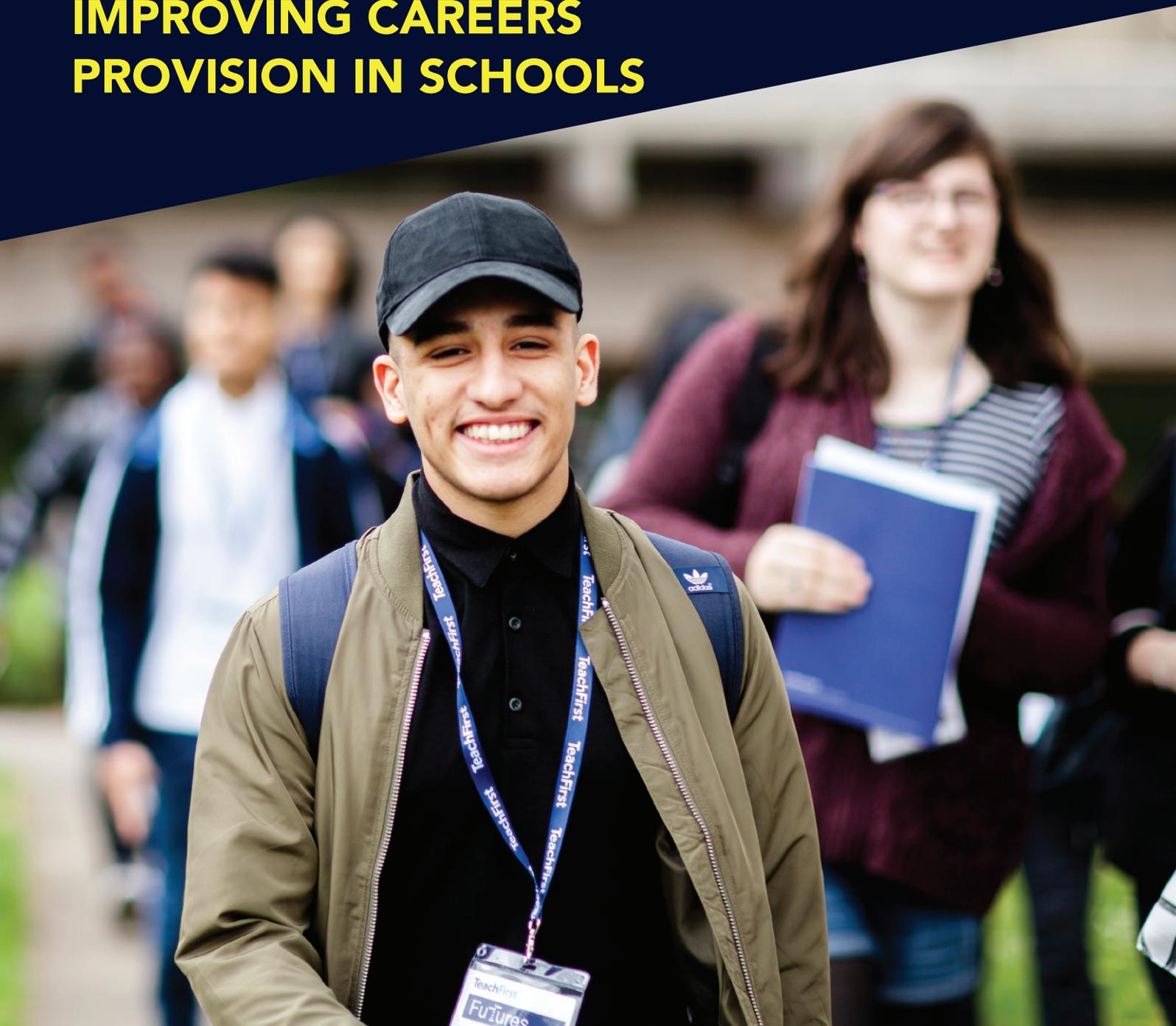


TeachFirst

CHALLENGE THE  
IMPOSSIBLE

# Impossible?

IMPROVING CAREERS  
PROVISION IN SCHOOLS



## About Teach First

Since 2002, Teach First has been challenging the deeply-rooted reality that a child's socioeconomic background is the biggest determining factor in their chances of future life success.

By working with excellent teachers, schools and communities, we've seen first-hand how it is possible for young people to scale the hurdles to social mobility and achieve incredible things. Yet it is still the case that children from low-income backgrounds face a litany of barriers to achieving their full potential.

In 2012, Teach First worked with members of our community and experts around the globe to identify a set of goals which, if achieved, would substantially close the gaps between children from low income backgrounds and their wealthier peers by 2022. The purpose of these Fair Education Impact Goals was to focus efforts to improve social mobility in the UK on the areas that would make the biggest difference.

This report is focused on the support needed to achieve the following goals:

- Narrow the gap in the proportion of young people taking part in further education or employment based training after finishing their GCSEs
- Narrow the gap in university graduation, including from the 25% most selective universities

We believe that implementing the recommendations within this report would support progress towards these aims.

2017 is Teach First's 15th anniversary and we are focusing our efforts on addressing these issues through a year of action, campaigning and mobilisation to help every young person achieve their dreams.

This report follows on from *Impossible? Social mobility and the seemingly unbreakable class ceiling*, our report released in March 2017 which examined the multitude of social mobility hurdles young people from low-income backgrounds face in order to even have a chance at fulfilling their potential. In May 2017 our general election manifesto called on candidates of all parties to commit to the policies needed to address these increasingly important issues. And in August 2017 our report *Impossible? Beyond access: getting to university and succeeding there* looked in depth at the barriers specific to higher education.

By the time they leave school, we want every young person to be in the position to make informed and ambitious decisions about their future, to have secured a place on the route that is right for them and to possess the skills and mind-sets that will help them succeed throughout their lives.

We believe that disadvantage should not determine destiny. Achieving this is our driving force.

Will it be a challenge? Yes. Impossible? No.

**Report authors: Ben Gadsby and Kelly Loftus**

**We commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to estimate the costs of training careers middle leaders.**

# Contents

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Executive summary	4
1. Why does careers provision matter?	7
2. Is there a problem with careers provision in England?	9
3. What does good careers provision look like?	12
4. What is a careers middle leader and how do they support good careers provision?	16
5. How do we train effective careers middle leaders?	20
6. How do we know this training for careers leaders will work?	24
7. How much does it cost to train careers middle leaders?	27
8. What more is needed to improve careers provision in schools?	30
9. Conclusion and recommendations	32
References	34
Figure 1. The Gatsby benchmarks	13
Figure 2. Examples of the Gatsby benchmarks in practice	14
Figure 3. Career leadership tasks	17
Figure 4. A careers leader's work in practice	18
Figure 5. Number of schools on Teach First pilot programme indicating that participation had an impact on elements of provision	25
Figure 6. Number of schools on Teach First pilot programme indicating that participation had an impact on elements of provision	26

# Executive summary

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When Theresa May called a snap general election in April 2017, we knew exactly which policies we wanted all political candidates to commit to in the run-up to 8 June. That's because, just a few weeks previously, we had published a report which examined the litany of barriers young people from low-income communities are forced to overcome to even have a chance at smashing through the so-called 'class ceiling'.

