



# Evaluation of the Careers Leader Training

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## Institute for Employment Studies

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# Contents

<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Key Findings: .....	4
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1.1 Career guidance in England: Recent policy and practice .....	8
1.2 The birth of Careers Leadership .....	10
1.3 About the study .....	11
1.3.1 <i>Research Questions</i> .....	11
1.3.2 <i>Method</i> .....	12
<b>2 The Careers Leader training programme</b> .....	<b>16</b>
2.1 Background .....	16



Careers Leader: School	Responsible and accountable for the delivery of their school's programme of career advice and guidance.
Careers Leader: Operational	College Careers Leadership may be separated into operational and strategic leadership . operational leadership tasks might be done by more junior Careers Leaders such as department heads and includes the day-to-day running and reporting on the careers programme.
Careers Leader: Strategic	The strategic leadership tasks will be done by a leadership team, which includes managing the budget and other staff.
CDI framework	A structure for designing, delivering and assessing the school/college careers programme, from the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector.
Compass	An online tool provided by The Careers & Enterprise Company to support schools and colleges to evaluate their careers activity against the Gatsby Benchmarks.
CPD	Continuing professional development.
Enterprise Adviser	A volunteer from local business, who supports a school or college with the development of their careers programme.
Enterprise Coordinator	Locally based professional funded by The Careers & Enterprise Company and the local LEP working with schools, colleges and employers in local clusters to improve careers activities.





**Awareness of the course:** Interviewees were made aware of the training through a range of means, but their connections to The Careers & Enterprise Company and their local Careers Hub were particularly critical.

**Motivation to take part in the training:** Careers Leaders wanted to understand the role,







alongside their Careers Leader role), which impacted on the time they had for the training.

The pitch of the course also created some challenges for participants. Providers and Careers Leaders themselves described how some participants struggled with the academic requirement of the Level 6 and Level 7 accredited courses.

Those that took part in the qualitative research have the right motivations to improve teaching and assessment practice. They see the value in change and are committed and driven to achieving good outcomes for learners.

Finally, the report makes a number of recommendations, directed at government, The Careers & Enterprise Company, providers, and schools and colleges.

**Government:**

Continue to support Careers Leaders in school and colleges.

Ensure that funding remains available to train Careers Leaders.

**The Careers & Enterprise Company:**

Continue to fund both accredited and unaccredited programme.

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# 1

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## 1.1

The current period of career guidance policy began in 2014 with the publication of the *Good Career Guidance*<sup>1</sup> and the announcement of The Careers & Enterprise Company.<sup>2</sup> Following the establishment of a new career guidance system and subsequent funding reductions and de-emphasis of the area, the Gatsby Benchmarks offered a new and evidenced based framework.<sup>3</sup> From 2014 the focus was on the implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks and the practice of The Careers & Enterprise Company.<sup>4</sup>

In 2017, the Government published a new careers strategy which gave official backing to a more ambitious role, building on their progress to date by coordinating support for schools and colleges. The focus on the Gatsby Benchmarks was then operationalised through an update of the statutory guidance issued to schools and colleges which stated that all schools and colleges should use the benchmarks and that all schools and colleges should have a careers programme.

### The Gatsby Benchmarks

1. A stable careers programme. Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.

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<sup>1</sup> Gatsby Charitable Foundation. (2014).



schools working towards or having achieved the Gatsby Benchmarks;  
operating in line with the statutory guidance on careers advice, eg a copy of the careers programme on the school website.

The Careers & Enterprise Company also introduced a series of Careers Hubs in 2018 which drew on a model originally developed in the Gatsby pilot project to provide local support for schools and colleges implementing the benchmarks and bring collections of schools and colleges together.



Careers Leaders to establish themselves in a leadership position within their school or college and successfully implement a Gatsby-inspired careers programme.







	Academy (secondary) boarding	1
	UTC	1
Management position	Middle	33
	Senior	18
	Multi-site	1
Total		52

\* At the time of interview

Source: IES, 2020

### Senior Leaders

The evaluation also included interviews with senior leadership colleagues of Careers Leaders. The aim of these interviews was to understand how the training has impacted on the school or college, and also to situate the findings in the unique context of the Careers Leaders. Further to this, 18 of the Careers Leaders that took part in the research were members of their school or college senior leadership teams, providing additional insights from a senior perspective.

## 2

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### 2.1

A key component of the introduction of Careers Leadership into English schools and colleges has been the provision of training and resources for Careers Leaders

## 2.2

The Careers & Enterprise Company led the development of a training specification and established a fund to enable a wide range of providers to offer Careers Leader training. Although the original funding was intended to train 500 Careers Leaders, demand for the provision was greater than expected. A second tranche of funding was announced, which meant that the Careers Leader funding ultimately provided 1,300 places for Careers Leaders across England.<sup>25</sup>

The Careers Leader funding covered the cost of the training which was offered to Careers Leaders for free and a £1,000 bursary which the Careers Leaders school or college could claim upon successful completion of the training. This bursary could be used for covering travel and subsistence costs; for paying for teaching cover; for careers-related activity at a later date; or for any other activity that the school deemed to be appropriate.

