

Making the most of everyone's skills and talents. The following guidance has been produced with the support of CSW Group and is designed to offer impartial guidance for governors, trustees and governing boards.

1. The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) was established in 2014 to be the strategic coordinating function for employers, schools, colleges, funders and providers and to provide high impact careers and enterprise support to young people (aged 12-18). The CEC's initial focus has been on employer engagement, based on evidence about the importance of giving young people more opportunities to connect with employers of all sizes, and from all sectors.

2. These opportunities will inspire pupils and allow them to learn about what work is like, or what it takes to be successful in the workforce. The Government's careers guidance [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#) was updated in May 2025.

3. The careers strategy confirmed that the CEC will take on a more ambitious role, building on their progress to date by co-ordinating support for schools across all of the Gatsby Benchmarks, see [Good Career Guidance Benchmarks for Young People](#). The Gatsby Benchmarks are not a statutory framework, but schools are expected to adopt them by September 2025 to ensure that they are fulfilling their legal duties. The careers strategy explains that both co-ordinated external support and an appropriately skilled and experienced leader in school are important to help schools meet the Benchmarks.

4. Statutory duties: Section 42A of the Education Act 1997 requires governing boards to ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from year 7 (11-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds). The governing board must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:

- Is presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option
- Includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes
- Is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils.

5. What is the governing board expected to do? The governing board should provide clear advice and guidance to the headteacher on which they can base a strategy for careers education and guidance. This must meet the school's legal requirements, developed in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks. Every school should have a member of their governing board who takes a strategic interest in careers education and guidance and who champions employer engagement.

6. Compass is an online self-evaluation tool for schools to use to assess how their careers support compares against the Gatsby Benchmarks and the national average. Schools should baseline themselves using this tool, consider the opportunities to improve their careers

programme based on their confidential results and track their progress against the Benchmarks over time.

7. Governing boards should ensure that the school has a published policy statement setting out these arrangements. This should be part of a broader approach that ensures students are aware of the full range of academic and technical routes available to them at each transition point; the governance handbook provides information on governors' other legal duties.

8. Access: The governing board must ensure that arrangements are in place to allow a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in years 7-13; in order to inform students about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships

Requirements and Expectations of Schools – Original Timeline

Timing	Action
Ongoing (legal duty came into force in September 2012)	• Every School must ensure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 to year 13 (see Sep 2022 below).
Ongoing (legal duty came into force on 2nd Jan. 2018)	• Every School must ensure that there is an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access all pupils in year 8 to year 13 for the purposes of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships. • Every School must publish a policy statement setting out their arrangements for provider access and ensure that it is followed.
From Jan. 2018 to end 2020	• Every school should have met the Gatsby Benchmarks to improve careers provision by 2020.
Ongoing	• Every school should appoint a named person to the role of careers leader to lead the careers programme.
Ongoing	• Every school will be expected to publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents.
From Sep 2022	• Every school must ensure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance from year 7 to year 13
From Sep 2025	• Every school must meet the Gatsby Benchmarks