In that report, we discovered that poorer young people repeatedly find doors closed and paths to the top blocked, regardless of their academic talents<sup>1</sup>. We found that:

- In every part of the country young people from poor backgrounds are less likely to do an apprenticeship than their better off peers.
- Only one in four young people from poor families make it to university, whilst nearly double their better-off peers make it.
- For those who get to university against the odds, one in 12 freshers from poorer backgrounds drop out.
- Only 4% of doctors, 6% of barristers, 11% of journalists and 12% of solicitors have working-class backgrounds.

These shocking facts exemplify the social mobility challenge, but also raise many questions that need to be urgently addressed. Namely:

- How can we support young people from low-income backgrounds to make choices that set them on the right path?

- How can we make sure young people from low-income backgrounds access our top universities and high-quality apprenticeships?
- How can we set young people up to reach the very top jobs in our society?

From cradle to college to career, the odds are so stacked against disadvantaged young people it can seem impossible to improve social mobility. But we know it isn't. Young people across the country are achieving against the odds. In the wake of Brexit the British economy is expected to experience a shortage of 3 million high skilled workers. It has never been more important to nurture home-grown talent and ensure that every young person is supported to achieve.

There are over 37,000 university undergraduate courses, over 20,000 apprenticeships and thousands more further education courses and job opportunities available to school-leavers in the UK alone. Every year, tens of thousands of disadvantaged young people face difficult choices but lack access to the quality support they need to make informed decisions.

In this report we look at evaluation of our frontline experience and independent research to explore how high-quality careers provision can be part of the solution to the skills gap.

**Chapter 1** examines how our labour market will inevitably change in the wake of Brexit, with a greater need than ever before to develop a highly-skilled workforce. Achieving good grades at school underpins every young person's progress, but we know that grades alone are not enough. This is why quality careers provision, by which we mean all activity to support progression after school, matters so much.

It matters, but all too often it simply isn't good enough, as we outline in **Chapter 2**. This is a conclusion shared by Ofsted, the CBI, and the House of Commons Education Select Committee. In May and June 2017, ComRes interviewed 2,015 18-25 year olds in England online between 18 May and 12 June 2017, including 506 current university students and 807 university graduates<sup>2</sup>. The survey revealed that only 32% of the most disadvantaged young people found advice given by careers advisers helpful for deciding what to do after finishing school. And this is despite the fact that young people from low-income backgrounds are more reliant on careers advice compared to their better-off peers. For example, 44% of the most advantaged pupils say they found their work experience placement through friends or family, compared to just 18% of the most disadvantaged.

In **Chapter 3** we set out how poor quality careers provision need not be inevitable. Through the Gatsby benchmarks we know what good careers provision looks like, and we look at what schools can do on the ground, with a particular focus on Churchill Community College.

Leadership in schools is crucial to improving careers provision. **Chapter 4** outlines why a careers middle leader is needed in every secondary school to improve leadership and coordination of careers provision.

**38%**  
**OF YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**FROM** LOW-INCOME  
BACKGROUNDS  
**FOUND**  
**CAREERS ADVICE**  
**HELPFUL**  
**COMPARED WITH**  
**29%** OF BETTER-OFF  
**PEERS**

Careers middle leaders need training to have the greatest impact. Training should focus on improvement of the whole schools approach to careers, in addition to improving the skills of the individual leader. Based on research and evaluation of our experience, **Chapter 5** details what this training could look like, while **Chapter 6** assesses the evidence.

We worked with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to estimate the cost of training careers middle leaders. **Chapter 7** reveals that it would cost just £31.06 million for every state secondary school to have a trained careers middle leader, equivalent to less than £13 per pupil<sup>3</sup>. We believe that Government should invest in training in the forthcoming careers strategy.

In the longer term, and as we outline in **Chapter 8**, all middle leader training should include training on supporting careers education in schools, so that every member of school staff moving up the ladder knows how their role can best support this agenda.

The Secretary of State for Education has said that we face a social mobility emergency, and tackling this challenge is the Department for Education’s guiding mission. The forthcoming careers strategy presents a concrete opportunity to turn these words into action. Ministers must ensure every child has access to excellent careers provision. Only then will every single young person, regardless of their background, reach as high as their talents allow.

IT WOULD COST  
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**SCHOOL**  
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**CAREERS**  
**MIDDLE**  
**LEADER**



**EQUIVALENT TO**  
**LESS THAN**  
**£13 PER PUPIL<sup>3</sup>**

# 1. Why does careers provision matter?

Good careers provision can boost attainment, and we know that getting the grades is the single biggest factor in progression from school. There are proven correlations between schools which hold Quality Awards for their careers education and improved GCSE and A-level performance, as well as lower incidents of unexplained absence and improved destination data<sup>4</sup>.

Good careers provision is also important because making career choices is hard. There are over 37,000 undergraduate courses at UK universities alone; over 20,000 apprenticeships; and countless more further education courses and job opportunities available. Young people's choices are not only plentiful, they are very different to those their parents faced 30 years ago. In 1986 just 49% of 16-year-olds and 32% of 17-year-olds were in full time education. By 2010 these numbers had risen to 85% and 71%.<sup>5</sup>

The options will continue changing in the years ahead. By 2022, 9 million people with low skills are expected to be

competing for 4 million low-skilled jobs, with a shortage of 3 million workers to fill 15 million high-skilled jobs<sup>6</sup>. Reforms to technical education, will be ongoing and present new opportunities for young people to navigate.

The picture is very different depending on where you are in the country. There are twice as many manufacturing jobs in Mansfield as Lewes. Lewes by contrast has almost three times as many information and communication jobs, twice as many real estate jobs, and twice as many professional and scientific jobs<sup>7</sup>, as well as easier access to London for even greater variety.

**IN 1986** JUST 49% OF 16-YEAR-OLDS  
AND 32% OF 17-YEAR-OLDS  
WERE IN FULL TIME EDUCATION

**BY 2010** THESE NUMBERS HAD RISEN TO  
85% AND 71%

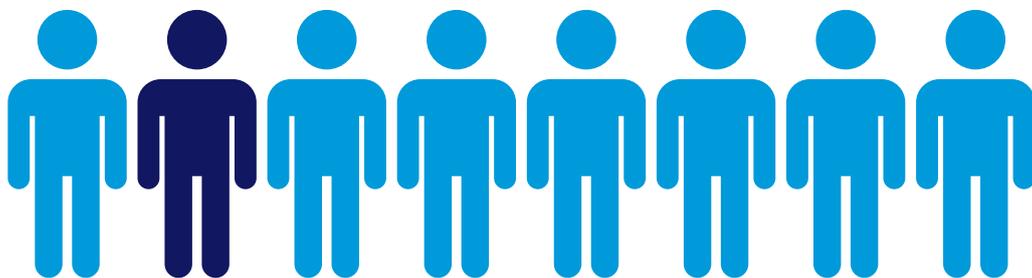
Young people are faced with many options, and often little means to objectively compare them. There is currently no 'one stop shop' for information on progression from school, and a lack of personalised support to make informed choices. These challenges sit behind the fact that one in eight of those aged 19–24 is not in employment, education or training (NEET)<sup>8</sup>.