In contracting the provision, The Careers & Enterprise Company aimed to provide access to both local and national provision for Careers Leaders across the country and to allow Careers Leaders to choose among a range of different delivery options. The funding was also designed to give Careers Leaders the choice between non-accredited and accredited training with accreditation offered at both Level 6 and Level 7. The programme is currently being rolled out across England by 14 training providers with different backgrounds and approaches. In addition to the face

Discuss key aspects of career theory and how these apply to the design of a school or college.

Describe a range of different education and employment routes, and make use of career and labour market information.

Discuss and apply relevant policies and frameworks for practice.

Describe how to keep the careers provision up to date.

Articulate and adopt the principles of good leadership and management, and consider how these can apply to leading careers provision in a school or college.

Describe and perform the key roles and attributes that comprise careers leadership.

Develop as a Careers Leader and develop the programme in the light of reflection, evaluation and new evidence.

The Careers & Enterprise Company also supported the training with a three-stage quality assurance process. At development stage this was to review the training programmes to ensure they would meet the above learning outcomes. During delivery observations of delivery took place and the Company kept providers up-to-date with regular updates to resources. The Careers & Enterprise Company also supported the review of the quality of the training by conducting a skills audit survey and collating feedback.

## 2.3

The 14 providers came from a range of different sectors:

Seven were career specialists















wide range of factors influencing choices indicates how the flexibility offered across the programme was appreciated, and usually allowed individuals to find a course that suited them. Key factors included the following.

Convenience in terms of **location** and transport links was often a primary factor in choices. Here interviewees talked about the importance of central locations, locations that were easy to drive to or close to train stations. This meant interviewees often attended courses within an easy commuting distance, and so could be learning alongside people they already knew which was regarded as a benefit. A few interviewees chose courses much further away (that offered other factors that were important to them) and felt they benefited from mixing with others from outside of their locale:

*'I wanted to go to a different area, to not see the same faces that I normally interact with at training days etc., to get a broader understanding of what other practice looks like. So I was really open for travel to meet others.'*

Careers Leader, L6, Accredited, in progress, SEND Academy

**Level** and whether the course was accredited or not (see below), also tended to be a key and over-riding factor in the choice of course.

Convenience in terms of **delivery times and methods**/channels and thus fit with other commitments and expectations. The choice for participants included weekend delivery, full day or half day or two back-to-back days (in addition to the online only training). Face-to-face delivery was particularly appealing to interviewees (reflect

worked with the training providers before in some capacity and were aware of their standards.

**Word of mouth.** A small number of interviewees spoke to colleagues in other schools and colleges and were recommended a course.

Mix and/or **balance of practical training and theoretical underpinning.** Some were particularly attracted to the practical aspects, such as developing action plans, whereas others found the theoretical work appealing (enabling a deeper understanding of career guidance). One interviewee noted:

*'I thought the training would be really applied and practical that I could take back into the role. I thought, being a new role [...] that the training would be more training, rather than just regurgitating facts and figures and being totally irrelevant to the role. I had hopes it would be sharing of ideas, sharing of specifics, something that would help me in my role, my school and ultimately help the students in their careers.'*

Careers Leader, L6, Accredited, in progress, Secondary Academy

### Importance of fee waiver and bursary

The fact that the training was free of charge and offered a bursary was often promoted to Careers Leaders interviewees by their Careers Hub or training providers. For the vast majority of these interviewees this helped make the training attractive and accessible, and could act as a major motivator (or facilitator) to take up.

The Careers Leader interviewees noted how the fee waiver was important and indeed for many even essential, as there tended to be limited or no money/budget for external training or for careers work. This was in a context where school and college budgets were often strained. This meant that without the waiver individuals might have had to pay for it themselves (making such CPD prohibitive) and/or would have struggled to get senior level sign off. The waiver was important; although Senior Leadership Teams might feel the training would be useful, the training was not perceived as mandatory. No Careers Leader interviewee indicated with certainty that they would have been able to do the training had it not been free.

One interviewee noted that they had been a 'very early' adopter and signed up to the training as soon as they heard about it. They noted how they had been turned down for training previously because it had not been funded, and the school did not have the budget to pay for such a high cost course.

*'They just couldn't invest in that lump sum, it would have had to come out of the careers budget and the call just wouldn't have been made to take it away from students to spend on developing myself'*

Careers Leader, L6, Accredited, Spring complete, Secondary Academy

The £1,000 bursary was also highly important for a large group of interviewees. For many this bursary was less critical than the fee waiver, so acted as a bonus and added attraction rather than an essential requirement for participation. This appears to be largely driven by the timing of payment (on completion of training). The bursary (or promise of the



## 3

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This chapter



through their local Careers Hub, local E



**Figure 2 To what extent the training met their expectations**

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*The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020*

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**Quality teaching**

In the interviews training providers from all specialisms highlighted quality teaching as a major strength of their delivery. Training providers reported that delivery staff were qualified and experienced teachers with strong groundings in the field. This allowed them to deliver the training effectively to Careers Leaders from diverse backgrounds and ensured that the training met all learning outcomes. Training provider interviews also suggested that quality training staff enhanced other effective elements of delivery, such as peer learning and effective support for Careers Leaders.

