RAND EUROPE

Career guidance in schools

Research with schools and providers
of career guidance services in
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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Preface

Cambridge Ahead commissioned RAND Europe to carry out a study examining the career guidance provision in schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This piece of research was conducted in response to the growing requirements and variation of skills across multiple sectors within the local economy.

Businesses and the local authorities recognise the importance of more career-led education in schools and this important piece of research would not have been made possible without the sponsorship support given by the following organisations: the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, the Greater Cambridge Partnership, Cambridge Regional College, One Nucleus and Cambridge Ahead Members: Anglia Ruskin University, Arm Ltd, AstraZeneca, Birketts LLP, Deloitte LLP, Marshall of Cambridge, Mills & Reeve LLP and Urban & Civic.

This research study aims to build a comprehensive picture of the provision of career guidance services in the region and how these services meet the needs of children and young people. This report provides evidence based on primary data collected via an online survey with schools and interviews with career guidance providers operating in the local areas. As this research is published at the time when we seek to understand the challenges that Covid-19, and other factors, will pose to our economy, it is intended that the research findings will be used to shape policy discussions about the roles of education in economic strategies at the local, regional and national level.

Executive summary

Secondary schools and colleges in England have a statutory requirement to provide impartial career guidance to students (Department for Education 2018). The ability to identify, make informed choices and pursue career opportunities is considered a core skill preparing young people for the demands of the labour market. Understanding and assessing the availability, relevance and quality of the career guidance provision is therefore of great importance to inform policy discussions about further improvements in this area.

This report, commissioned by Cambridge Ahead, examines the provision of career guidance in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. Findings are informed by analyses of primary data collected via an online survey of staff at 54 secondary schools and colleges in the region and interviews with 10 career guidance service providers.

The analyses are guided by three high-level research questions examining: the types of career guidance services available in schools in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area, the gaps and overlaps in career guidance provision, and definitions of quality and approaches to measuring the quality of career guidance. Whenever feasible, analyses focus on comparing situations between schools and providers operating in the region.

These are the main points that arose from our analyses of the survey and interview data:

1. The majority of surveyed schools have a stable and embedded careers programme in place offering a wide range of activities and opportunities and covering a broad range of topics. However, schools seem to prioritise academic over technical and vocational career routes, do not sufficiently cover matters related to job demands and working life, and rarely integrate parents into career guidance provision. Most schools have appointed a careers leader but the effectiveness of this role depends on the time and resources allocated to it.

2. Engagement with local employers is typically integrated into schools' career guidance programmes. However, some of the respondents from surveyed schools indicated that they had experienced challenges building relationships with local employers, for instance in relation to arranging work experience for students or engaging employers as mentors. Around two-thirds of schools wished to expand or develop their career guidance programme to include new or increased opportunities for work placements, experience and shadowing, and a closer relationship or greater collaboration with local employers.

3. All surveyed schools work with at least one external career guidance provider. As a number of them operate in the region, schools are often overwhelmed by the range of choices in career guidance services, with some overlap in services they offer. The complex funding landscape is also a challenge

for schools and means that the schools' choice of provider(s) is most often constrained by time and funding. The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) virtual wallet makes the process easier for eligible schools (ten schools in the Peterborough region), enabling them to choose from a list of pre-approved fully funded providers.

4. Interviewed career guidance providers stated that they monitor the quality of their services by proactively seeking feedback from schools. This feeds into a cycle of continuous improvement of services. However, there is a lack of sector-wide measures of quality; one reason for this is that there is insufficient recognition of and weight given to career advice provision in the Ofsted assessments frameworks. Finally, career guidance services often aim to achieve longer-term outcomes that are only measurable when students have left school, so it is challenging to assess and measure the longer-term outcomes and impact of career guidance services.

The report concludes by formulating recommendations for stakeholders.

