluation report contains a similar finding with one school feeding back on the number of NEETs:

> **We haven't had any year 11 student that is NEET (not in education, employment or training) when leaving the school; and it is no coincidence that this has happened with the support of DEBP within our school.**
>
> **Programme evaluation report**

MY Trust, working with young people with SEND, also noted an increase in intended destinations:

> **One school stated that all of those referred were at risk of NEET but now all had a place for September but one, and the one was still being supported by the MY Careers Adviser.**
>
> **Programme provider evaluation report**

Respondents to the iCeGS qualitative survey were asked about intended destinations after their current study finished with only four respondents still undecided. Of those who had made a decision as to their next step, half stated that their choice was a result of working with a careers adviser .

> **Yes because I now know that my ambitions are achievable**
>
> **Student**

The remaining respondents indicated that working with a careers adviser had not necessarily helped with decision making regarding a specific destination but that it had either refined course choice or empowered them to make the application.

Similar findings were reported in the Doncaster Chamber of Commerce programme evaluation report with 54% of students (N=108) having changed their minds/added additional options to their thinking about what they want to do after school.

> **No, however she made me understand the process of university and therefore I have now applied for uni and got choices for the course I want, because she made it seem less uncertain.**
>
> **Student**
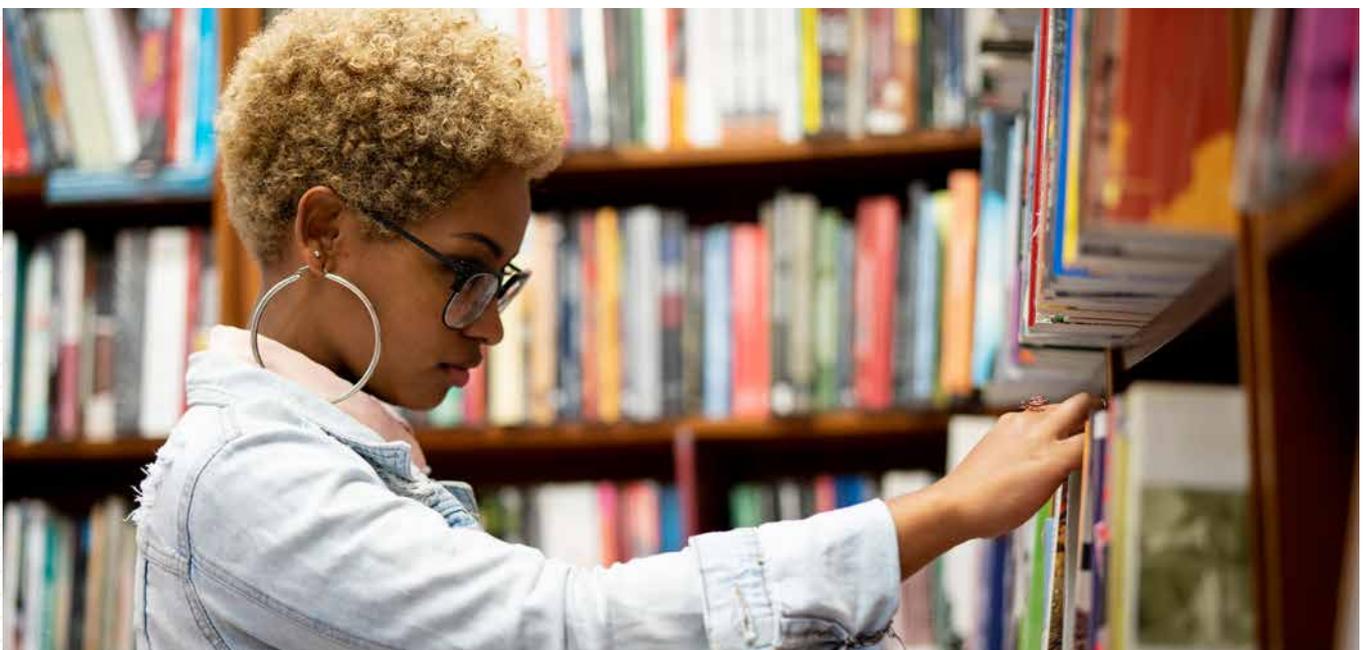
6 | Impact of training on staff and school/college career guidance

Advisers who received training talked of developing a professional identity and being more able to reach a wider range of students. School and college staff had increased understanding of careers and personal guidance and the profile of careers was raised in those institutions.