This view was mirrored in Career Leader interviews, with Careers Leaders commonly



understanding and improving practice. Peer learning was identified by some participants as particularly useful in this training due to the nature of the Careers Leader role.

Mirroring training provider views, Careers Leaders appreciated that peer learning could overcome some of the isolation of the role, and helped them to understand and define what it meant to be a Careers Leader. Many Careers Leaders noted that peer support was facilitated in face-to-face sessions through group work and class discussions, with some highlighting the role of delivery staff in making peer learning successful. This was identified as a source of engagement during face-to-face teaching by Careers Leaders.

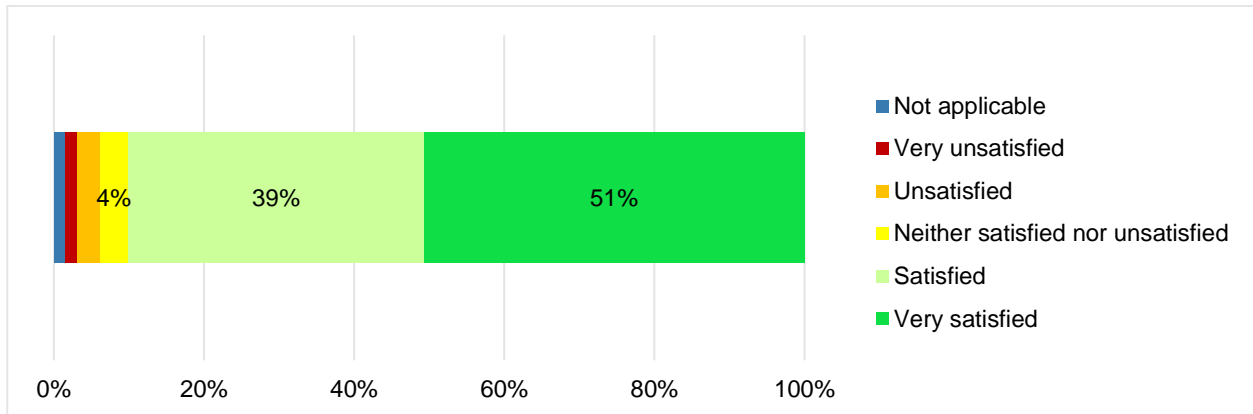
Careers Leaders of all levels of experience valued peer learning and highlighted it a strength of the training. **Old hands** were most likely to name peer learning as the main strength of the course, whereas for **newbies** and **careers specialists** this was secondary to course content and quality teaching staff. As with training providers, Careers Leaders noted that the diverse mix of training participants enabled this successful peer learning, while a few also noted that attending training outside of their region enabled them to meet new people and removed the pressure of competition, allowing them to be more open when sharing experiences (reflected in their decision making about which course to choose, as noted above).

### Delivery Method

Another strength of the training that was identified by both training providers and Careers Leaders was the mixed delivery method. The training courses were predominantly delivered through a mix of face-to-face teaching days and independent learning, often facilitated through online platforms. Most providers found this delivery method effective, with many naming it as a main strength of their delivery. A number of training providers highlighted that the mixed delivery allowed them to be flexible to the diverse needs of learners. Providers reported that the face-to-face element allowed for interaction and peer learning, which some identified as a key source of engagement for Careers Leaders. Online elements and independent learning helped to make the training more accessible, especially as many Careers Leaders had (or chose) to travel to attend face-to-face sessions. Most providers reported that they had blended these elements well to deliver a coherent course that is flexible to participant needs.

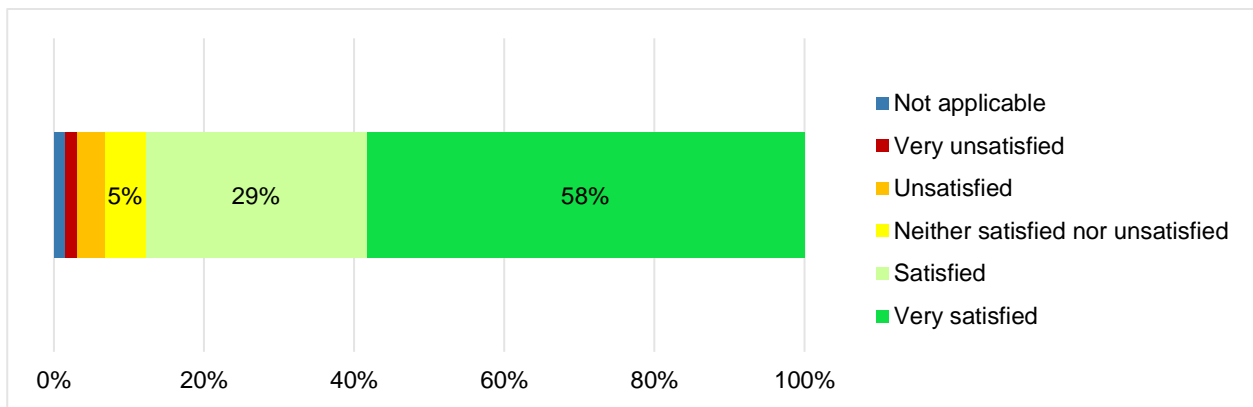
In the skills audit, the training programme structure, delivery and number of contact hours were all well received: 90 per cent of participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with the training programme; 87 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied with the delivery of the training programme; and, 84 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied with the number of contact hours, as seen below.