It is clear that too many young people fail to make a successful transition on leaving education, and the support that exists for young people to make good careers choices is not working for everyone. Securing a job is not the sole purpose of education, it is good in and of itself, but the time young people spend in school has a significant impact on their long-term prospects. In the wake

of Brexit the Government is committed to reducing immigration, therefore ensuring employers have access to home-grown skills will only increase in importance. Improving careers provision is not just a matter of fairness for each young person. It is an economic imperative.

Good careers provision is about more than just helping young people get the jobs they want. When careers provision is done well, there are benefits for the individual in increasing their employability, for employers in helping them to recruit staff who have the skills that they need, and for society in reducing unemployment.<sup>9</sup>

Careers provision matters. Yet, despite its importance, there are many reasons to be concerned about its quality in England.



**ONE IN EIGHT  
OF THOSE AGED 19–24  
IS NOT IN EMPLOYMENT  
EDUCATION (NEET)  
OR TRAINING**

## 2. Is there a problem with careers provision in England?

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The responsibility for careers provision was transferred to schools in 2011. Unfortunately, this transfer of responsibility was not accompanied by the training, support and resource schools need to deliver high quality provision. Despite challenging circumstances, many schools are prioritising this work and doing it well, for example, Churchill Community College (Chapter 3).

However, more support needs to be provided. The House of Commons Education Select Committee described careers provision as “inadequate in too many English schools”<sup>10</sup>, while a CBI survey found 77% of businesses felt it was not good enough<sup>11</sup>. Ofsted’s review of the topic found provision not “sufficiently well-coordinated or reviewed to ensure that each student received appropriate guidance”<sup>12</sup>.

While there are pockets of best practice, the overall picture shows vast room for improvement. 5% of schools admit that they only promote pathways available at their own institution, while less than half (42%) say they include sources of independent and external information as part of their careers programme<sup>13</sup>.

The Government has invested in this area, and the early signs are that initiatives to increase links between schools and employers, such as the Careers and Enterprise Company, are bearing fruit. However, schools lack capacity to make the most of support

available, and therefore “in most cases activity is not at a level to create significant impact”<sup>14</sup>. Investment in careers initiatives, such as the Careers and Enterprise Company needs to be topped-up by investment in training and capacity in schools to enable real results. 12% of schools have no contact with local employers and fewer than a third have a broad-based employer engagement programme that extends beyond one-off school visits. This is particularly alarming, given that research this year conducted by the Education and Employers Charity and LifeSkills created with Barclays, shows that students are 86% less likely to become NEET when they have 4+ contacts with employers before leaving school.

This problem is widespread because schools are not often supported to do better. Teachers are focused on the core subject learning of their pupils, and are not equipped to be experts on, for example, the labour market or progression routes. Nor do they have time to become experts in career paths. Even for those who receive training, it needs to be updated

regularly as the world of work moves on. There is a need to regularly support teachers to improve their knowledge of their pupils' post-school options.

### What young people say

Poor careers provision can have a profound impact on young people, especially those from low-income backgrounds who are particularly reliant on careers advice.

We commissioned a ComRes survey of 18-25 year olds to explore this further.<sup>15</sup>

The survey revealed:

- Less than a third (32%) of the most disadvantaged young people found advice given by careers advisers helpful when deciding what to do after finishing school. This is despite them being more likely to rely on it.
- Young people with at least one parent who attended university are more likely than those whose parents did not go to university to say they found their family helpful in deciding what to do after school – by 64% to 52% – leaving the latter potentially more reliant on other sources, such as formal careers advice.

A survey by Which? of 1,000 university applicants found only around half felt informed about how their A-level choices would affect their university options, and a third felt the advice they received on which A-levels to take failed to factor in the implications for their university options.<sup>16</sup>

One aspect of effective careers provision, as outlined by Gatsby, is encounters and experiences with employers, which can be achieved through many activities including work experience and employer visits.

**STUDENTS ARE**  
**86%**  
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**TO BECOME**  
**NEET**  
**WHEN THEY HAVE**  
**4+ CONTACTS**  
**WITH EMPLOYERS**  
**BEFORE**  
**LEAVING SCHOOL**

A recent Government study found that 90% of schools offer work experience opportunities, and almost all make them available to the entirety of the relevant year groups, usually Years 10 and/or 11.<sup>17</sup> Digging deeper, however, the report also finds that schools largely leave it to students to make their own arrangements, and notes "having engaged and supportive parents and carers, as well as parents and carers with good family connections facilitated the student-led approach". Unintentionally, therefore pupils with fewer family connections to varied workplaces will be immediately disadvantaged.

# NEARLY HALF OF THE MOST ADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE FOUND WORK EXPERIENCE THROUGH FAMILY AND FRIENDS COMPARED TO LESS THAN 1 IN 5 OF THE LEAST WELL-OFF

The ComRes survey also explored the differences between disadvantaged young people's access to work experience opportunities compared to their peers during school years.<sup>18</sup> It found:

- Nearly half (44%) of the most-advantaged young people found work experience through family and friends, compared to less than 1 in 5 (18%) of the least-advantaged.
- The most disadvantaged young people are most likely to find work experience themselves (42%) or through their school (39%).
- The most advantaged young people are four times more likely to have completed a work experience placement in law – 9% compared to 2%.
- More than twice as many better off young people (27%) undertake work experience in professional services, compared to the least advantaged young people (12%)

The most-advantaged tended to find their placement more helpful in preparing for the future, too:

- 75% of the most-advantaged found it helpful gaining experience for a future career, compared to 63% of the least-advantaged.
- 65% of the most-advantaged found it helpful in inspiring them to do something they loved, compared to 59% of the least-advantaged.
- 55% of the most-advantaged found their work experience helpful in making contacts and networking, compared to 42% of the least-advantaged.
- 55% of the most-advantaged found it helpful in inspiring them to go to university, compared to just 39% of the least-advantaged.

There are interesting regional variations. Half of those living in the South East (45%) and London (49%) said that they completed two or more work experience placements between the ages of 11 and 18, compared to only 37% in the North of England. Those who live in London are more likely than those who live elsewhere in England to say their work experience placement was in professional services (23%), compared to just 14% in the North of England or the Midlands.

Of all those who did work experience, 65% said work experience was helpful in gaining experience for a future career, 63% said it was helpful deciding where they wanted to work in the future and 45% said it was helpful in inspiring them to go to university.

# 3. What does good careers provision look like?

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In 2013, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation commissioned Sir John Holman, Emeritus Professor at the University of York, senior education adviser and former headteacher, to set out what careers guidance in England would look like if it was good by international standards.

The resulting report, *Good Career Guidance*,<sup>19</sup> defined eight benchmarks – known as the Gatsby benchmarks – which outline the features of good careers guidance (Figure 1).