This section reports on the numbers of advisers and school/college staff who received training, how the training was experienced and the perceived impacts it had on those who took part. Table 12 describes who took part in training and the nature of that training.

Table 12 Number of individuals trained in Phase 1 and 2 programmes

	Level 6 training	Other Careers adviser training/ CPD	CPD for school/ college staff
Achieving for Children	2	3 (L3)	1
Adviza 1 (CPD)	1	10	11
Adviza 2 (parental courses)	2	7	47
Association of Colleges	29	2 (L3)	1542
Career Connect (Phase 1)	12	0	172
4Y PUK	4	3 (L4)	2
Aspire-igen	4	0	9
Bedford Borough Council	4	1 (L4)	4
Career Connect (Phase 2)	0	0	100
Career North	1	0	50
Derbyshire EBP	4 (L7)	4 (L4)	116
Doncaster Chamber	2	0	4
EKC Group	6 (1 to L7)	0	80
Minsthorpe Community College	2	9 (L3) / 4 (L4)	78
MY Trust	1	0	60
Sussex Learning Network	4	0	437
University of Bath	5	0	698
Westminster Kingsway College	1	5 (L4)	0
Totals	84	48	3410

Practitioners were funded to undertake the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) level 6 in career guidance and development or the Level 7 Qualification in Career Development. Many practitioners were given the opportunity to up skill from the Level 3 or 4 to the Level 6 award. A minimum of a Level 6 qualification in career guidance and development is required for practitioners to be recognised as professionally qualified and to meet the requirements of Gatsby Benchmark 8 (DfE, 2017). A selection of other CPD activities were also included such as a professional coaching certificate for experienced practitioners and triage training for a range of staff including, teachers, college tutors/administrators and support staff. In total 3410 individuals accessed funded training within the project, with 156 careers advisers receiving training (97 to Level 6).

Level 6 and 7 Awards

Many of those who were undertaking the Level 6 qualification had extensive experience of working with young people, often in supporting or adjacent roles. In colleges for example, Level 6 candidates came from student support roles such as admissions: although they lacked the formal qualification their experience provided a strong foundation on which to build their guidance skills. Their previous experience also helped to shine a spotlight on how their guidance skills enhanced their interactions with young people. In particular, the training helped practitioners to:

1. Be more structured and to develop a process in providing personal guidance to young people.

2. Become cognisant of the parameters around their new role, that they were to help the young person to make their own decisions, often through challenging them and not just tell them what to do. This was an important differentiation for some whose previously roles were as information givers.

3. Support the students to consider different approaches to making their decisions.

4. Understand the role of theory and weave that into practice. Some theoretical perspectives, such as planned happenstance, helped to inform their thinking and to acknowledge the importance of opportunity in career planning. Practitioners had a preference for those theories that they saw as being very practice focused; motivation theories and reflective approaches were therefore popular.

5. Identify a new set of tools/resources/strategies that helped them to work more purposefully with students. These ranged from using online resources such as Kudos which were used with students to initiate some career ideas to more cognitive behavioural tools.

6. Use cognitive behavioural approaches such as force field analysis and scaling techniques to build confidence and reframe situations so students could feel more positive about them. These were used to help students to consider the challenges and barriers that they felt were stopping them moving on.

7. Use visualisation techniques to consider possible selves. The practitioners doing coaching regularly used this technique within an educational guidance context, helping students to think about achieving higher grades, what they need to have in place to successfully achieve the grades for the course or career they wish to pursue.

8. Blend coaching skills with guidance skills for a greater focus on questioning and goal setting to enable young people to progress their ideas more positively.

9. To differentiate the elements within their role and to recognise when they were providing information and how to use it.

10. Increase confidence in themselves and their abilities. Practitioners identified that they were now better able to undertake in depth exploration with students about their ideas and future plans, they could use LMI to inform their guidance sessions and also support the students to know how to research and find the LMI they need to inform their career choices.

Some practitioners felt their confidence had increased through undertaking the training; more frequently practitioners referred to how they felt they were perceived by others. This also led to a greater sense of confidence in themselves and their role, being able to promote they had a Level 6 qualification and were qualified to do the role. This was especially important for those who had been working (in colleges) providing career guidance but without a formal qualification.

Many of the practitioners engaged in training commented on the importance of mentorship and observation in helping them to develop their knowledge and skills. Some of the providers built in experienced staff time to support those who were new to the work. The opportunity to observe interviews, to discuss the approaches and the strategies used were important in building the confidence of the new practitioners. These opportunities offered contextual information to supplement the external training sessions provided as part of the Level 6 programme.

