



GATSBY

# Good Career Guidance: The Next Ten Years

AUTUMN 2023 UPDATE

## OVERVIEW

This briefing provides an update on the Gatsby Foundation's work on securing the next ten years of career guidance for young people. Given the changes to education and the labour market that have taken place since our original *Good Career Guidance report in 2014*<sup>1</sup>, we believe the time is right to hear from the sector and revisit this work to ensure the Gatsby Benchmarks continue to have impact in the future.

As part of an extensive research programme including literature reviews, roundtables and visits, we carried out a national consultation survey completed by over 1,200 education and business stakeholders. It found:

- The Gatsby Benchmarks are universally supported - **94% see them as a valuable framework for career guidance.**
- Every Benchmark is highly valued as part of the overall framework - **the value placed on each of the eight Benchmarks individually ranges from 96% to 99%.**
- The vast majority (**88%**) of secondary school and college leaders say that the Benchmarks have had a positive impact on their students.

These findings, together with all the other evidence we have seen, have encouraged us to focus on stability. The Benchmarks are highly respected and are having an impact. We have therefore concluded that radical changes to the Benchmarks are not needed. But we have heard the extensive feedback and suggestions from the sector. Our work over the next few months will focus on reviewing the evidence and considering and consulting on any evolution of the Benchmarks to ensure we can secure even more impact for young people over the next decade.

## BACKGROUND

Gatsby is committed to ensuring all young people, whatever their background, have access to good career guidance. In 2014 we published *Good Career Guidance*, a report based on international evidence which introduced the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. These Benchmarks describe the elements needed for world-class career guidance. They are now the bedrock of career guidance in England, embedded in Government strategy, and over 90% of schools and colleges in England use the Careers & Enterprise Company's Compass tool to measure their progress against the framework. Since their national adoption steady and positive progress has been made, with schools and colleges reaching an average of 5.5 out of 8 Benchmarks (compared to 1.8 in 2017)<sup>2</sup>.

Recent publications from the Education Select Committee<sup>3</sup> and Ofsted<sup>4</sup> both reflect these improvements in careers guidance and the impact of the Benchmarks. Most importantly, achieving the Benchmarks has a tangible impact on young people's outcomes, with many more leaving education with increased career readiness<sup>5</sup>. Data also shows that when schools meet all eight Benchmarks they can expect 10% more students to make a successful transition into further education, training or employment, compared to if no Benchmarks are achieved. This effect doubles to 20% in schools with the most disadvantaged students<sup>6</sup>.

However, we know that a lot has changed in both education and the labour market since the Benchmarks were published ten years ago. Therefore, the time has been right to assess what, if any, refinements might be needed to ensure that the stability and impact of the Benchmarks continues for the next decade.

### **ACTIVITY SO FAR**

We launched our work in Spring 2023 alongside our academic partner, the University of Derby. We have completed several strands of activity including: an academic literature review, international interviews, a large open consultation (completed by over 1,200 stakeholders), workshops with young people, and many meetings with expert practitioners, employers and sector leaders. We have also visited schools, colleges, training providers and specialist provision, including those supporting young people who may be particularly vulnerable.

### **REFLECTIONS ON THE EVIDENCE**

The Gatsby Benchmarks are universally valued, with 94% of stakeholders (from education and business) agreeing that the Benchmarks are a strong framework for career guidance. Furthermore, each of the eight Benchmarks is considered to be individually important as part of the overall framework, with the value placed on each ranging from 96% to 99%.

The framework is also having impact on young people, with 88% of senior leaders in schools and colleges stating that the Benchmarks have had an impact on their students. Through our visits, workshops and separate national research by Youth Employment UK<sup>7</sup>, young people have told us that while refinements could be made, many have experienced improved career guidance over the years.



“WHEN I WAS MUCH YOUNGER (LIKE STARTING THIS SCHOOL), I THOUGHT BEING EXPECTED TO CHOOSE A CAREER WOULD BE TOO MUCH PRESSURE. OVER THE YEARS, MY SCHOOL HAS SHOWN ME THE BEST WAY TO FIND OUT ABOUT A CAREER IS TO MEET PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING IT, FIND OUT ABOUT THEIR JOURNEY AND THEN GO AND EXPERIENCE IT FOR MYSELF.”



A SECONDARY SCHOOL SIXTH FORM STUDENT

There is more to be done to ensure every young person experiences world-class career guidance, but we are confident that radical changes to the Benchmarks are not needed. They are widely used, deemed useful and are having impact. We now have a system where everyone from education, to business, to parents and carers, has a shared language for career guidance. Our evidence has encouraged us to focus on stability.

We have, however, heard lots of feedback about how we might do this. For example, connecting the Benchmarks into the whole school or college strategy – at the most senior level – is essential, and provision should be tailored to the needs of every student, including those who are most vulnerable. We are reflecting on how we can share these messages more clearly in the framework and supporting materials.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Over the rest of 2023 we will reflect on all of our evidence, and what refinements we might make to the Benchmarks, with expert practitioners and sector leaders. We will also consider how best to highlight the excellent practice being developed across the country. We will be publishing our final report in Autumn 2024, including our key research reports and case studies.

We have been inspired by the generosity of everyone we have engaged with in this project; taking the time to meet with us, respond to consultations and share experiences and ideas for the future. If you would like to be kept up to date on the progress of this work, please email [careerguidance@gatsby.org.uk](mailto:careerguidance@gatsby.org.uk) to be added to our stakeholder mailing list. We are also keen to see good practice in action, so please let us know if you have examples you would like to share.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>
- 2 <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/3grczffq/insight-briefing-gatsby-benchmark-results-2022-2023.pdf>
- 3 <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/40610/documents/198034/default/>
- 4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-careers-guidance-in-schools-and-further-education-and-skills-providers>
- 5 <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/news/young-people-s-career-readiness-rising-as-result-of-careers-education/>
- 6 Percy, C. & Tanner, E. (2021). *The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.
- 7 <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-2023-report.pdf>