**Figure 4 Training programme structure**



*The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020*

**Figure 5 The delivery of the training programme (ie pace and length)**



*The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020*

**Figure 6 Number of contact hours (ie training delivered face-to-face)**



*The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020*



accessible, with many reporting that their previous qualifications and experience helped them to understand theory and meet academic expectations. Some **newbies**, without this background, initially found the course challenging, but with support from their peers and training staff most learned a lot and ultimately said the training was pitched at a good level.

### **Support from training providers**

As well as quality teaching, many training providers identified support provided by delivery staff as a strength of delivery. Most training providers reported that their participants were happy with the support that they provided, with many receiving positive feedback around support given. This support primarily took the form of one-to-one support from delivery staff, both through scheduled tutorials and informally through phone and email. Training providers said that this was successful as it allowed support to be personal and tailored. HEIs also provided support through their institutional resources, for example through student support services, and resources supporting academic skills. For careers based training providers, support was provided primarily via the tutor, so support offered would depend on individuals. One careers based provider assigned each participant an assessor to provide one-to-





This largely seemed to depend on personal preference. However, most Careers Leaders preferred to receive resources in advance of taught sessions so that they could prepare.

The skills audit data relating to quality of training materials again shows high levels of satisfaction, with 89 per cent of participants either satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the materials.

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**Figure 10 The quality of the training materials provided**

*The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020*

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**Accessibility**

The majority of Careers Leaders reported that the training was accessible in terms of

### Support from schools and colleges

Careers Leaders were prompted in the interviews to report on the level of support received from their school/college. This was less apparent than support received from providers and peers (in terms of the number of mentions in the interviews and level of detail provided) but it appeared that most Careers Leaders had received some degree of support from their school/college. Careers Leaders generally were given time in their role to attend taught training sessions, with some schools and colleges arranging cover for contact hours where needed. Some Careers Leaders also received time in their role to work on assignments. Most of these Careers Leaders had a number of non-contact hours, and flexibility and control over their timetable. However, all Careers Leaders worked on the majority of their coursework in their own free time, this was regardless of time in their role to study, particularly to complete assignments. Most reported that they had anticipated this, and were happy to work in their own time.

Line managers were a key source of school support, especially for Careers Leaders in non-senior roles. Line manager support ranged from a generally supportive attitude

The interviews with Careers Leaders indicated that whether the course was accredited or not was a factor in the decision to undertake the training and also factored into decision-making about which provider and course to choose, and Careers Leaders appreciated that there was a choice.

Accredited courses were particularly appealing to Careers Leaders as they were thought to offer quality and a certain standard of learning and thus legitimacy and credibility to the learning and

It is worth noting that some Careers Leader interviewees found the accredited courses challenging as these required additional work (eg projects and assignments) and had an academic focus:

*'I wasn't expecting the course to be as academic as it was, in terms of the level of reading, terminology and assessment'.*

Careers Leader, L6, Accredited, in progress, FE

A few interviewees described how they had initially chosen a non-accredited course but changed their minds and selected an accredited course. In contrast, some interviewees (**old hands**) preferred a non-accredited course, because they felt they did not need a (another) qualification, although they recognised that those earlier on in their career might find accreditation important. Another reason for choosing a non-accredited course was because it might involve less (time) commitment and be less formal.

*'I did the non-accredited course, I am time-poor. I have never been a careers adviser. I just wanted knowledge about how to best do the job. It wasn't about my own career progression or to do other units in the future'.*

Careers Leader, Non-accredited, just complete, Academy Secondary

Additionally Careers Leaders who chose a non-accredited course did so because they felt these courses would be practical and focussed on how to do the Careers Leader role; rather than focused on their own self-development (they had existing careers qualifications).

### 3.4

While there were many positives about the Careers Leaders training, providers and Careers Leaders did report some challenges with the provision . these often were the mirror image (or reverse) of the aspects of effective delivery discussed above. A few providers experienced issues with meeting the expectations of learners . while in the skills audit survey three-quarters (78 per cent) of participants thought the course met or exceeded their expectations, one-fifth (21 per cent) thought that it either did not or only partially met their expectations. Feedback from training providers was that the learners were not always aware of the intensity of the training or that they had to disET21 0 595.32 8 3(idl7( o).

### Academic level of the training

A few higher education (HE) providers running accredited courses faced problems with learners not being prepared for the academic content of the course. This included participants expecting prescriptive training rather than an academic course, being unprepared for the volume and level of reading required, and struggling with the academic standard of assessments. Two training providers noted that this appeared to be due to misconceptions by those Careers Leaders from a teaching background, who did not expect academic theory to be covered on the course and in assignments. This is something that providers faced in their earlier cohorts and subsequently tackled by spending time on expectations management at the beginning of the course or before contracts were signed with the Careers Leaders, and being more prescriptive around the expected content of assignments to balance the various skill levels of learners. The providers in HE anticipated this problem and were able to use existing university policies and resources, such as deadline extensions and academic skills support, to mitigate the impact on results.