Many practitioners found it challenging to progress from lower-level qualifications to Level 6/7 especially if they had not studied at this level previously. This was specifically the case for those who saw themselves as a 'mature student'. Engaging with theory and the academic side of the programme particularly writing essays and learning to reference was demanding.

Level 4 Awards

Some of the funding available for training was also used to support staff in employability focused roles to gain a Level 4 qualification. These roles delivered career information and advice and helped integrate careers activities more widely throughout the school, allowing the careers adviser to focus on the one-to-one delivery activities. Engaging with a careers related qualification supported and embedded many of the skills practitioners have. Additionally, it supported practitioners to develop group skills and be more reflective about their work and their practice.

CPD for qualified practitioners

A range of informal training was also provided, this focused on coaching skills, Makaton (a language programme using signs, speech and symbols) and safeguarding. These were identified by providers as supporting practitioners to attain a skill set which would enhance their existing guidance skills and focus on specifically meeting the needs of students; especially those with SEND or perceived as being potentially NEET.

Several projects introduced coaching as an advancement for experienced Level 6 qualified guidance practitioners. Coaching skills were identified as an area that would add increased impact to the delivery of personal guidance. This was well received by all practitioners and provided additional skills set to support students who need targeted support. This allowed careers advisers to focus on empowering young people to take responsibility for their career related activities. Practitioners were able to cite examples of interactions with teachers and parents who feedback the impact that guidance had had in motivating students and raising their aspirations.

School and college staff

This section makes use of data collected in interviews with school and college staff, programme providers and careers advisers, and from evaluation reports submitted by providers.

Data from all participants and sources indicated that schools reacted positively and favourably to the programmes. Although there were variations in schools' abilities to work effectively with programme providers and advisers to deliver sessions, most schools were enthusiastic. Feedback indicated that schools had welcomed the provision that was offered, for example the Doncaster Chamber evaluation report noted that both of the schools involved in their programme found it of real value.

Where programmes included CPD for school or college staff, the CPD was perceived favourably because it:

1. Raised the profile of careers across the school/college.

2. Helped teaching staff make links between curriculum and careers (Gatsby Benchmark 4).

3. Enabled staff to better support students in career decision-making because of increased knowledge of careers and LMI and increased confidence.

4. Encouraged schools/colleges to work strategically to improve their careers programme.

The impact of the wider programmes on schools and colleges did vary however, for example, MY Trust noted that:

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Schools found that there was no great impact on the school's wider teams, although one school felt that it was a positive link to bring the careers and SEN teams together and another felt that the support was immense and invaluable and another that it was helping to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks

Programme evaluation report

Variations in the extent of impact could be due to differences in programme provision but may also be a consequence of the extent to which schools/colleges engaged with the programme and the careers adviser(s) - a form of you get out what you put in.

Schools that worked hard to facilitate delivery, embed the programme into existing provision and embed the adviser into school were able to reap the benefits of this which included:

1. Relationships between the adviser and staff which enabled communication about students and improved support.

2. CareerPilot noted that having access to information from the digital tool students were using meant they were able to identify those who were most in need.

3. Access to the full range of features of digital tools and the knowledge and skills that careers advisers have which can help meet Gatsby Benchmarks other than Benchmark 8.

4. Increased capacity for personal guidance.

5. Personal guidance better embedded and linked to other career guidance activities

6. Careers becoming a priority in schools.

Recommendations

This section presents key learning from across the evaluation of enabling and challenging factors, as well as best practice, focusing on the take away messages for different stakeholders (Careers Leaders, school/college Senior Leadership Teams, careers advisers and programme providers).

For providers and careers advisers

Set-up of a new programme of personal guidance:

1. Ensure that time is planned in for recruitment and induction of careers advisers because this can be a protracted process, especially in shortage areas. Recruitment is often most successful when timed around academic years.

2. Ensure that staff have a clear understanding of commitments and personal investment required in gaining qualifications and are provided with support.

Working with schools and colleges:

1. Have a clear rationale for the programme and demonstrate how it fits with school/college's existing strategic priorities.

2. Secure support from senior leaders from the start of the project.

3. Clarify commitments. Service level agreements can help formalise expectations.

4. Hold launch events to communicate project purposes and engage key stakeholders - these might introduce key staff from different organisations, promote networking and offer advice on how to plan, coordinate and deliver programmes.