There is a broad consensus across the sector that these benchmarks are the right ones. They have been described by the House of Commons Education Select Committee as “a useful statement of the careers provision to which all schools should be aspiring”<sup>20</sup>, and by the Government as “an effective way to capture the important dimensions of careers guidance for young people”.<sup>21</sup>

These benchmarks are a framework for emphasising what needs to be achieved, but are flexible enough to allow schools to apply their own context to the international standards of what good careers provision looks like. What a particular school delivers and when will vary depending on their local context, but for each benchmark there are a range of achievable options (Figure 2).<sup>22</sup> These are just examples of the kinds of activity that can be undertaken. They are not a checklist or a complete list of

options, and many activities will achieve more than one benchmark. It is important that these activities are not a one-off, but part of a coherent whole-school careers strategy.

Schools would not need to complete all activities to achieve the benchmarks – some activities achieve multiple goals. The idea is here that schools have the freedom to implement the right careers strategy for their students and local needs. What’s important is that schools have a coherent overall strategy to ensure that every pupil, over their years at school, has access to a range of well-planned and high-quality opportunities, timed to be relevant to the decisions they are facing. One school that does this particularly well is Churchill Community College.

Figure 1: The Gatsby benchmarks

<b>1 A stable careers programme</b>	<p>Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers.</p>	<p>1.1 Every school should have a structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person of authority responsible for it.</p> <p>1.2 The careers programme should be published on the school's website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers and employers to understand the school's offer in this area.</p> <p>1.3 The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process.</p>
<b>2 Learning from career and labour market information (LMI)</b>	<p>Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.</p>	<p>2.1 By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options.</p> <p>2.2 Parents and carers should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children.</p>
<b>3 Addressing the needs of each pupil</b>	<p>Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.</p>	<p>3.1 A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.</p> <p>3.2 Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil, and subsequent agreed decisions.</p> <p>3.3 All pupils should have access to these records to support their career development.</p> <p>3.4 Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations after they leave school.</p>
<b>4 Linking curriculum learning to careers</b>	<p>All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.</p>	<p>4.1 By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.</p>
<b>5 Encounters with employers and employees</b>	<p>Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.</p>	<p>5.1 Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer.</p>
<b>6 Experiences of workplaces</b>	<p>Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.</p>	<p>6.1 By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.</p> <p>6.2 By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.</p>
<b>7 Encounters with further and higher education</b>	<p>All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.</p>	<p>7.1 By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including Sixth Forms, colleges, and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and pupils.</p> <p>7.2 By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and pupils.</p>
<b>8 Personal guidance</b>	<p>Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.</p>	<p>Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.</p>

Figure 2: Examples of the Gatsby benchmarks in practice

<p><b>1 A stable careers programme</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The school has a 5-year careers strategy to achieve its vision for careers, shared with all staff. The strategy is approved, monitored and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and governing body. Progress and impact is reviewed on a termly basis.</li> <li>● The whole school approach is structured to include a specific focus for each year group: Year 7: Introduction to careers; Year 8: Focus on future options; Year 9: Where to go?; Year 10: Work Experience Placements, Year 11: GCSEs; Year 12 UCAS and apprenticeships; Year 13: CV's and individual mentoring.</li> <li>● There is a scheme of learning for careers for every year group. In the summer term, the lessons link students' academic progress through the year back to potential progression paths and careers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 Learning from career and labour market information (LMI)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Labour market information is shared with pupils via a weekly newsletter, school website, timetabled lessons or infographics around the school.</li> <li>● Small group meetings are held with students in Year 10 based on the industries they are interested in.</li> <li>● The Careers team has identified top employers in the borough to help identify potential employers to host work experience placements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 Addressing the needs of each pupil</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regular information events are held to tackle gender stereotypes on topics such as careers for girls in construction and boys in social care.</li> <li>● Pupils at risk of being NEET (e.g. young carers, SEND pupils) are identified and given additional support to address barriers such as one to one support activities.</li> <li>● Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the pupil impact of individual and whole-year/school careers activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 Linking curriculum learning to careers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The departmental/curriculum lead has accountability for ensuring there is an opportunity to link what is being learned in the curriculum and the opportunities that each subject can provide to the world of work.</li> <li>● Teaching staff receive CPD in careers and employability to understand how to link careers to their subject teaching.</li> <li>● A specific focus on careers is embedded in every scheme of learning to give careers provision a very definite place within the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5 Encounters with employers and employees</b></p>	<p>The examples of encounters should not be treated as one off events and should be aligned with the careers programme, labour market information and pupil need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employers visit the school to participate in school assemblies, employer breakfasts or to run sessions and workshops.</li> <li>● Employers visit the school to provide mock interviews and to provide CV and employability advice.</li> <li>● Hold yearly careers fairs aimed at multiple year groups, comprising local businesses, apprenticeship providers and further and higher education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6 Experiences of workplaces</b></p>	<p>As above, encounters with further and higher education should be considered in the context of the wider programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Workplace visits for various year groups, including residential opportunities on rarer occasions.</li> <li>● One or two week work placements for Year 10s with supportive mentoring sessions.</li> <li>● One hour a week of work experience in Year 12 and 13 as part of the enrichment activities either arranged by the school or students themselves.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7 Encounters with further and higher education</b></p>	<p>As above, encounters with further and higher education should be considered in the context of the wider programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Visits to sixth-forms, colleges and apprenticeship providers where they talk to staff and pupils.</li> <li>● HE and apprenticeships fairs.</li> <li>● University visits and open days, including opportunities to attend sessions or workshops run in colleges or universities</li> </ul>
<p><b>8 Personal guidance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hold one-to-one personal guidance interviews with Year 11 delivered by professional careers advisers, also offered to Years 12 and 13.</li> <li>● Building on established one-to-one careers advice to add pre-careers meetings with Year 10 pupils and then follow-up meetings before they finish Year 10.</li> <li>● Work with Year 8 to focus on future options before choosing GCSEs.</li> </ul>

## Churchill Community College: Excellent Careers and Employability Learning

**Churchill Community College in Wallsend is delivering excellent careers and employability learning to 11-18 year olds in the North East.**

Head of Guidance and Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Marie Jobson has been in charge of transforming careers provision in recent years. Previously careers provision was focused on sixth-form students, and most provision was ad-hoc, the school now has a co-ordinated and sequential approach to careers, from Year 7 to Year 13 – a careers programme.

Marie credits the framework provided within the Gatsby Career Benchmarks Pilot, run by The Gatsby Foundation and the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, as key to equipping her to lead this transformation. “I was keen to do things but didn’t really know how. The benchmarks are a holistic approach to careers. They have equipped us to make sweeping changes so that our school now meets all eight benchmarks”.

Before taking part in the Career Benchmark Pilot Marie had taken part in the Careers Champion Pilot, which involved working towards a quality award (Inspiring IAG) and she completed units toward a Level 6 Careers Education qualification. This grounding was crucial in helping Marie use the Gatsby framework to overhaul careers provision at her school.

Marie has invested a lot of time working with other middle leaders to embed careers in the curriculum. While different departments in the school take different approaches – from prompting teachers to think about careers links on the lesson planning pro-forma to careers-based projects – every department has bought in to the careers and employability agenda.

