



Department for Education Careers Strategy

On 4 December 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) launched its 'Careers Strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents'. This long awaited report outlines the government's approach to raising the quality of careers advice at all ages and levels, with policies aimed at primary, secondary and adult education.

Overview

Feeding into the government's Industrial Strategy, the government's Careers Strategy is an important step in preparing Londoners and the UK for the demands of the future job market as well as addressing skills shortages in many sectors today. Changing the perceptions of technical routes with access to quality and locally relevant information is vital for enabling Londoners to make informed choices about their skills development and career objectives.

Analysis

Careers Strategy Content

There are five main elements contained within the Careers Strategy, summarised below:

1. **A dedicated Careers Leader in every school and college:** By September 2018, a named Careers Leader will be expected to lead the careers programme in every school and college in the UK. The government will provide £4 million to fund training programmes and support at least 500 schools to develop specialist knowledge of careers in schools and colleges. Schools will also be required to give providers of technical education and apprenticeships the opportunity to talk to students about these pathways.
2. **Twenty Careers Hubs, underpinned by £5 million of investment:** To deliver improvements in social mobility, the government will test 20 'Careers Hubs' by September 2018. Supported by additional coordinators based at the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), the Careers Hubs will link schools, colleges and universities with community organisations. Hub activities will deliver targeted support to young people in areas identified as having particularly acute disadvantages. The strategy does not define or designate these areas at this stage.

3. **Meaningful interactions between business and secondary schools:** Secondary school students will be expected to have a minimum of seven interactions with employers while at secondary school. This will be supported by CEC Enterprise Advisers, who will assist in delivering inspiring employer encounters. By 2020, an Enterprise Adviser will be available to all secondary schools and colleges as a point of labour market expertise and advice.
4. **Piloting careers activities in primary schools:** Early access to careers advice is seen as particularly important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds in raising aspiration and understanding of how their school subjects connect to their future. Starting in 2018, a £2 million fund will be used to test what careers activities work well in primary schools with the results shared widely.
5. **Specialist support and advice for all ages and skill levels, particularly for those with additional needs and long-term unemployment:** The government wishes to ensure that schools, young people and their parents, and adults looking to reskill or retrain, are clear about the opportunities offered by technical, employment-focused education. A new National Careers Service website will be launched in 2018, developed with industry experts, to give a clear expectation of the salary, qualifications and experience required to enter and progress in any given career. Particular skills shortages are also addressed as part of this, with £34 million dedicated to expand construction training programmes.

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Adoption of the Gatsby Career benchmarks:

All schools and colleges will be expected to develop and improve their careers services based on the ‘world class standard’ identified by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. The Careers Strategy has adopted the Gatsby Career benchmarks as the foundation of their approach to school/college careers provision. While schools are encouraged to adopt these benchmarks, this is not checked or monitored at this stage. The government will publish statutory guidance in January 2018 setting out how to meet the following eight benchmarks, which put employers at the heart of careers programmes:

1. A stable careers programme - *Embedded, known and understood.*
2. Learning from career and labour market information - *About future study options and labour market opportunities.*
3. Addressing the needs of each student- *Tailored advice and support, with equality and diversity considered.*
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers- *Linking careers to the curriculum, particularly in STEM subjects.*
5. Encounters with employers and employees - *Opportunities to learn first-hand the skills valued in the workplace.*
6. Experience of workplaces - *For every student, through visits, shadowing and other explorations of opportunities.*
7. Encounters with further and higher education - *All students understanding the full range of learning opportunities available.*
8. Personal Guidance - *One-to-one guidance with a careers adviser, available to every student.*

Commentary

It is expected that schools and colleges will start adopting the Gatsby benchmarks from January 2018. The Careers Strategy has a timetable to achieve full implementation by 2020. The timetable is provided in detail as Appendix 1.

The careers strategy makes some important commitments to provide targeted careers support that is both tailored to the individual and their local labour market. There is also recognition of the critical role the Mayor has in facilitating links between employers and local careers advice. London Councils has long made the case to central government that careers information, advice and guidance in London is patchy and inconsistent. The system is highly centralised, which has left London with few tools to address specific issues in recent years. It is vital therefore that the implementation of this strategy ensures accurate advice for individuals and consistent service across London.

In recent years there has been an emphasis on university as a progression route from schools and colleges, which has not been optimal for developing the skills pipeline London requires in industries such as construction and engineering. London students also need effective information on growing sectors such as digital and tech, life sciences and creative industries. It has also left young people in some cases without sufficient information to make an informed choice about their future and career options.

London's youth unemployment rate remains three and a half times greater than London's overall unemployment rate; demonstrating careers advice is not matching the needs of the local labour market. As part of the development of apprenticeships within the London public sector, London Councils welcomes the fact that providers of technical education and apprenticeships will have the opportunity to talk to students. Mandating schools and colleges to diversify careers advice should allow young people to be better informed when making decisions about their route into further education, incoming T-levels, employment, or an apprenticeship.