5. Plan activities and training as far in advance as possible to ensure time is available within the timetable.

6. Remember that time out of class is easier to facilitate if it is for shorter sessions run multiple times.

7. Check that the IT infrastructure in schools/colleges will support the activities/programme you want to run.

8. Be flexible/adaptable in how the programmes are delivered in different schools or colleges.

9. Identify career champions and/or integrate some delivery into form time to promote the programme and drive integration and eventually culture change within schools/colleges and move careers guidance from a peripheral to core activity.

10. Create and cultivate networks to provide forums for sharing practice and disseminating learning.

11. Offer school/college staff training to promote awareness and understanding of career guidance, personal guidance and the programme. This also helps to build in sustainability.

12. Provide triage training as part of induction training for all new staff within the college and school environment. This also helps to build in sustainability.

Engaging parents/carers:

1. Make use of social media and encourage the school/college to work with you.

2. Offer a range of models of delivery to provide beneficiaries (parents and students) with the option that works best for them.

3. The timing and frequency of events must be carefully considered to fit with parent availability.

Monitoring and evaluation:

1. Clarify the aim of your programme, the intended outcomes and the activities/changes needed to achieve that. A theory of change is a worthwhile development when investing resources such as time and money and the CEC are currently developing a toolkit to support this endeavour.

2. Think about evaluation before you start delivering – consider collecting data before, during and after the programme. Some evaluation activities such as assessing career readiness, employability skills and career management skills can be built into the programme elements.

3. Explore current data that may be collected already and how this may be repurposed to assess impact.

4. Develop robust monitoring and evaluation that can contribute to evidencing impact, developing insight into what works to improve programme effectiveness and provide support for future funding applications.

For Careers Leaders

1. Communicate promptly with programme providers and careers advisers.

2. Recognise and utilise the added value that a careers adviser brings; in addition to supporting the school and college to meet Benchmark 8, they can work with the careers leader and contribute to the achievement of most, if not all, Benchmarks through their knowledge, skills and networks.

3. Integrate the careers adviser into the school and college by introducing them to each year group and to staff. For students this increases familiarity, trust and openness. For staff this:

   a. Opens channels of communication between staff with key roles such as SENCOs pastoral support, form tutors and heads of year. This facilitates identification of support needs and intervention.

   b. Helps teaching staff understand the value of career and personal guidance for students.

   c. Offers another level of support in helping them link careers to the curriculum in their lessons.

For Senior Leadership teams

1. Your school/college needs an appropriate budget to resource careers guidance. Be clear with providers about your budgets and think about how investing in digital tools and engagement with younger students could enhance the return on investment of personal guidance.

2. Take responsibility for organisation and coordination of the programme, the adviser and the students attending appointments.

3. Provide a dedicated space because:

   c. It creates an identity for careers and for the careers adviser.

   d. It allows students to seek help when they need it – this is facilitated when the students know where to find the adviser.

4. Enable your staff to create time for personal guidance sessions.

5. Ensure all staff in colleges and schools have access to training when it is needed and training in triage should be core for all staff in student facing roles.

6. Facilitate staff and governors to access CPD on career guidance and personal guidance.

7. Consider starting personal guidance with younger students who tend to be enthusiastic and receptive.
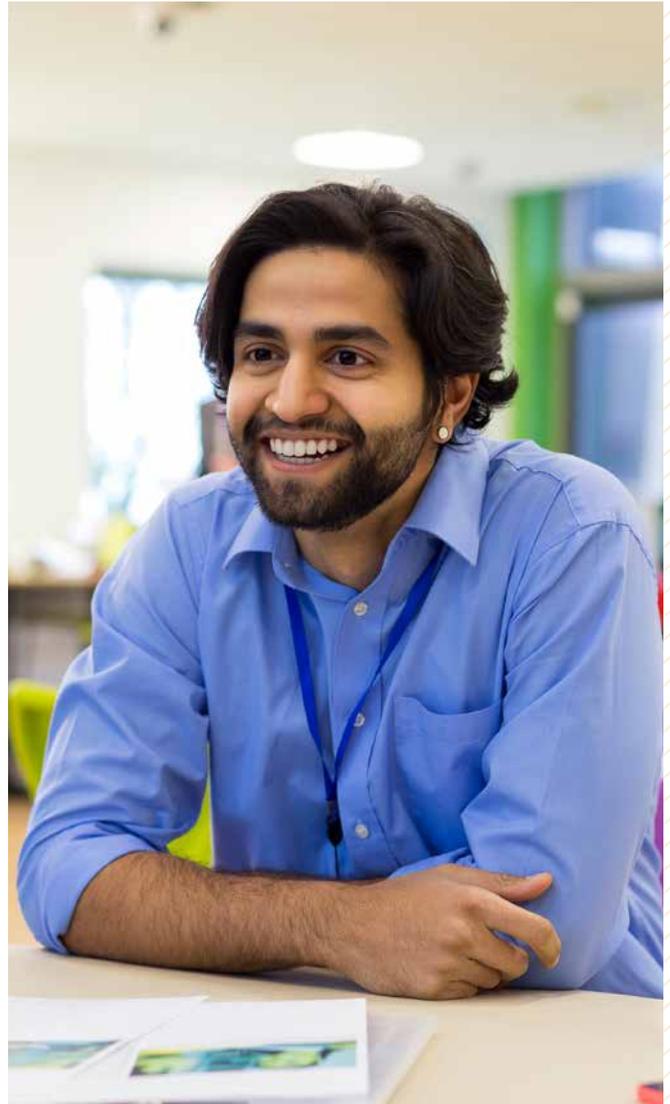
Conclusions