And whereas before, experiences of workplaces were only offered post-16, now Year 10's are also involved in a week long workplace programme that includes tackling a project set by local businesses, working at their site for a few days, and a presentation back to employers and the school's senior leaders, parents and governors at the end of the week.

Careers provision is now so embedded as a whole school strategy that it's no longer seen as just an add-on to other main job roles. Marie is now Head of Guidance and CEIAG across the whole school.

**Good careers provision is a well-understood and deliverable prospect. But we need trained careers leaders to make it a reality.**

## 4. What is a careers middle leader and how do they support good careers provision?

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Up to the age of 18, most young people spend a significant amount of their time in school. With a new, more rigorous curriculum, a teacher's time is more stretched than ever. But there is still a huge opportunity to embed careers provision within the curriculum, as opposed to perceiving employability as an add-on, alongside core subject learning.

Delivering careers provision is a task that all teachers must play a part in. But, a classroom teacher shouldn't be expected to lead the strategy across a school or know all the options for their pupils. A dedicated, specialist middle leader is needed in every secondary school. The International Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby, argue that "every teacher has a role in supporting the career building of their students" and that "the role of a school's career specialist or 'career leader' offers a potential progression route for teachers themselves"<sup>23</sup>.

To improve careers and employability education, schools firstly need a strategy for improvement and whole-school coordination. Ofsted found that schools achieving excellent student outcomes do not do so by chance, but through "highly reflective, carefully-planned and implemented strategies"<sup>24</sup>. A careers leader would also be the natural source of expertise in how to take advantage of support outside of the school, for example from local businesses or the Careers and Enterprise Company.

**SCHOOLS ACHIEVING EXCELLENT STUDENT OUTCOMES DO NOT DO SO BY CHANCE, BUT THROUGH HIGHLY REFLECTIVE CAREFULLY-PLANNED AND IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES**

Figure 3: Career Leadership Tasks by David Andrews and Tristram Hooley

<b>Coordination</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing the provision of careers information</li> <li>2. Liaising with the personal, social, health and economic education leader and other subject leaders to plan careers education in the curriculum</li> <li>3. Liaising with tutorial managers, mentors, special educational needs coordinator and head of sixth-form to identify pupils needing guidance</li> <li>4. Referring pupils to careers advisers</li> </ol>
<b>Networking</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Establishing, maintaining and developing links with further education colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers</li> <li>6. Establishing, maintaining and developing links with employers</li> <li>7. Negotiating an annual service level agreement with the local authority for support for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils</li> <li>8. Commissioning careers guidance services</li> </ol>
<b>Project management</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Planning schemes of work for careers education</li> <li>10. Briefing and supporting teachers of careers education and tutors providing initial information and advice</li> <li>11. Monitoring teaching and learning in careers education</li> <li>12. Monitoring access to, and take up of, careers guidance</li> </ol>
<b>Line management</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Managing the work of the careers administrator</li> </ol>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Advising senior leadership on policy, strategy and resources for careers and employability information, advice, and guidance</li> <li>15. Reporting to senior leaders and governors</li> <li>16. Reviewing and evaluating the programme of careers and employability information, advice and guidance</li> <li>17. Preparing and implementing a development plan for careers and employability information, advice and guidance</li> </ol>

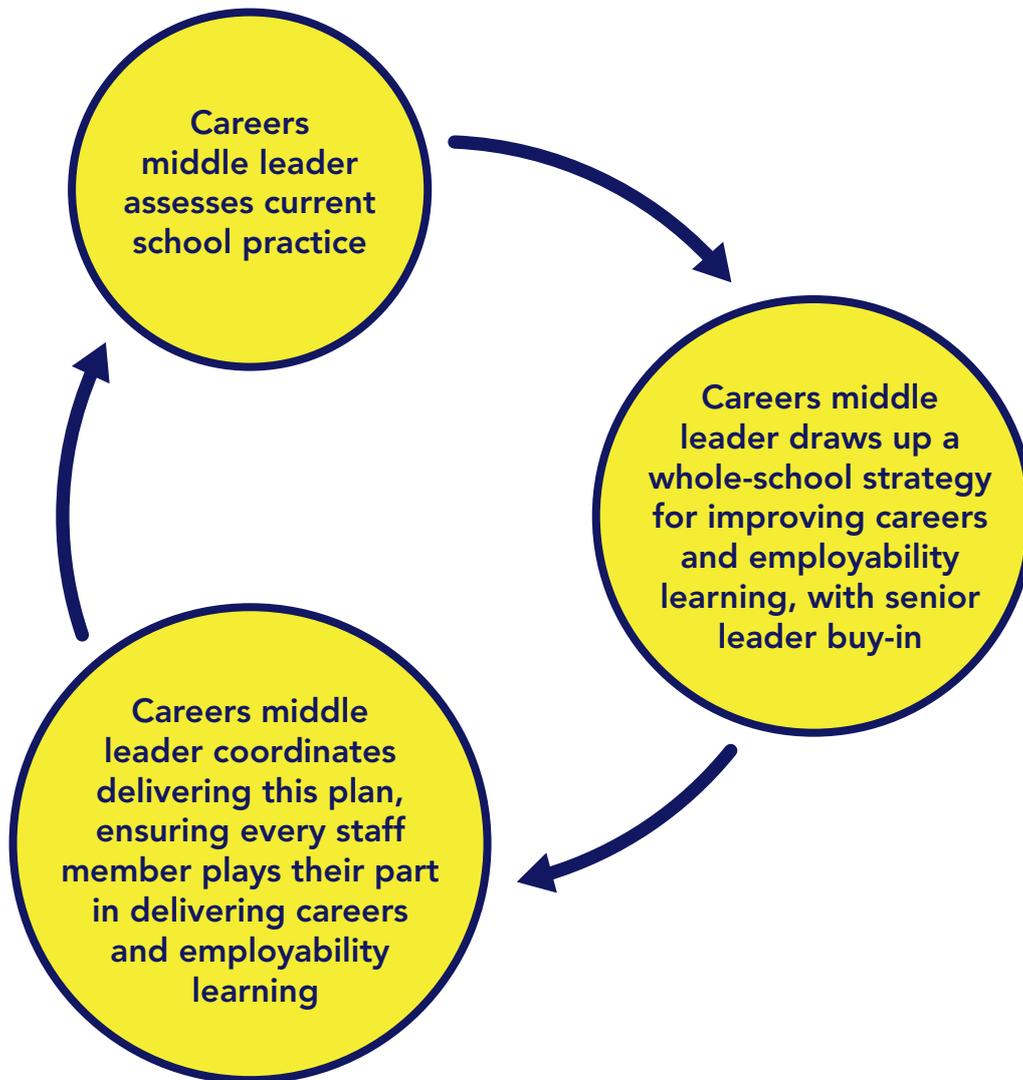
In order for a truly transformative strategy to leave the paper it's written on and have an impact in schools and beyond we need leadership, capacity and expertise. Finding these resources is the greatest barrier schools face.

Existing research has shown that, while much effort goes into identifying individuals capable of providing transformational leadership, there is rarely a plan in place for how these individuals will implement their work and transform the school<sup>25</sup>. As Professor Dylan Wiliam has said about improving the effectiveness of teachers more

generally, "the biggest obstacle is leadership"<sup>26</sup>.

