



THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY

# Careers in Context 2020:

A can-do guide



# Purpose of the Guide

Due to Covid-19, the end of the 2019/20 academic year was unique. It forced changes in the way careers guidance could be approached and delivered, and simultaneously demonstrated the agility and responsiveness of Careers Leaders, wider school/college staff and employers. As we enter the 2020/21 academic year we can see that the pandemic has changed the value placed on quality careers guidance as part of an institution's recovery planning, presenting opportunities to achieve impact in new ways.

At the end of last term almost three quarters (72%) of secondary school and college leaders felt that careers guidance had become even more important, although there had been significant disruption to careers programmes over the lockdown.

In a recent survey of young people, Engineering UK found that as a result of Covid-19, concerns over future prospects were common, with 62% of young people surveyed agreeing that finding a job in the future has become more difficult.

It is recognised that there are immense and varied pressures on schools and colleges, but the combination of more engaged senior leaders and a student body that needs support shows how important careers guidance is. This guide will give Careers Leaders the confidence to make decisions about what constitutes good careers guidance in the context of Covid-19 over the next academic year.

The Gatsby Benchmarks have not changed and neither has the expectation that they remain a framework for good career guidance. The Benchmarks continue to support schools and colleges in providing students with the best possible careers guidance.

“Although Covid-19 presents many challenges, and a few opportunities, the Gatsby Benchmarks remain at the heart of Careers Guidance in England. Their principles are as relevant today as before the pandemic” Read the full blog from Sir John Holman [here](#).

It is also intended that Enterprise Coordinators, Enterprise Advisers, employers and other organisations will find the information within this guide useful when considering how to adapt the design and delivery of careers programmes in a way that continues to meet the needs of young people.

For a reminder of what good always looks like, see the Gatsby Benchmark Toolkits for:



School



College



SEND



# What has changed?

There are significant changes in how and when careers guidance activity can take place. This guide highlights quality resources and innovative worked examples, showcasing how practice can be adapted to meaningfully meet the needs of students, whilst continuing to meet the benchmarks.

## Change brings opportunity.

The Making it Meaningful Framework is designed to help Careers Leaders ensure each encounter or experience is meaningful for all participants and will ensure quality and consistency to activity. This guide gives examples that apply the framework, to maximise the opportunity and impact of blended, online and face to face encounters and experiences.



Access the new Resource Directory for more quality resources and case studies reflecting adapted practice

To support continued effective engagement with schools and colleges, The Careers & Enterprise Company will follow-up this guide with bespoke versions for employers and other organisations that provide careers education support to schools and colleges.



If you would like to sign up to receive our Careers Leader Newsletter and resources emails, please complete this short [form](#).



Covid-19 has had a clear impact on us all and responsive careers education is more important than ever if young people are to regain confidence in their future

Andy Lovatt, CEO, The White Room

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals (NNUH) has always sought to help young people to understand the world of work. It is now more important than ever before that employers get involved and show young people the opportunities they have available to them.

Clare Fox, Career Development Facilitator, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



# How to use this guide

**For each Benchmark, this guide outlines the following:**

- The opportunities that have been created as a result of Covid-19;
- How a Careers Leader can tap into these opportunities;
- Practical resources and support for achieving success.

Each page following this one, contains two interactive links:

- 'Select a different Benchmark' will bring you back to this page
- 'Continue reading' will move you on chronologically



# Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

It is essential that Careers Leaders have a clear understanding of their school or college's strategic objectives to ensure their careers programme is aligned with whole school and college improvement and Covid-19 recovery planning.

## Opportunity:

Prioritise engagement with senior leadership and governors to ensure that your careers programme is aligned with school or college priorities and school or college return and curriculum recovery plans. Your programme should also directly support positive outcomes for students.

## How:

Just like any new academic year, the suggested starting point for Careers Leaders is to evaluate and plan the school or college programme according to the needs of students.

The process for this is no different year to year. However, the need for this process is now more important than ever. Example strategic objectives for both the whole school or college strategy and a specific careers strategy may include:

### Example Strategic Objective 1:

Support students to progress to positive destinations and reduce their risk of becoming NEET by:

- linking curriculum learning to careers and LMI;
- providing meaningful encounters with employers and providers;
- providing quality experiences of work.