This view was also reflected in some of the Careers Leader interviews. A few Careers Leaders with varying levels of prior knowledge and experience found the academic nature of the training and assignments daunting. Specific issues included Careers Leaders being unprepared for content around careers theory, lacking experience in academic writing and being unclear about the expected content and form of academic writing. Some of these Careers Leaders reported that these issues were dealt with effectively with support from training staff and broader institutional support. Whereas a small number of **old hands** and **careers specialist** Careers Leaders with other careers qualifications found the course somewhat repetitive.

### Balancing the needs of diverse cohorts

While the diverse school/college backgrounds and roles of Careers Leaders were frequently raised as strengths of the training, it meant that sometimes training did not meet Careers Leader needs. A few training providers noted that the diverse abilities and backgrounds of Careers Leaders created a challenge as it was difficult to meet

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This was again reflected in Careers Leader interviews. Some Careers Leaders from SLTs said that the training was pitched towards dedicated career practitioners and so was less useful for them. Careers Leaders from FE colleges in particular were less likely to appreciate diverse cohorts, as they were frequently the only person from an FE background on the course, and subsequently did not benefit as much as others from class discussions. In addition, a number of Careers Leaders from special schools also reported a lack of content focusing on these contexts. These Careers Leaders said that resources were too mainstream school focused and not useful for their context.

### **Fitting the course in with Careers Leader**

Another challenge raised by training providers and Careers Leaders alike, was the difficulty Careers Leaders faced in fitting the training around an already busy role. Many Careers Leaders had already taken the role on as an addition to other responsibilities, and some struggled to find time to attend sessions and work independently on the course. Many training providers struggled to fit the necessary content into a relatively small amount of face-face hours, so did not think that they could make the course any shorter to reduce time pressure on Careers Leaders. This problem of balancing course length between covering the required content and the capacity of learners was one of the big challenges for training providers.

This issue was reflected in Careers Leader interviews, with many Careers Leaders reporting that it was difficult to fit the course into already busy schedules. Some Careers Leaders also found the course too condensed, reflecting provider worries around making the course shorter to fit Careers Leader capacity. In general, Careers Leaders were more likely to struggle with finding the time to work independently busy schedules.

### **Problems with online resources**

A number of Careers Leaders across multiple training providers had trouble using online platforms to access resources. They found that it was difficult to use the platform to upload or write documents, and to search through a high volume of resources. In one case a provider helped people to navigate the drive by placing resources in well labelled folders.

### **Accessibility**

While most Careers Leaders found the training accessible, there were some issues raised during interviews, which made the training more of a challenge. In terms of location, while most found a suitable location without a long wait, some Careers Leaders did have to wait over a year to find a course that was suitable; others travelled further than they would have liked to attend the training. A few Careers Leaders thought that they had to attend training even when unwell or when they had a long standing professional commitment due to the agreement signed at the start.



## 4

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Training providers, Careers Leaders and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)





For example, one lead was adapting their Apprenticeship evening and changing the location and number of break-out rooms. During the training, many Careers Leaders also realised that their existing routes were very local, so they were working hard to expand their provision to cover a wider geographical area. In some cases, expanding their offers meant including other providers from FE and HE.

With regard to the use of LMI, some Careers Leaders reported that the course had shown them how to present the data and how to use other resources, for example, arranging visits from employers. Some Careers Leaders had become aware that understanding LMI meant presenting data from a wider geographical area and finding more varied ways of presenting these data than in the typical posters they had been doing.

A significant benefit of the training was the networking opportunities offered, and many Careers Leaders felt they had gained a lot from hearing from their peers in terms of routes and using LMI. It was also pointed out by some that having staff from a mix of contexts, ie mainstream and FE meant they could learn a lot from each other. Examples given included finding out more about what courses are available in other institutions and new sources of LMI.

A small number of Careers Leaders reported no impact with regard to routes and LMI. This might not be surprising given some of them were **old hands** or **careers specialists** and studying for the Level 7 qualification. Additionally, in a few cases, the Careers Leaders had tried to implement some changes around routes and the use of LMI, eg emailing weekly information about jobs and training to staff and pupils, but they had either not been given admin support to do this or been told not to by some staff.

However, there were a few cases where the Careers Leaders were quite negative about these elements of the course. In such a case, a **careers specialist** from a special school thought the course lacked information about provision for pupils with special educational needs, something that would vary greatly, depending on experience:

*'I felt that SEND-specific information was really lacking here - and this outcome, in particular, is really influenced by your length of tenure in careers; if you've been there for a while, you'll already know most of this stuff and be using it.'*

Careers Leader, L6, Accredited, Spring complete, SEND Academy

### 4.1.3 Policies and frameworks

It was reported by Careers Leaders that the course covered a wide range of relevant policies and frameworks including the CDI Framework<sup>33</sup>, the National Careers Strategy and the Quality in Careers Standard. Interviewees were largely familiar with these key

<sup>33</sup> The CDI framework sets out learning outcomes and a suggested curriculum for the delivery of careers, employability and enterprise education. For further information see <https://www.thecdi.net/write/BP556-CDI-Framework-web.pdf>.

policies and frameworks; and Careers Leaders were positive about these aspects of the training,

*students to fill out evaluation forms and collate the data [...] [for careers in*