As an education and social mobility charity developing teachers and leaders this is something we have taken on board. We have enhanced the careers content in our flagship Leadership Development Programme for new teachers, and have also piloted and expanded an entirely new training programme to support schools to develop careers leaders. We are grateful for the support of our principle partner for their invaluable work in this area, LifeSkills created with Barclays. LifeSkills is an employability

Figure 4: A careers middle leader's work in practice



programme which inspires and helps young people to develop the skills they need for the world of work. With ongoing input from the experts at the International Centre for Guidance Studies, The Careers and Enterprise Company, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and independent evaluators, we're proud of our work developing

an entirely new programme in this area. We're keen to share what we've learned from this work to benefit policymaking, and a larger number of schools than we could ever reach through the programme alone.

Careers leaders, like other middle leaders in schools, are responsible for developing and implementing a whole-school strategy

to improve education in their area of responsibility. This leadership role, distinct from that of a teaching or pastoral role, is key in binding the overall careers strategy in schools. It is important that a member of a school's senior leadership also has strategic oversight of this work, and how it fits in to the school's wider plans and priorities. The type of work a careers leader undertakes is shown in Figure 3,<sup>27</sup> and a summary of the overall process of how they deliver change is outlined in Figure 4. The National Occupational Standards for career development practitioners also provides an example of the kinds of work this role undertakes, framed in a broader context than schools.<sup>28</sup>

The careers leader needs time off timetable to focus on the leadership role if they are to have a real impact. The amount of time will vary from school to school, depending on what other administrative support is available. It is a role that can be filled by someone from a non-teaching background, if they are an experienced member of school staff, such as school business manager.

In our view, every school needs a careers middle leader – a view shared by The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and the Career Development Institute, with whom we are working to develop proposals to make this happen. For smaller schools, or where neighbouring schools are part of the same Multi Academy Trust, it may be effective for a careers leader to be shared between schools. But all schools should ensure someone is responsible for leading on the careers and employability agenda, and they must dedicate time to do so.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**All schools should have a trained careers middle leader. Their role is to develop and lead a careers and employability strategy for their whole school.**

## 5. How do we train effective careers leaders?

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Nearly half (45%) of schools already have a careers middle leader-type post.<sup>29</sup> But careers leaders require training if they are to be effective. While courses to train middle leaders to head-up subject areas or year groups are plentiful, this is not the case for prospective careers leaders.

Since 2015, building on the research from the International Centre for Guidance Studies and our experience of delivering training programmes we have piloted a careers middle leader programme. Our pilot scheme has been trialled in schools serving disadvantaged young people who are most in need of high-quality careers provision.

Based on what we've learned from our pilot programme, the latest research, and emerging consensus around practice in the sector, we are in a position to outline what we believe is needed to train a careers middle leader. It is important to be clear from the outset that just as important as training for a careers middle leader is in-school support and capacity to deliver tangible, systematic change.

A careers leader programme should aim to develop confident, knowledgeable and trained careers leaders who can design and implement a high-quality, whole-school careers strategy. The training should be designed to focus on school improvement alongside the individual's leadership development. Both a school and the individual careers middle leader benefit from the programme.

In line with what is largely considered best practice in professional development, the objectives of the careers leader programme should be achieved through a combination of mechanisms that include developing career leader specialist knowledge and skills, broad leadership development, and practical application in a real school context. The careers leader programme should consist of:

- Days out of school to receive training from external experts.
- Evaluation of the school's current provision.
- One-to-one support from the training provider and industry employers.
- Time between training modules to implement change in school.
- A paired buddy support system and collaboration between the community of careers leaders.

This is much more comprehensive than simply a few days of training, reflecting the larger scale of the challenge in delivering substantial school-level improvement.

While the knowledge gap is an important issue a careers leader programme must address, it is not the whole solution. As Professor Dylan Wiliam has noted, “most professional development has been designed to address those (knowledge) deficits. The result has been teachers who are more knowledgeable, but no more effective in practice”<sup>30</sup>. Viewing the careers leader programme as a school improvement programme and not just a training course is key to helping bring about genuine change.

The main aim of the training is for careers middle leaders to understand what each of the benchmarks is, what good practice looks like, and to develop the leadership skills and specialist expertise needed to improve practice in their school. Effectively, over the course of a year’s careers leader programme, they should develop a whole school careers and employability strategy.

While this careers leader programme training phase only lasts around a year, this isn’t the end of the improvement process. The years training is about equipping a careers leader with the knowledge and resources they need to make careers provision better, but delivering that is an ongoing and iterative process. Again, this is key – training sessions for a careers leader should be at the core of any programme, but they are not, by themselves, sufficient. In particular, they need to share their knowledge with colleagues across the school.

We believe the goals for the careers leader programme training should be to ensure a careers leader can:

- Develop and integrate a whole-school approach to careers provision. This should be based on analysis of school need, critical evaluation of recommended practices and prioritisation of the most appropriate short and long-term aims for each individual school.
- Monitor, evaluate and review individual interventions and the whole-school career programme in order to assess impact and effectiveness, and ensure continuous improvement.
- Provide effective leadership to influence school-wide change and ensure careers learning is integrated across the school and teaching practice.
- Deliver effective management processes (including resource management) to drive change in a school so that all pupils have access to high-quality careers provision.
- Develop and manage partnerships with a range of internal and external stakeholders, including local businesses and volunteers.

Based on our pilot, we think the training element can be boiled down to six face-to-face core modules (totalling seven days, mostly one per half-term), with online and self-directed support or twilight content to enable learners to personalise to their school. The spread of the modules at intervals across a year is crucial. This gives participants the time to apply what they learn in their own school context between modules. This is the approach that research tells us is best practice in professional development, and what we have found through experience.

## Alice Coates' experience of the Teach First pilot Careers Leader Programme

"When I started at Appleton Academy there was already someone leading careers provision in the school, but unfortunately they didn't have the capacity to implement a school wide strategy. Instead it was targeted only at students in certain years. This meant some pupils were missing out on support and we weren't able to plan for the what help the pupils needed over the duration of their time in the school."

"Luckily, the school had identified these problems and were keen to make some changes, so chose to participate in the pilot of Teach First's Careers and Employability Leadership Programme (CELP) and chose me to lead it. This was a really positive experience for both me and the school – as the training as helped us to design and evaluate a careers programme for each year group, resulting in a positive impact for all our pupils.

"The careers team now run teacher training lessons in the school and as a result teachers now approach the careers team to discuss how to use careers and employability to make their lessons more engaging. We're also really focused on getting businesses into the school to inspire the students, have careers fairs and organise residential trips to universities. It's also been great to also be trained to understand more about the benchmarks, so we can properly evaluate the careers work we're doing and guide us in the future.

"It's also been amazing to see wider awareness of the value of careers across both the senior leadership team and the other teachers in the school. We did a questionnaire at the start and the end of the programme and one of the biggest differences was the increased value that the Senior Leadership Team are now placing on careers provisions."