### Example Strategic Objective 2:

Support positive attendance and behaviour data through high levels of engagement by linking curriculum learning to careers and meaningful employer encounters.

### Example Strategic Objective 3:

Improve engagement and raise attainment through linking curriculum learning to careers.



School



College



SEND



Resources



### Transform Your Careers Programme: fully funded Careers Leader training

There are **650 further places** available for Careers Leader training.

These can be accessed now via The Careers & Enterprise Company website or [here](#).

All training providers are currently offering virtual delivery of their courses in response to the impact of Covid-19.

Schools and colleges may apply for more than one place as long as the individual attending is a named Careers leader/overseeing Careers activity.

[Download the Careers Leader Training Catalogue](#) for more information.

96% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the training had helped them to identify action to improve their practice.

If you have any questions about the training please contact [careersleaders@careersandenterprise.co.uk](mailto:careersleaders@careersandenterprise.co.uk)

### Practical resource and support:

1. Use the Teach First four-step process for creating a strategic careers plan. To learn more about this, complete the free '[Introduction to Careers Leadership](#)' online training
2. Read the [Cheadle Hulme Case Study](#) to see how a school has aligned their strategic career plans to wider school priorities
3. Take inspiration from this [worked example of a careers programme](#), which supports the suggested strategic objectives examples we've provided on page 5
4. To easily present your programme, [use one of these editable templates](#), designed to be used across all settings, including SEND, FE and Middle & Secondary schools
5. [Evaluate your programme](#) to ensure that changing student needs are being met (particularly Year 11/13 and both existing and newly identified vulnerable cohorts)
6. Schools can use Compass+ to create concise and data rich [reports and visualisations to monitor and report on performance](#) against the Benchmarks. Explore a range of Compass+ CPD [here](#)
7. For regular updates about training and development, including how to engage a Careers Link Governor CPD, [sign-up to our Careers Leader newsletter](#)

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It is time to rethink our strategic plan for careers, we need to ensure careers education is embedded into high-quality teaching.

David Baldwin,  
Headteacher, North East



# Benchmark 2: Learning from labour market information

Labour Market Information (LMI) is key to preventing students from feeling constrained by external contexts and ensuring they understand the realities and opportunities of the world of work they will be entering.

It is critical this year that students are supported, particularly in key transition moments, to understand opportunities and the changing labour market and how this could impact the shape of their current plans. Students and parents should feel confident that they are equipped with the information needed to make positive choices.



School



College



SEND



Resources

## Opportunity:

Ensure students, staff, parents and carers are aware of the new opportunities and challenges of the changing labour market and address assumptions and misconceptions.

## How:

Prioritise working with your LEP through your Enterprise Adviser and/or Enterprise Coordinator to review how and when accurate LMI is shared. You may need to do this more frequently to account for the fast-changing landscape. Consider also working with your Careers Adviser to ensure LMI is up to date and is matched to student needs.

## Practical resource and support:

1. Send out LMI updates and newsletters. [Click here](#) to access an LMI Update Template for KS4 students
2. Refer to [My Choices Guides](#) for resource and support for you, students and parents/carers, with identifying relevant LMI. You can also work with your Enterprise Coordinator to find out about local My Choices activities
3. Regularly share latest editions of publications such as [Amazing Apprenticeships Parents Pack](#) and [CareerMag](#) with students and parents
4. Access and share [this video](#) with key LMI messaging from Aimee Higgins, Director of Employers and Partnerships at Careers and Enterprise Company
5. Ensure that staff are kept up to date with local labour market information. [Cleaswell Hill SEND school](#) prioritise staff understanding and keeping up to date with local labour market and opportunities. They note that their “learners are a lot more likely to explore alternative career options if they know there are job opportunities available locally.”
6. St Wilfrid’s RC College and St Joseph’s Hebburn are linking information from [Compass+](#) student profiles with information about the local labour market in conversations with parents about their child’s careers journey and choices to maximise conversations with parents about engagement and progress



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Our findings suggest that some young people felt their career choices had been constrained because of the pandemic, whilst for others what they wanted to pursue had changed as a result”



Read more about the views of young people in the recent [Engineering UK research report](#)





[LMI] is not as simple as just saying this sector has definitely done well [as a result of Covid-19] and that sector hasn't, because ultimately, at its core, every business exists to solve customers' problems. [Businesses have] changed what they were doing to respond to what the customer needed.