### **4.1.5 Learning about Leadership and management**

The learning outcomes related to leadership and management were that participants

98 per cent of participants



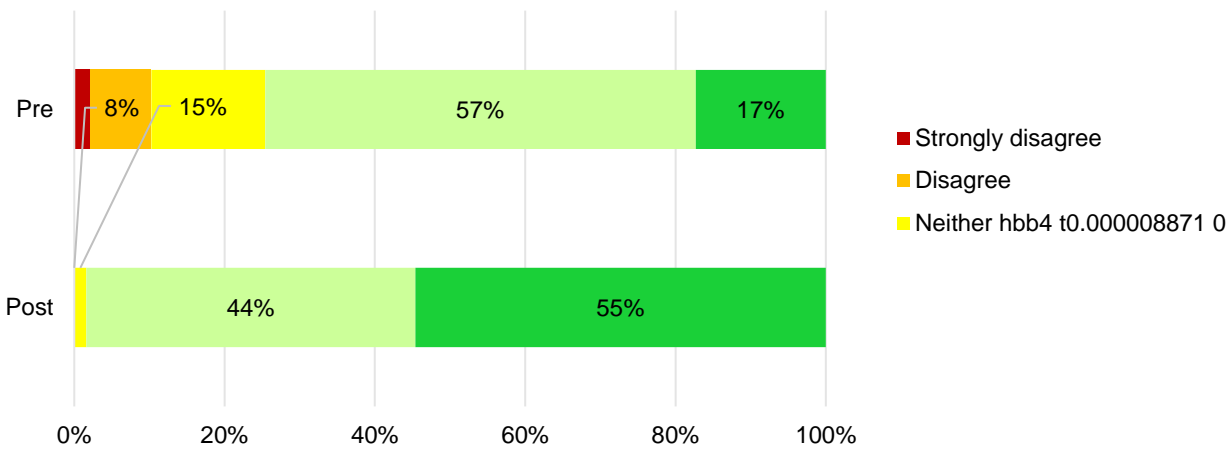








**Figure 20**  
**the education system**



*The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020*

For participants on the accredited courses, their feedback highlighted how useful this element of the provision had been in understanding the importance of identifying outcomes and then measuring if these have been achieved; linking careers programme improvement plans to whole school improvement plans; conducting training needs analysis of staff; and ideas about how they could further embed careers in the curriculum. On the accredited courses, one Careers Leader described how they were revising their careers plan as a result of the training to become broader in scope and involve more of the school. Others described how they had moved from having a calendar of events to a more fully formed strategic plan with actions and measures:

*‘The best bit was how to set up your programme from a vision to be the school’s vision. It made it easier to justify why you are doing certain things’.*

Careers Leader, L6, Accredited, just completed, Secondary Academy

For the non-accredited courses there were no specific requirements to submit a strategic careers plan, but this formed part of their portfolio and, as with the accredited provision, was a theme threaded throughout the training days.

In the non-accredited training, the training had given one participant the impetus to audit their current provision and rewrite their career strategy and refine their careers plan. As described earlier in this report, this had resulted in them being able to increase their rating against several of the Gatsby Benchmarks. However, it had also helped them to identify weaknesses in their performance against other benchmarks and they could then set in place action plans to focus on addressing these gaps.

Senior leaders spoke of Careers Leaders investing their time in continuous improvement of their careers programme and building momentum over time, changing and adapting what is delivered. It was common for SLT colleagues to describe the Careers Leaders as being good at being reflective.

## **4.2.2 Leadership and management in the context of careers**

It was common, in the interviews with SLT colleagues, for them to recognise the gains that Careers Leaders had made as a leader as a result of the training. This was attributed to greater knowledge and confidence, and applying additional leadership skills to their role, as well as putting in place performance indicators and monitoring progress.

## 4.3

Relating to the Kirkpatrick model Level 4, this research again shows that the Careers Leader training had clear impact on their organisation due to participation in the training. This includes increased achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks and improved knowledge, decision-making and progress among pupils

### 4.3.1 The Gatsby Benchmarks

As seen earlier in this chapter (4.1.6), the Careers Leaders appreciated increasing their knowledge around the Gatsby Benchmarks. In many cases, they had been able to implement this knowledge and make progress towards the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Many Careers Leaders, 0 G[(d)p2c985.45 475.51 Tms.664 475.51 Tm0 g Tm[(im)-4(p)-3(le)8(m)-6(e)

Careers Leader, L6, Accredited, Summer complete, FE

Careers Leaders also reported that the training around the Gatsby Benchmarks had wider impacts at a strategic level for their institution. A number of Careers Leaders had consequently, changed it as a direct result of the training. One Careers Leader reported mapping the benchmarks onto the school vision:

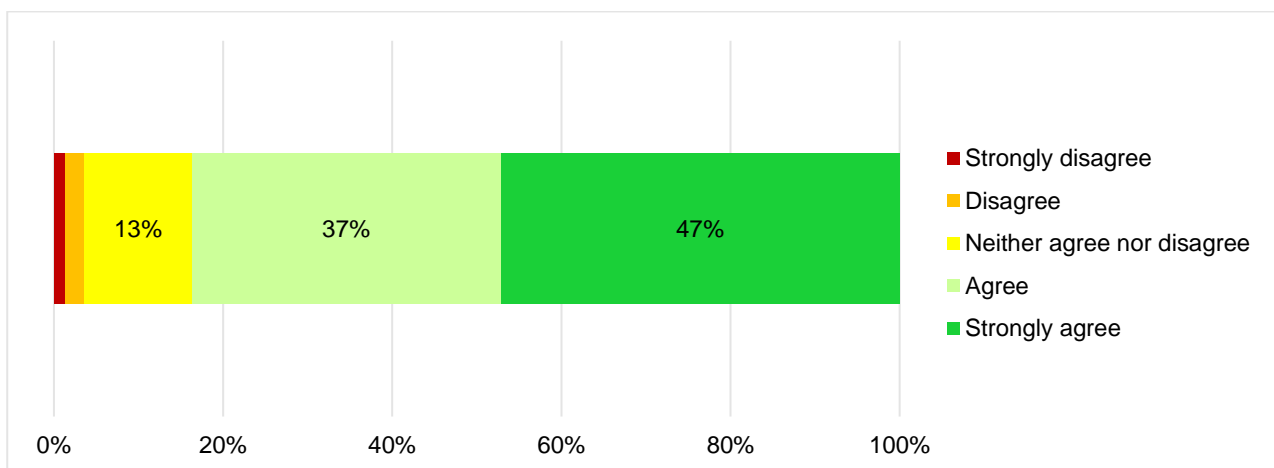
*'I was already aware of the benchmarks but following the course, I was able to edit the careers strategy to successfully meet Benchmarks 1 & 8 which I had identified as problem areas in a previous audit'.*

Careers Leader, non-accredited, Summer complete, FE

In many cases, the Careers Leaders described how they had improved their scores on Compass since undertaking the training and were now scoring better with regard to most Gatsby Benchmarks. In the case of one school, the training was a catalyst for rewriting the careers programme which actually led to them achieving a national award for their strategy. These Careers Leaders reported that, as a result of the changes in strategic documents, their institutions were now making better progress towards meeting the benchmarks. However, in a few cases, a better understanding of the benchmarks and good practice led to a temporary revision downwards in their self-assessment scores on Compass, before their actions had time to make a positive impact.

The skills audit results also echo the findings from the qualitative interviews, over 80 per cent (84%) of Careers Leader participants thought that, as a result of the training, their institution was making better progress towards the Gatsby Benchmarks.

**Figure 22 Have made progress towards achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks as a result of the training**



*The Careers & Enterprise Company, 2020*

Challenges still remained for Careers Leaders to implement the Gatsby Benchmarks and these, in common with the overall challenges of the role (as noted above), were around: time and capacity to focus on delivery, and resources and funding to pay for what was





## 5

### 5.1

It is apparent from the qualitative research, which has been the main focus of this report, but also from the supporting quantitative data from the skills audit survey, that the Careers Leader training has been successful in attracting Careers Leaders to attend the training, supporting them to successfully complete the training, and preparing them for the role.

#### 5.1.1 Impacts and outcomes

The training has had a positive impact on individual participants and their schools and colleges leading to a range of perceived short-term and longer-term outcomes (or the potential for longer-term outcomes). The impacts are summarised here referring to the Kirkpatrick framework.

##### Level 1: Reaction to the training

This evaluation suggests that overall the Careers Leader training programmes were delivered well and that they met or exceeded participants' expectations for the course.

Careers Leaders appreciated the choice of provider and accreditation level, which meant that they could choose a course that best suited their needs and availability.

Face-to-face delivery generally worked well, but mixed delivery that involved some face-to-face sessions and some self-guided study was deemed to be most suitable, given the time pressures individuals felt in their day to day roles.

Resources used on the courses were generally high quality and relevant. Careers Leaders appreciated the mix of online and paper resources.

Delivery staff were reported to be excellent: Careers Leaders thought that tutors tended to be experienced, knowledgeable, approachable and supportive. Careers Leaders especially appreciated facilitators with a background in careers provision who could add their own experiences to the class discussions.

Overall, the content of the provision was seen as relevant and engaging. Careers Leaders liked the mix of theory and practice.

Social media and the professional body (CDI) were key strengths of the Careers Leaders training. Many interviewees spoke of the isolated nature of the Careers Leader role and that the face-to-face training helped them network, hear of new ideas from other schools and colleges and create contacts and a support network that they continued to use after the training.

Diversity of participants was seen as a major strength of the training. Careers Leaders noted that the diverse mix of training participants enabled successful peer learning, while a few also noted that attending training outside of their region allowed them to meet new people and removed the pressure of competition, allowing them to be more open when sharing experiences.

The interviews also provided useful lessons for implementation of the programme, which was acknowledged to have improved over time, particularly as the training providers actively sought and responded to participant feedback. At the early stages of implementing this new provision, some of the providers struggled to recruit viable cohorts both for national and regional programmes. Over time they established links with LEPs and Careers Hubs and were better able to recruit. Providers and Careers Leaders . especially those new to training at this level . reported teething problems with the IT systems that were used for assignments but one-to-one support from the tutors overcame these issues. Diversity of cohorts was seen as a strength of the programme by participants, although providing training to diverse cohorts posed a challenge for the providers. However, most were able to tailor their approach for each cohort.