"A key consideration for us now is to ensure that the current careers provision is sustainable and would continue without the present careers team. We are working to involve more teachers and NQTs in careers and embedding a clear schedule of regular activities."

A careers leader programme is as much a school improvement programme for careers provision as it is a training course for a careers middle leaders.

Depth of training is crucial, but it requires significant commitment on the part of schools. Senior leaders must be

committed to the process and give careers provision – and the careers leader – the time and profile needed for this to be a success. The evidence shows that, where careers provision is effectively realised, it tends to be dependent on strong direction from the school's senior leadership.<sup>31</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

**Every careers middle leader should be comprehensively trained for the role and Government should invest in seed funding to enable training to be rolled-out nationally.**

**Delivering training to a careers middle leader in every state secondary school would cost £31.06 million over four years.**

**Training must be one to two days each half term, over the course of a year, with time to implement learning between modules. Careers middle leaders must be trained to develop the leadership skills and expertise required for the role and know how to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks in practice. A senior leader in each school must support training and attend some modules.**

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

**Careers middle leaders must be given time out of school to complete training.**

**To enable teachers to have time away from school we urge the Government to invest £5.8 million in supply teacher cover.**

This is the core of a plan for developing careers leaders for every school. But how do we know it will work?

## 6. How do we know this training for careers leaders will work?

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Our proposals for training careers middle leaders are built on the underpinning research, delivery and evaluation of our own careers leader programme pilots. Our pilot scheme has been delivered in 15 schools serving low-income communities, educating disadvantaged young people who are most in need of high-quality careers provision.

All the pilot schools designed a high-quality whole-school careers strategy as a result of the programme, and made strong progress in achieving the benchmarks. At the start of the programme all participants were asked to rate how far their schools met each of the eight Gatsby benchmarks, which was then compared to a final assessment to measure their progress against each benchmark.<sup>32</sup>

As shown in Figure 5, the greatest progress across all the benchmarks is the shift from 'some' to 'competent' practice. This is particularly evident for the 'a stable careers programme' and 'addressing the needs of each pupil' benchmarks. The 'linking curriculum to careers' benchmark remains the most challenging for schools to deliver, although all schools are at least providing 'some' practice in this area post programme. Our ideas for addressing this benchmark are covered in Chapter 8.

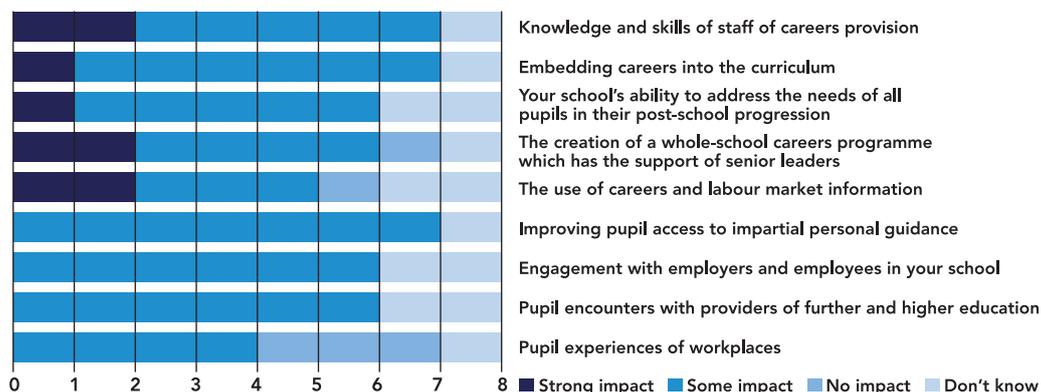
Figure 6 shows the impact the pilot programme had on schools' provision six months after the end of the pilot. In addition, schools were asked about the impact of their school's participation in the Teach First pilot on pupils<sup>33</sup>:

- Five out of seven schools noted that participation had an impact on pupils' future career choices.
- One school noted that participation had an impact on pupils' subject choices.
- Six schools noted that participation had an impact on pupils' skills and aspirations.
- Two schools noted that participation had an impact on pupil progression.

Figure 5: Schools on Teach First pilot programme self-assessment for each benchmark at November reassessment and June/July final assessment

Benchmarks		Not currently addressing	Some practice	Competent	V Competent	Outstanding
A stable careers programme	November	1	10	4	0	0
	June/July	0	4	10	1	0
Learning from career and labour market information (LMI)	November	4	7	3	1	0
	June/July	2	8	4	1	0
Addressing the needs of each pupil	November	0	7	4	4	0
	June/July	0	2	9	3	1
Linking curriculum learning to careers	November	2	8	5	0	0
	June/July	0	10	4	1	0
Encounters with employers and employees	November	2	2	8	1	2
	June/July	0	2	7	4	2
Experiences of workplaces	November	0	6	4	3	2
	June/July	0	3	5	4	3
Encounters with further and higher education	November	0	4	5	4	2
	June/July	0	0	8	5	2
Personal guidance	November	0	6	2	3	4
	June/July	0	2	7	2	4

Figure 6: Number of schools on Teach First pilot programme indicating that participation had an impact on elements of provision



On an individual level, 100% of the careers leaders in our first-year pilot say they would recommend the programme to other schools. They credited the programme with making them think more strategically, feel more confident in their knowledge of careers provision and able to positively influence others.<sup>34</sup>

Having piloted this programme in 2015/16, and as we work through a second phase of piloting an improved programme, there are three things that stand out as key lessons from the front line for any potential programme.

Firstly, to reemphasise the research, we have found in practice that commitment from senior leaders in each school is key. This programme is ultimately about changing culture and practice across a whole school, which is impossible without the support of senior leaders.

Secondly, there is at least one important but immeasurable benefit of bringing together the group of middle leaders for training – the sense of community it creates. As these teachers tackle similar problems in different schools, getting to know each other and becoming a

support network has been a valuable boost in driving change, and in the longer term a thriving community of careers leaders is vital for supporting the status of the role and the sharing of ideas. It could be explored if some of the training could be delivered through distance or online learning, but face to face interaction is key to success.

Finally, our experience of schools' self-evaluation is that they don't know what they don't know. In many cases, after undertaking a module covering a benchmark they had considered a strength, they discover that, in retrospect, their practice was not as strong as they had believed, and they were able to strengthen it as a result of the training. While there are potentially training approaches whereby schools choose which modules are most important to them for the careers leader to undertake, the benefits of a coherent and comprehensive programme should not be underestimated.

Well-trained careers middle leaders are key to delivering excellent careers provision. The next step is to spread best practice to more schools.

## 7. How much does it cost to train careers middle leaders?

We commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to estimate the costs of training careers middle leaders. We think every school should have access to a trained careers middle leader and this should be a priority for Government in their forthcoming careers strategy.

Delivering training to a careers middle leader in every state secondary school would cost £31.06 million over four years. If the training is targeted at the third of schools in the most disadvantaged areas, where the need for training is greatest, the estimated cost is £10.49 million.

For every child to attend a secondary school with a trained careers middle leader, the estimated average cost per child would be £12.76.<sup>35</sup>

**FOR EVERY CHILD  
TO ATTEND  
A SCHOOL WITH A  
TRAINED  
CAREERS  
MIDDLE LEADER  
THE COST PER CHILD  
WOULD BE  
£12.76**



If the training is targeted at those third of schools in the most disadvantaged areas, where the need is greatest, the average cost would be £13.05 per child.