Remember, that while this is a time that is difficult for many...there's also lots of opportunity. The economy will always go through peaks and troughs... it turns back around because businesses change...or people access new opportunities.”

Aimee Higgins,  
Director of Employers and Partnerships  
at The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Watch the full video [here](#)



# Case Study: Year 9 Virtual Careers Day

**Maltings Academy AET, led by Careers Leader Tony Degun, reshaped their planned Careers Day for Year 9 students and instead delivered their objectives through a Virtual Careers Day.**

'As a crucial part of the careers programme for Year 9, it was important to maintain the original aims and learning outcomes, including understanding connections between job families and sectors, pathways, LMI investigation and self-reflection, under the key themes of 'Ambition', 'Curiosity' and 'Awareness'.

Promotion was key to ensure engagement, reinforced by the initial messaging in the live online assembly, from the Headteacher highlighting the importance of CEIAG for their future success. This was filmed in the school hall to give students a sense of familiarity and followed by the Careers Leader, explaining the day and evaluation process.

Students worked on their own profile, identifying and recognising their own skills, strengths and qualities. They engaged with labour market activities (accessing the National Careers Service website and our own YouTube careers video library) to identify appropriate opportunities based on their profile.

An evaluation of the day highlighted the students' desire to hear directly from more employers, building on the content that they had received. This interaction is already built into our planned provision next year and makes us confident that we have sequenced the careers learning for this year group correctly.'



In Year 9, we are at the stage where we need to consider our potential career paths for the future. Today we had an online careers day event that was very helpful and beneficial for my decision making. I was amazed at how many opportunities that are open to me and now I am researching more possibilities as to where I can go from here and am super excited for my future.

Student, Year 9



# Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Young people will have had very different experiences over the last few months and may require different or enhanced support.



School



College



SEND



Resources

## Opportunity:

Prioritise working with SLT and other key staff to ensure that the careers programme is responsive and effective in supporting and tracking positive destination outcomes for all students.

## How:

Establish systems and processes to track, record and respond to intended and actual destinations. Ensure that vulnerable students and those at risk of not making positive transitions are identified and supported.

Ensure your careers programme provides tailored opportunities for advice and support, particularly for existing and newly identified vulnerable groups. Newly identified vulnerable groups may include those disproportionately or unexpectedly impacted by Covid-19.

Align your careers programme to whole school or college initiatives on NEET prevention.

Analyse destination data and knowledge of local labour market to shape your careers programme.

## Practical resource and support:

1. Make a list of the key groups of students who are most at risk of NEET or not making a positive transition and ensure that your careers programme explicitly meets the needs of these students
2. Use [Compass+](#) or similar systems, to record activity at a student level and to create custom groups so you can target relevant careers interventions
3. Evaluate NEET prevention activity to ensure that student needs are being met (particularly Year 11/13 and vulnerable cohorts). Access this [webinar](#) for training on how to do this.
4. Use [Compass+](#) or similar systems for tracking intended and actual destinations
5. For useful process guides and templates, visit the [Benchmark 3 section of the Resource Directory](#)
6. Refer to these valuable [guides](#) from 'Employment is Everyone's Business' on how to support young people with SEND getting into work
7. Carefully consider how recovery planning appropriately accounts for KS3 careers learning. It is important that learning gaps do not widen for younger students whilst a KS4 deficit model is being actively supported

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Never has there been a more important time for our students and wider community. Our Careers Leader will have the opportunity to rewrite the rule book on Careers Guidance to not only raise aspiration but “Broker Aspiration” benefitting our students and wider community”

Ian Parry,  
Headteacher, Southport



# Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

Due to time pressures, competing priorities and Covid-19 school or college adaptations, teaching staff may need additional support in embedding careers across the curriculum.



School



College



SEND



Resources

## Opportunity:

Be clear about defining what 'careers' is right now -setting a Covid-19 context- in your school or college and what your expectations of curriculum staff are for this benchmark. Embedding careers within curriculum and helping students to understand the relevance of their subjects to future careers will support positive student outcomes and school/college priorities around destinations, engagement and attainment.

This is of even more critical importance this year, as the potential for discrete careers events and delivery may become limited.