The Careers & Enterprise Company's Personal Guidance Fund was used effectively by both Phase 1 and Phase 2 providers to meet targets in recruitment of schools/colleges, deliver training to advisers and school/college staff and deliver personal guidance programmes to students. Where targets were not met these shortfalls were small and were the consequence of Covid-19 and lack of direct access to students.

Staff in schools and colleges, students, and parents responded favourably to the programmes. All the targeted groups (disadvantaged students, younger students, students with SEND/SEMH and parents) offered positive feedback and demonstrated beneficial outcomes. Approaches which were delivered particularly effectively were whole school integration, triage and the use of digital tools. These approaches complemented each other and when used in combination appeared to be even more effective when used alongside one-to-one guidance with a Level 6 qualified careers adviser.

Solutions to some of the challenges discussed by the providers (in both Phases) could be implemented by providers. For example, service level agreements and launch events encourage schools and colleges to engage and communicate promptly. To encourage young people

to attend sessions, careers advisers can introduce young people to personal guidance in advance and communicate the value and benefits of it, this can also be reinforced by teachers. Agreeing with schools and colleges formal systems to ensure attendance would be beneficial, particularly for those institutions where a comprehensive programme of careers guidance has not been embedded for a long time and where staff and young people do not yet see it as a normal part of what happens in school/college. Some of the issues are beyond providers control, however, and their best response here is to be flexible/adaptable in programme design and delivery and work hard to plan as much as possible in as far as advance as they can. The reality of working with schools and colleges is that staff are time pressured, face a number of competing demands, work to academic timetables set up far in advance and work within organisations with significant financial limitations.

Despite these demands, limitations and pressures, providers suggested that schools and colleges do often recognise the value of career guidance generally and personal guidance specifically. Providers have talked about staff being keen to engage and to support them in identifying young people and families who would

benefit and in making use of social media to encourage awareness and interaction. There are good examples of schools and colleges working with providers to engage young people and staff in the programmes. Other successes include using launch events, developing Career Champions and engaging parents in workshops and less formal encounters.

The 'What Works?' themes are prevalent throughout the findings in this report, but three stand out. Firstly, preparation. All programmes encompassed an element of preparation and this has promoted learning about careers and labour market information and created trust between adviser and student. Integration has also been important with advisers responding very positively to being better integrated into the school and this helping to embed personal guidance into the careers programme and careers across the whole school. Professionalism has been important, and the findings here suggest a need for the professional skills, knowledge and value brought by professional careers advisers to be better understood by schools and colleges. Advisers undergoing training has supported their professionalism but some of the training provided has also increased interview effectiveness – the development of coaching skills and knowledge of working with SEND and SEMH students has helped advisers work more effectively with a wider range of students.

Despite providers being able to articulate the aims of their programmes, and in some cases more specific impacts in the short, medium and long-term, programme providers evaluation strategies to capture evidence for these impacts need development. Support to help them develop Theories of Change before embarking on programme delivery would be helpful.

There are several other factors which could strengthen the fund; providers have talked about increased time to fully develop their programmes and identify long-term impacts, and schools/colleges to be supported in

making staff available for training. Sustainability will be easier for some to achieve than others – some providers will be able to leave a legacy of knowledge, awareness, positive attitudes and resources that can be maintained in schools and colleges. Others, which rely more on increased sessions with highly qualified professionals, may be more difficult to sustain if additional funding is not made available.

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