### **What is included in the cost of the training?**

The cost of training a careers middle leader includes the design and development of the training programme followed by its delivery, including the expenses incurred. It includes the cost both to schools participating in the training as well as those for the provider.

### **Cost to schools**

The average estimated cost for a school to complete the training is £5,296. This figure is largely the opportunity and time cost of a career middle leader and senior leader preparing for and attending training, over the course of a year. It also includes £1,702 cash cost for a supply teacher to cover and allow the middle leader to be away from school to complete the training.

The cost of a supply teacher cover to enable the training for all state secondary schools would be approximately £5.8 million. We urge government to provide ring-fenced funding for the supply teacher cover to enable schools to

take-up this opportunity. Without additional capacity in schools to improve careers provision progress will stall.

### **Training design, development and delivery**

The cost of designing and developing initial training for each provider is one-off and approximately £73,000. PwC's analysis assumes that delivery would be undertaken by a single provider. If training was rolled-out at national scale and several training providers were needed there would be additional costs, this could include the cost of each provider developing its own programme or of one provider training all the other trainers.

The cost to the training provider of developing the programme includes programme design, resource development, procurement of external expertise including labour market information, recruiting a team to deliver training and set-up of monitoring and evaluation.

To deliver the training to careers middle leaders in the third of schools in the most disadvantaged areas would cost £4.48 million.

Training delivery costs include: marketing the programme, recruiting schools, arranging and facilitating training days, budgeting, quality assurance and follow-up support to schools. Expenses for training delivery include venue hire and catering costs.

The cost of recruitment to the training programme depends upon a range of factors including: awareness of the training provider amongst schools and the financial incentives for schools to participate. Financial incentives might include the cost of supply teachers whilst a middle leader attends the training.

The cost estimates presented here assume national scale roll-out, high awareness and funding to cover the cost of supply teachers. If awareness of the programme is low and or less incentives are available, the costs of recruitment are likely to be higher.

### **Achieving excellence**

Of course, a trained careers middle leader in each secondary school is only the start of the journey to improving careers provision. For the training to be effective time needs to be spent implementing the strategy that is developed. We estimate that it would take a careers middle leader around ten days annually to effectively implement their strategy across a school. This cost is not included in PwC's estimates, as they focus on the cost of training only. We estimate that the ten additional days would cost a school around a £3,780 of the career middle leaders time per year. This is additional to overall costs described.

A trained careers middle leader in each secondary school would help enable schools to effectively engage with employers, take advantage of support from initiatives including The Careers and Enterprise Company and ultimately work towards the benchmarks and ensure every child is gets the support they need to make informed choices .

In 2013 PwC estimated that it would cost a medium sized school £53,637 in the first year and £44,676 from second year onwards to achieve the benchmarks.<sup>36</sup> Much of the cost of achieving the benchmarks is again staff time. For this reason we believe it is vital to invest in capacity in schools to support teachers to succeed and in turn support pupils to achieve their ambitions.

**Accreditation**

Cost estimates are based on an unaccredited route to becoming a careers middle leader. It should be explored if there is value in accrediting careers middle leaders with a qualification. This could provide an excellent opportunity to raise the status of the careers leader role in schools.

**Summary**

At a cost of just £12.76 per year, per child, we believe there is a strong case for having a trained careers middle leader in every secondary school, as we know it can have significant impact on a child's life chances.

**£13.06**  
**MILLION**  
**THE TOTAL COST**  
**FOR EVERY SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
**TO HAVE A TRAINED**  
**CAREERS**  
**MIDDLE**  
**LEADER**

## 8. What more is needed to improve careers provision in schools?

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Every school needs a careers leader, but every member of staff has a role to play, and so does wider society.

Schools require someone with the expertise, leadership skills and capacity to develop a school-wide careers strategy. However, responsibility for delivering the strategy must be shared by all staff, particularly for ensuring careers education is taught through the curriculum. School leaders must buy-in to and support every member of staff to make careers education a priority.

To make this approach a reality careers middle leader should deliver training to existing leaders in their school on how they can each play a role in achieving the benchmarks.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

**All school leaders should undertake training to be equipped to play their role in supporting the delivery of careers provision in school.**

**Existing school leaders should be trained by their school's careers leader and all leadership training should include a careers component.**

New teachers must all be equipped for the role they will play in supporting children to make choices about their future. Training on careers should be delivered during the NQT year. Schools

are well placed to provide this training, introducing teachers to this part of their job as they develop. Training must be in line with their own school's approach to careers learning, relevant to their local context.

Training for new teachers should focus on benchmark 4, linking curriculum learning to careers, something teachers can adopt as part of their daily practice.

Support for this work must go beyond the school gates with groups including governors, employers and Regional Schools Commissioners providing advocacy and resource to ensure great careers provision is available to all children.

It is clear there is a need for careers middle leaders to enable wider change. But training is currently uncommon and infrequently of high quality. A career middle leader apprenticeship route could

potentially provide a source of long term funding for this training. With many schools paying the apprenticeship levy they should have access to this investment to improve the skills of their staff. Higher level apprenticeships could provide a way of accrediting the programme and developing a highly skilled workforce. This could also lead to increased status of the importance and expertise of the role.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**Various routes to becoming a careers middle leader must be available to support the needs of different pupils, schools and individuals. A high quality apprenticeship route to becoming a careers middle leader should be developed and made available to experienced school staff.**

## 9. Conclusion and recommendations

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Careers and employability learning is a key part of a successful education system, but it is currently not often given the resources and focus it needs to be good enough. In many cases careers provision is perceived as a bolt-on once schools have raised standards in attainment. But preparing young people for life after school should be the driving force within our education system, and we know that good careers provision can support academic attainment and wider school improvement too.

These are our recommendations for change:

### RECOMMENDATION 1

All schools should have a trained careers middle leader.

Their role is to develop and lead a careers and employability strategy for their whole school.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

Every careers middle leader should be comprehensively trained for the role and Government should invest in seed funding to enable training to be rolled-out nationally.

Delivering training to a careers middle leader in every state secondary school would cost £31.06 million over four years.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Careers middle leaders must be given time out of school to complete training.

To enable teachers to have time away from school we urge the Government to invest £5.8 million ring-fenced funding for supply teacher cover.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

All school leaders should undertake training to be equipped to play their role in supporting the delivery of careers provision in school.

Existing school leaders should be trained by their school's careers leader and all leadership training should include a careers component.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

**Various routes to becoming a careers middle leader must be available to support the needs of different pupils, schools and individuals.**

**A high quality apprenticeship route to becoming a careers middle leader should be developed and made available to experienced school staff.**

The Secretary of State for Education must harness the forthcoming Careers Strategy as an opportunity to turn words into action by bringing together Government, employers, schools and the third sector to improve careers provision and ensure every child has the support they need to achieve their ambitions.

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**[teachfirst.org.uk/challenge](https://teachfirst.org.uk/challenge)**

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