## How:

As a foundation, build a progressive careers programme which delivers on key learning outcomes and ensure that all subjects highlight the relevance of their subject to future career paths

## Practical resource and support:

1. Take inspiration from this [worked example of a careers programme](#), which supports the suggested strategic objectives examples we've provided on page 5
2. Access the [Benchmark 4 Masterclass](#), which introduces a new modelling matrix as a guide and mapping tool to help Careers Leaders evolve their approach to delivering 'Careers in the Curriculum'. The training also includes examples of good practice from across The Careers and Enterprise Company's network to support Careers Leaders in maintaining the profile of Careers throughout 2020/21 and beyond.
3. Consider using [this template 'Proposal' document](#) to help you to make a case to SLT for time, resource and support for careers guidance
4. Visit our Resource Directory for a wide range of resources and guidance on how to support staff to highlight the relevance of their subjects to careers, including new resources from [Loughborough University \(LUDUS\)](#) and the new [STEM Toolkit](#)
5. Connect staff to [these resources](#), which deliver on curriculum learning and are linked to the world of work. [See here for Maths lesson plans from Stoke-on-Trent](#)
6. Take inspiration about 'branding careers' from [Hailsham Community College](#) in East Sussex who use a student designed logo to promote careers activity and have assigned 'Careers Champions' who add resource and support for careers in the curriculum

# Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

Benchmark 5 now presents an opportunity for much adaptation of careers programmes. Covid-19 has driven many employers to seek digital solutions to support innovative approaches to the provision of encounters.

At the same time, Careers Leaders may need to re-engage with employer partners to reassure them that there is still appetite in school or college for encounters, even if online.

Careers Leaders should refer to the [Meaningful Encounters Framework and checklist](#), the [Online Employer Engagement Guidance for Benchmarks 5 and 6](#) and the [Gatsby Benchmark Toolkits](#) to support them in their judgement regarding if each and every student has had a 'meaningful encounter' with an employer (whether online or in person).



School



College



SEND



Resources

To include an activity under Benchmark 5, it must meet the following minimum requirements:



Learning outcomes are defined, based on the age and needs of students



The encounter involves two-way interaction between students and employers/employees



There is evidence that the student actively participated.

### Opportunity:

Maximise the value of employer encounters by clarifying the purpose/rationale for employer engagement that directly supports school/college priorities & student outcomes.

### How:

Identify key learning outcomes and aims to be delivered and achieved through employer engagement and consider time, opportunity and mode of delivery (e.g. online)

### Practical resource and support:

1. Consider using [this template 'Proposal' document](#) to make a case to SLT for time, resource, support for careers guidance
2. Consider how you can work with local employers to make the [My Week of Work resources](#) interactive to support learning outcomes and to meet Benchmark 5. Your Enterprise Coordinator can help with this
3. [Connect with providers](#) who can support you in facilitating bespoke employer encounters to respond to the specific needs of your cohorts and region
4. Apply the principles of the [Making it Meaningful Framework and checklist](#) to planning for all employer encounters

**Opportunity:**

Increase the scale of activity and the range of employers that you engage with by sourcing and developing meaningful online employer encounters.

**How:**

Work with your Enterprise Coordinator and/or Enterprise Adviser to identify what is available regionally and nationally to engage with employers to support your careers programme and meet student needs.

1. For a summary of what good looks like for Gatsby Benchmark Five in an online world, download the [Online Employer Engagement Guidance](#) and the [Making it Meaningful Checklist](#)
2. Refer to the [Employer Engagement Guide](#) from the Careers and Enterprise Company to extend your database of contacts
3. Take inspiration from [North Derbyshire Careers Hub's My Future platform](#) on how schools and colleges can work together to create a careers event at scale
4. Consider how you can engage with employers and providers to bring the resources from [My Week of Work](#) to life as interactive employer encounters. Reach and build a wider network with [Provider Directory](#) or via [Compass+](#)
5. Use [Compass+](#) to manage your employer and provider contacts easily using [Careers Partners Function](#)

**Consider an employer reward scheme**

Manchester College wanted to recognise and thank industry partners for the contributions they make to the work-readiness of students. Employers receive a set of social assets to place on their website and on social media posts, as well as a certificate of appreciation and an invitation to an annual Thank You networking event.





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It is now more important than ever before that employers get involved and show young people the opportunities they have available to them.