London boroughs, schools and colleges will also welcome a system with greater coordination. Recent work by London Councils, the GLA, and the LEP identified more than 240 careers providers and/or services in London. This is a lot for a single careers adviser based in a school to track, and even harder for a young person and/or parent. London Ambitions, developed by London Councils in partnership with the GLA and industry, was created with the aim of shaping a successful careers offer for young people that provides them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their future. We are glad that this close link between careers advice and employers is being considered as part of a national strategy.

London Councils will continue to push and advocate for devolved powers that allow London government to address the needs of local communities and business. The government's careers strategy draws some parallels with the Mayor of London's draft Skills Strategy published in November 2017, including the shared priority of empowering all Londoners to access education and skills to participate in society and progress into education and work, as well as meeting the needs of London's economy and employers now and in the future. However, the CEC will coordinate the national response to careers advice, which does not align with our ambition to deliver strategic, city-wide improvement in progression pathways for students and improving access to information for learners that enables them to make informed decisions about their future. Enabling a more locally responsive careers strategy would make better use of resources and provide a more effective service for Londoners.

London will have devolved adult skills and employment provision by 2019 enabling them to align local services to support individuals in a way that cannot be achieved by national government. Currently, there is duplication of careers services across the CEC, schools and Job Centre Plus. London Councils argues that devolving responsibility in a similar way to skills and employment provision will strip out this duplication and provide a more holistic and effective service for all Londoners. London Councils will work with the GLA and London boroughs to understand, as the two strategies develop, how they can be best aligned to

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achieve improved outcomes for Londoners of all ages and skill levels.

One other aspect of the new policy that will be welcomed by London boroughs is the government's consideration of making PSHE (Physical, Social and Health Education) mandatory in schools. Boroughs have long been arguing that careers and skills strategies require attention on 'softer' social skills and not solely skills/qualifications that lead directly into employment if their communities are to achieve the best outcomes for their communities.

Considering the acute pressures on the construction industry in London, London Councils welcomes the £34 million identified in the Careers Strategy for the expansion of construction training programmes, underpinned by broad advice and support for people exploring this career option. £30 million has also been identified for developing digital skills as an early scheme initiative. As these are two large and growing industries for London we will work with government to ensure London can maximise a proportion of this investment.

Going forward, The National Careers Service will offer up-to-date local labour market analysis and use local industrial strategies to inform local economic growth support. We would hope this analysis is coordinated with the GLA and other London partners.

While additional resource for careers provision is welcomed, the question remains as to whether this funding is sufficient. Schools and colleges, while adopting these changes, will not be able to achieve full effectiveness without sufficient resources to provide dedicated careers support locally.

Although there is a greater concentration of opportunities in the capital when compared to the rest of the UK, the gulf between individual's skills and the opportunities available to them locally are some of the largest in the UK. There are many different communities in London with many different needs and priorities. London Councils will continue to push for these considerations to be acknowledged, and to ensure that London local government is empowered to act as flexibly as possible in addressing the needs of its residents and in maximising the opportunities available in its communities.

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Links:

[DfE Skills Strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents](#)
[London Ambitions](#)

This member briefing has been circulated to:

Portfolio holders and those members who requested policy briefings in the following categories: Children and Young People; Economic Development

Appendix 1

Timeline: The following timetable for action has been extracted from the Careers Strategy

Timing	Action
By January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and colleges should use the Gatsby Benchmarks to improve careers provision, as set out in new statutory guidance. • Schools must give providers of technical education and apprenticeships the opportunity to talk to all pupils. • Ofsted must comment in college inspection reports on the careers guidance provided to young people.
By September 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC will launch a new investment fund of £5 million to support the most disadvantaged pupils. • Schools and colleges are expected to publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents. • Job specification and standards for Careers Leaders developed and started to be used by schools and colleges. • A named Careers Leader should lead the careers programme in every school and college. • CEC will begin to take on a broader role across all the Gatsby Benchmarks. • 20 “careers hubs” will be funded by Government and supported by a coordinator from the CEC. • Government sponsors two UK Career Development Awards for 2018
During 2018 and 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC triples the number of cornerstone employers committing to work with schools and colleges across the country, including Opportunity Areas, to 150. • New approaches to careers provision are tested and evaluated, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>encourage young people, especially girls, to consider jobs in science, technology, engineering and maths;</i> • <i>understand what careers activities work well in primary schools;</i> • <i>improve careers information, advice and guidance for young people and adults who are disadvantaged or vulnerable.</i> • CEC will provide tools to help schools and colleges meet the Gatsby Benchmarks. • Careers Leaders training funded for 500 schools and colleges. (Note, there are over 3000 secondary schools and 300 FE colleges in the UK) • Clear information about T levels is provided to parents, teachers, young people and careers professionals. • Guidance will ask universities to do more to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds to make good use of their careers services. • New contracts for the National Careers Service in place. • Results from the Career Learning Pilots collected and evaluated. • New standardised application forms tested to make it easier for young people to apply to further education. • Data on student destinations widely available and easily understandable by people of all ages.
By end 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools and colleges will have access to an Enterprise Adviser. • Schools should offer every young person seven encounters with employers - at least one each year from years 7 to 13 – with support from the CEC. Some of these encounters should be with STEM employers. • A new, improved National Careers Service website will include all of the information to help citizens make informed choices.