## Level 2: Learning

It was clear from the feedback that Careers Leaders felt the training had a positive impact, gaining in confidence and increasing their knowledge of careers and the Careers Leader role. More specific areas of learning reported:

The evaluation suggests that all participants, regardless of background and school/college context, and course attended, felt they learned from the programme. Some individuals (**newbies**) gained a great deal; and whilst others with experience of career guidance (

events. It also improved confidence in being able to develop careers programmes in line with changes to the education system.

The majority of Careers Leaders improved their understanding of Gatsby Benchmarks and the Compass Tool, and for less experienced Careers Leaders, it provided skills against the benchmarks.

Many Careers Leaders had experience of undertaking evaluations 600rlu tbeir career( )] TJETQq0

Many Careers Leaders reported how they were better able to critically appraise and identify gaps in provision and/or prioritise action, often in a context of limited resources, against particular (often harder to reach) benchmarks.

The focus of the programme on developing a strategic careers plan meant that Careers Leaders were able to produce one by the end of the course, and to have continually refined this during the training. This could involve developing a new strategy or revising and appraising a pre-existing one. The process of audit, evaluation and refining helped identify areas for change.

#### **Level 4: Organisational behaviour change**

While the training had clear impact on Careers Leaders and their institutions due to participation in the training, longer term outcomes and impacts were taking time to show.



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important that the requirement to identify a Careers Leader is maintained and supported in future training.

**Ensure that funding remains available to train Careers Leaders.** This evaluation has found that offering fee waivers and bursaries has been an important factor in reluctance to support staff to attend training. It is important that the funding is continued firstly to cover all schools and colleges that have not yet accessed it and secondly to address a level of turnover in the Careers Leader workforce by enabling schools and colleges to train new appointees.

## 5.2.2 The Careers & Enterprise Company

**Continue to fund both accredited and unaccredited programme.** There was enthusiasm for both accredited and unaccredited provision. While on balance, accredited provision was more valued, there were multiple reasons why some Careers Leaders felt that it was not appropriate for them. Consequently, The Careers & Enterprise Company should continue to fund both routes.

**Continue to fund choices for Careers Leaders in each region.** Continue with the same model where Careers Leaders have a choice over different providers both locally and nationally. Keep delivery stable so that Careers Leaders are aware of what provision is available and providers know where and when they are delivering and can build their local networks.

**Consider longitudinal research and evaluation.** In order to establish the longer term impacts from the training (relating the Kirkpatrick Level 4), further evaluation of the programme should be commissioned to enable longitudinal impacts to be established.

**Review the process for claiming the bursary.** To ensure that the bursary is as helpful as possible to schools and colleges, The Careers & Enterprise Company and providers should clarify the process for claiming the bursary with participants and make sure payments are made in a timely way.

**Consider supporting the development of FE only provision.** In order to allow sufficient focus to the differing challenges of career guidance in FE, some participants preferred to have the option of provision that was dedicated to their sector. This should be matched to have not yet accessed it and secondly to address a level of turnover in the Careers Leader workforce by enabling schools and colleges to train new appointees.



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**Table A.1 Kirkpatrick evaluation framework**

Level in Kirkpatrick model	Intended outcome
1: Reaction (immediate)	<p>Participants are satisfied with the training they have received and believe it will help them to establish a careers programme that fulfils the Gatsby Benchmarks.</p> <p>Participants actively participate in the training and contribute to the learning experience (e.g. attend session, participate in online forums, actively share experiences and learning, complete assignments such as developing a careers strategy).</p> <p>Participants consider the training to be relevant and that they will have opportunities to apply their learning in their contexts.</p>
2: Learning (short-term)	<p>Participants feel well-informed about the Gatsby Benchmarks and feel confident in</p> <p>Participants feel satisfied with the plan/strategy they have developed to take forward careers advice and guidance in their context and intend to implement it.</p> <p>Participants understand key aspects of careers theory and feel confident talking about them with others.</p> <p>Participants have good knowledge of a range of employment and education pathways, feel confident accessing, interpreting and using labour market information.</p> <p>Participants feel confident understanding and using relevant policies and frameworks.</p> <p>Participants know how they will keep</p> <p>Participants have good knowledge and understanding of leadership and management and feel they can apply them, including persuading and influencing leaders and colleagues.</p> <p>Participants can articulate the role and purpose of a Careers Leader; can identify key internal and external stakeholders and their role in implementing an excellent whole school/college approach; identify training needs for themselves and others.</p> <p>Participants are able to use LMI, Gatsby Benchmarks and other sources to assess and evaluate their careers programme and also their own professional development requirements.</p>
3: Behaviour (medium-long term)	<p>Participants apply learning to demonstrate leadership skills in their college and school to make progress in implementing their careers strategy.</p> <p>Participants use LMI more effectively.</p> <p>Participants work effectively with external partners to provide wider opportunities to engage with employers and education providers to learners.</p> <p>Participants quality assure their careers programme by seeking feedback, conducting evaluation and using Compass.</p> <p>Participants report to senior leaders and governors to lead and influence careers strategy.</p>