Clare Fox, Career Development Facilitator, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation





Our work with The Careers & Enterprise Company has created a strong key link between The Sovini Group and schools in our local community.

Through that link we have been able to work with schools and young people to make them aware of the wealth of diverse opportunities that exist in the workplace and help them access a range of different apprenticeships. It has helped us appoint to specific roles and schools have been able to identify and develop talent. Without this relationship, we wouldn't be able to connect young people with the work experience and job opportunities that are available.

Kerry Beirne  
Group People & Learning Director,  
The Sovini Group



# Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

Employers and industry sector leaders have been developing their support offers to schools and colleges during the period of lockdown. Innovative approaches to online work experience are emerging.

Careers Leaders should refer to the [Meaningful Encounters Framework and checklist](#), the [Online Employer Engagement Guidance for Benchmarks 5 and 6](#) and the [Gatsby Benchmark Toolkits](#) to support them in their judgement regarding if each and every student has had a 'meaningful encounter' with an employer (whether online or in person).

Experiences of workplaces should allow students to have first-hand experiences of the workplace through online or face to face work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and to expand networks. Experiences of the workplace could and should reflect the fast-changing nature of work, including remote working.

The Gatsby Benchmarks hold the same level of relevance in an online world and continue to work as a framework for quality careers guidance.

All experiences of workplaces should sit within a progressive careers programme that have clear learning outcomes and that supports positive student outcomes.

**To include an activity under Benchmark 6, it must meet the following minimum requirements:**



Learning outcomes are defined, based on the age and needs of students



Student meets a range of people from the workplace



There is extensive two-way interaction between the student and employees.



Student must perform a task or produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace and receive feedback on it from the employer

## Opportunity

The current context allows us to re-evaluate and take a fresh look at the aims and value of experiences of work. Consider school/college priorities and key learning outcomes to shape the aims, content and format of any experiences of work. Schools and colleges were already exploring innovative alternatives to the traditional model of 1- or 2-week placements, which lend themselves to blended or online delivery. Experiences and encounters can also teach young people about digital skills, teamwork and communication in an online environment which has increasing relevance for workplaces.



School



College



SEND



Resources

**How:**

1. Identify relevant learning outcomes and aims for any experience of work and consider opportunities for implementation to deliver in those learning outcomes
2. Consider how learning at school/home can be blended with structured experiences of work (online or face to face) to ensure that students access meaningful experiences of the workplace
3. Whether face-to-face or online, work with employer partners to incorporate skills development that is up-to-date and relevant to the fast-changing world of work
4. Consider developing workplace skills such as joining online meetings, independent working (e.g. research) and online professional etiquette to meet the changing requirements of the workplace.

**Practical resource and support:**

1. For a summary of what good looks like for Gatsby Benchmark 6 in an online world, download [Online Employer Engagement Guidance](#) and [Meaningful Encounters Framework Checklist](#)
2. Refer to the [Employer Engagement Guide](#) from the Careers and Enterprise Company to extend your database of contacts
3. Working in partnership with a large employer, AET developed an interactive, virtual work experience programme for 2,000+ students with clearly defined learning outcomes. Access top tips from AET on creating an online work experience programme [here](#)
4. Reach and build a wider network with [Provider Directory](#) or via [Compass+](#)
5. Consider using [this template 'Proposal'](#) document to help you to make a case to SLT for time, resource and support for careers guidance



# Case Study: Scape Group

## - Learning in Lockdown

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To tackle one aspect of the challenge of digital disadvantage, this model of online work experience, did not rely on computer access, instead utilising the technology, Microsoft Teams, available to students via mobile phones as well as the ability to link into their school Office 365 accounts.

St. Joseph's Catholic College worked with Class of Your Own, Turner and Townsend and Mace Group, to replicate the rhythms of a working day. The students had three daily online meetings. At 9am they met with their school mentor to go through the expected tasks, resources and Q&A. At noon, the students met with industry professionals in a meeting facilitated by Class of Your Own. Students prepared questions about the day's tasks to discuss with the professionals, learning from their experience. At 4pm students again met with their school mentor to reflect on the challenges of the day.

During the week, aspects of the project were submitted for feedback from the professionals in preparation for final submission at the end of the week.

All students involved rated their experience of their virtual work experience as "outstanding". The quality of the interaction with employers and the necessity for students to be proactive and "take a risk" in asking questions in a professional environment lifted this experience above the norm despite the virtual nature.

The first round of Learning in Lockdown has now been completed and was a resounding success. Scape Group and partners are exploring how to expand the pilot. Schools can register interest via [this link](#).

Click on [this video link](#) for a flavour of what's on offer.



## Case Study: Morgan Sindall - online work experience

In light of Covid19, Morgan Sindall, a Cornerstone Employer supporting 5 locations, has adapted its work experience week to take place virtually. Morgan Sindall identified a suitable platform and partner (Speakers for Schools and Class of Your Own), overcoming safeguarding and risk assessment challenges, to adapt their face to face model to suit a virtual experience. Engagement from students was strong, with high quality questions coming from participants. Morgan Sindall have influenced the Fenlands & East Cambridgeshire Cornerstone Employer Group to now collaborate on a virtual Work Experience (VWEX) week for the Opportunity Area (OA) and have supported other Cornerstone's in Norwich OA to deliver VWEX this summer (Norfolk & Norwich NHS).

## Case Study: Derbyshire Virtual School

Derbyshire Virtual School have adapted well to Covid-19 and plan to continue to offer young people the opportunity of experiences of the workplace. Importantly their approach will be school-led and will offer schools both a virtual and face to face approach dependant on their requests and requirements.

The young people involved will receive experiences of the workplace through being set enterprise projects by employers (who will receive training from Derbyshire Virtual School). They will attend live Zoom sessions with employers who will set them tasks and challenges which replicate those in the workplace.

Students will work on these in their own time and then present them at a showcase event with other pupils and the employers, creating an authentic audience. They will receive feedback and advice from the employers whilst documenting their progress along the way, culminating in a digital portfolio of their work.

### Useful adaptations you may want to consider in your own planning of experiences of work with your partners:

1. Recreate a typical induction process, including a 'getting to know you' session
2. Access to guest speakers, with briefs linked to key learning outcomes for the experience of work
3. Students to observe live or recorded staff meetings
4. Regular catch ups with a workplace coordinator/mentor
5. Virtual site tour, including discussions with site manager and key areas and concepts highlighted linked to key learning outcomes for the experience of work

# Case Study: My Week of Work - Blended Careers Learning

Many schools and colleges offer face to face work experience programmes during the summer term for Year 10 students. Covid-19 meant that many young people missed this opportunity.

My Week of Work was created as a rapid response to this problem. Developed in partnership with Oak National Academy, the online programme empowered Careers Leaders to adapt their careers programmes not just during the lockdown, but for the 2020/21 academic year.

Over 120,000 young people have participated in this programme so far this summer. The programme was designed to target Year 10; however some schools and colleges have used it from Years 7 to 12.

The programme is free of charge, can be used in school/college or at home and features a suite of 20 lessons which can be delivered in a variety of ways to suit your school or college:

- As a whole week coordinated by you, with built in employer led projects leading to interactions and assessment opportunities
- As standalone lessons
- As themed careers learning days
- As part of a structured learning programme
- As a blended learning programme
- To engage parents/carers in work related learning
- Embedded into curriculum subjects to enhance Benchmark 4 provision

The materials can be accessed via our [Resource Directory](#). Accompanying industry videos created by our Cornerstone Employers can be found on the [Learn Live site](#).

The [Careers Leader guide](#) will provide you with information about how to best utilise these resources.

## How schools are using My Week of Work

**Shrewsbury Academy** have used [My Week of Work](#) early in autumn term 2020/21 to address gaps in young people's knowledge, created by missed work experience during the pandemic.

- They have embedded sessions across their Year 11 DEAR time and PSHE time
- Their Careers Leader has structured the programme as compulsory modules, which tutor groups can watch together and discuss discussions
- Optional modules are available to learners so they can choose the sectors and employers they are interested in
- Students have been set the built-in tasks to complete during the week.

**Poole High School** used the programme as a full week of planned sessions during lockdown and young people engaged in all sessions as if they were undertaking their own work experience programme for the week. Watch the short [pupil feedback video here](#).

# Benchmark 7: Encounters with further and higher education

Further and higher education institutions have been developing their support offers to schools and colleges during the period of lockdown. Innovative approaches to online encounters are emerging.

Although written for Benchmark 5 and 6, Careers Leaders may find the [Meaningful Encounters Framework](#) and checklist and the [Online Employer Engagement Guidance for Benchmarks 5 and 6](#) useful reference points to support them in their judgment regarding if each and every student has had a 'meaningful encounter' with an institution (whether online or in person).

Much of what we would expect to see in a meaningful online encounter with a further or higher education institution, is the same as what we would expect to see in a meaningful online employer encounter.



School



College



SEND



Resources

Like activities under Benchmarks 5 and 6, encounters with further and higher education should have planned intent, delivery and impact of activities and sit within a progressive careers programme that supports positive student outcomes.

To include an activity under Benchmark 7, it must meet the following minimum requirements:



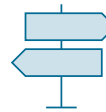
Learning outcomes defined, based on the age and needs of students



The encounter involves two-way interaction between students, appropriate provider staff and young people participating in this pathway



There is evidence that the student actively participated



There is evidence that the student has reflected on the experience and that it has shaped their thinking about future pathways

## Opportunity

Online encounters can offer students and parents the opportunity to engage with FE, HE and apprenticeship providers that they may not have considered visiting face to face. Work with students and parents to ensure that they connect with the wide range of online tours and online events showcasing all options at [Post 16](#) and [Post 18](#)



## How

Utilise the growing number of adaptations made by higher and further education institutions to increase two-way interaction between a greater number of representatives and young people – particularly those who may usually find this daunting.

It would be advantageous to work more closely with local FE providers to ensure the specific needs of young people in your context are met through a truly meaningful, two-way encounter.

## Practical resource and support

1. Work within your Hub or with an Enterprise Coordinator to challenge and flag issues around transition for vulnerable students
2. Use the [My Choices webinar platform](#) offer to build key contacts, partners and resource banks
3. [Office for Students](#) have collected some [short and useful examples](#) of how different colleges and universities have adapted their taster days and tours during this period
4. Explore the [HE Unboxed resources](#) from Loughborough University designed to help students (particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds), understand the range of opportunities available to them through Higher Education and to inspire them to continue learning to this level.
5. Engage with [Uni Connect](#) locally to understand their offer and what is available to you and your school/college community
6. [Engage with post 16/18 providers](#) to engage with virtual and online visit/experiences
7. Get ahead of the game and get students to apply to the [Sutton Trust online summer schools](#) for 2021
8. [Brightside](#) offers mentoring between university students and younger people
9. Ensure that students are made aware of the apprenticeship opportunities that are available to them so that they can make an informed choice between different education and career paths. [Amazing Apprenticeships](#) can support this
10. Consider using [this template 'Proposal' document](#) to help you to make a case to SLT for time, resource and support for careers guidance

Take a look at these DfE pages on the National Careers Service website which provide information about the options available to young people, both post16/18:

[Choices at 16](#)

[Choices at 18](#)



Positively, around a third (29%) of schools and colleges believe that parents, carers and guardians will have a more influential role in career guidance discussions going forward, and a similar proportion (30%) believe their relationships with parents, carers and guardians in relation to career guidance will be improved going forward.

Secondary School and College Leadership  
Views on the Impact of The Covid-19  
Pandemic on Careers Guidance

A Pye Tait report, commissioned by  
the Gatsby Foundation, August 2020



# Benchmark 8: Personal Guidance

The impact of Covid-19 is a heightened awareness of the need to deliver value and impact to young people through high quality personal guidance. The changing employment landscape, development of new technical education options (T-Levels and Higher Technical Education options from 2021) and the compromised examinations process during the pandemic is causing young people to revisit options and choices and careful consideration needs to be given to the levels of appropriate personal guidance that they are given.

Covid-19 has also fast tracked how we use online applications, meaning that some opportunities have been presented for personal guidance. For example, it is now possible to schedule more interviews in a day due to reduced travel time for external providers.



School



College



SEND



Resources

The strongest models of personal guidance see it integrated across, and layered through, the overall careers programme. Your programme should ensure an independent, impartial offer which is universal but has layers of personalisation and prioritisation.

It is a key element of pastoral support to encourage/aid engagement, progress and positive destinations for students, particularly the most vulnerable and it is recommended that you further target and support identified young people.

## Opportunity

Maximise the value and impact of personal guidance interviews, online or face to face.

## How

Work with pastoral staff (particularly as part of NEET prevention work) to understand priority cohorts and agree actions to support positive destinations for all students (also see Benchmark 3).

## Safeguarding

As you develop school and college recovery plans and blended learning opportunities for the future, you may continue to consider how young people access guidance and aspects of careers education through virtual means. The CDI have compiled some practical advice to consider when planning provision with partners. The advice can be [accessed here](#).

It is important to remember that any decisions taken regarding online activity remains within the governance of your individual school and safeguarding policy. If you feel unclear about any aspect of safeguarding practice in respect of virtual activity you should always speak with your Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## Practice resource and support

1. Ensure priority and tailored support is offered to students at risk of NEET or of not making a positive transition
2. Try [this pathway planner tool](#) that can support the triage preparation of activity. Read more about Careerpilot's approach to Providing effective, whole-school guidance through a triage model -
3. Refer to the [CDI Register of Professionals](#) if you need to source more advisers
4. Share student career programme records, for example Compass+ Student Report with careers advisers ahead of 1:1 process. Ensure appropriate consent is secured for this
5. To support a whole college or school approach to careers, the AoC have put together a [framework for triage training](#) that can be adapted to the needs of each college or school and their various curriculum and student support arrangements
6. Review and consider the additional value which your careers guidance professional could bring. Please refer to this [CDI paper](#)
7. Consider using [this template 'Proposal'](#) document to help you to make a case to SLT for time, resource and support for careers guidance

## Interim findings from the CEC Personal Guidance Fund Evaluation (iCeGS, 2020)

- Blended models of PG delivery can work with students engaging in virtual PG alongside the established face to face model, however this very much depends on the situation and the student and it is important for the adviser to factor this in if the context and environment allows for it.
- Students respond positively to advisers and greatly appreciate having someone who is not a teacher and has a less formal relationship with them. Advisers can be treated as confidantes and can help the school/college in identifying and understanding the additional needs of students. This works best when advisers have relationships with key teaching staff.
- Students report learning about a wider range of careers and jobs, as do parents where they have been involved. Parents/carers in particular find learning about future careers and pathways especially useful.
- Younger students respond very enthusiastically to being involved in group and individual sessions and demonstrate increased self-confidence and self-awareness as well as increased knowledge about opportunities.

Let's hear from a Careers Leader who is adapting their practice in the current context:

## The Priory Learning Trust

The Priory Learning Trust is a MAT of 3 secondary schools, a 6th form and 4 primary schools. The Priory Learning Trust Careers Team sees this year as a source of extraordinary opportunity but not without its challenges.

- This year means we can bring everything back to the 1:1 needs of the student and a timetable of themed appointments for every student in every year group. We will be based in the year group bubble, get to know each student, their needs, ambitions and help overcome potential barriers. What an enormous honour and opportunity!
- We are pausing and reviewing our historical events and activities while honestly assessing their impact on students and taking the brave step to shake things up. We are looking forward to looking at things with fresh eyes and letting some things go.
- We are catching up with CPD and level 6 qualifications for the Careers Team to be the best that we can be. The Priory Learning Trust Careers Team will all be Level 6 qualified practitioners by Christmas.
- We are rebooting our relationships with our stakeholders. Reviewing and improving some relationships and redefining the nature of our relationships with others.
- We are working even more closely with school leadership and teaching staff to ensure that our careers work is embedded throughout everything that they do with students more than ever. What a great opportunity to support our teachers.
- As teachers will be based in year group bubbles and not necessarily their own faculties, they may be feeling a loss of subject identity. We have sent all central leaders image files of their careers in curriculum posters to display as screen savers and to close their classes with.
- We are looking at creating an engaging online / remotely accessible suite of resources and employer clips for families to access as an alternative to a careers convention.



The year ahead may appear challenging, but we're looking forward to embracing the opportunities to enhance careers education advice and guidance, that have already been emerging through the lockdown period.

James Wilmot, Director of Careers, Employability, Advice & Guidance at The Priory Learning Trust



# Thank you

With huge thanks to all of the Careers Leaders, Careers Advisers, Enterprise Advisers, Enterprise Coordinators, LEPs, employers, providers and other organisations and individuals who have contributed to this guide.



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