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Acronyms

AP   Alternative Provision

CEC   Careers and Enterprise Company

FE   Further Education

HE   Higher Education

LEA   Local Education Authority

LEP   Local Enterprise Partnership

NEACO   The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach

SEND   Special Educational Needs and Disability

SLT   Senior Leadership Team

STEM   Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

1.   Introduction

1.1.   Background to the study

1.1.1.   National and regional career guidance regulations, strategies and recommendations

A national survey of career advice, guidance and education has not been undertaken since July 2015 (Gibson et al. 2015), which was before recent changes to statutory requirements regarding careers and advice education. At that time, advice and guidance included teaching pupils how to identify and pursue career opportunities to classes (delivered by form tutors or as part of personal, social and health education classes), individualised career guidance to older pupils, organised speakers from different industries and educational institutions, work experience for older pupils, signposting to external organisations and websites, and the use of internal professional careers staff and external professionals.

Secondary schools and colleges in England have a statutory requirement to provide impartial career guidance to pupils from the age of 12/13 onwards. The government issues statutory guidelines on what this career guidance must look like (Department for Education 2018). Guidelines have undergone some change in the last few years: following publication of the Department for Education's *Careers Strategy* (Department for Education 2017a), schools are required to consider eight benchmarks set out by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation of good practice in career guidance (Gatsby Charitable Foundation 2014). All schools should meet these benchmarks (see Table 1) by the end of 2020 and are expected to appoint a careers leader within the school (Department for Education 2017a). It is not a legal requirement for schools to follow the Gatsby benchmarks, but it is highly recommended. The careers leader should have a senior position within the school and be undertaken by an individual with specialist knowledge of careers (Department for Education 2017a). It is the school's responsibility to set up a stable careers programme, to publish the fair provider access policy, to specify the name and contact details of the careers leader, to track destinations data for a minimum of three years and to review the careers programme.

The CEC is a government-funded agency with a remit to build links between secondary schools, colleges and employers; provides training and support for careers leaders; and support schools to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks.[1] Schools can draw on resources offered by the CEC in working towards the Gatsby

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[1] As of 28 April 2020:
https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/about-us

benchmarks. The CEC runs two online tools to help students measure their progress against the Gatsby benchmarks:

1. Compass[2] – enables schools to evaluate their careers activity against the Gatsby benchmarks

2. Tracker[3] – helps schools to map and record progress over time in meeting the benchmarks.

In June 2018, the CEC launched the Careers and Enterprise Fund: £2.5 million is available via the fund for schools in 25 areas of disadvantage. Peterborough is identified as one of the areas of disadvantage and 10 schools in the region are eligible to receive CEC funding.[4] Eligible schools and colleges can access fully funded career guidance provision via the CEC 'virtual wallet' where they choose from a list of pre-approved providers. Certain schools in the region (9 secondary schools and 5 special schools[5]) can access funding through the CEC virtual wallet system via the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area (Department for Education 2017b).

Schools and colleges may be eligible to receive funding for career guidance activities via the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (NEACO), one of 29 partnerships across England funded by the government to promote participation in higher education. Funding is targeted at regions where participation in higher education is lower than would be expected based on GCSE results, including certain areas in Peterborough.[6] In addition, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Skills Strategy Framework calls for local, targeted interventions across the regions of Peterborough, Cambridge and the Fens (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority 2019).

There is different career guidance funding available for schools focusing on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or alternative provision (AP) and mainstream schools. The CEC and NEACO are not funded to provide activities to SEND or AP schools. Eligible SEND and AP schools (5 schools[7]) may access funding via the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area.

To summarise, although there are several funding streams to support career guidance activities available to schools and colleges in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region, eligibility is linked to the profile of the area according to their level of socio-economic disadvantage and participation in higher education. Some

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[2] As of 28 April 2020:
https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info

[3] As of 28 April 2020:
https://tracker.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info

[4] As of 28 April 2020:
https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/careers-enterprise-fund-2018-virtual-wallets-catalogue

[5] As of 28 April 2020:
https://fenlandeastcambridgeshireoa.co.uk/our-schools/

[6] As of 28 April 2020:
https://www.takeyourplace.ac.uk/where-we-work

[7] As of 28 April 2020:
https://fenlandeastcambridgeshireoa.co.uk/our-schools/

schools and colleges may find it difficult to access funding, particularly SEND and AP schools, which are not eligible for funding via the CEC or NEACO.

Table 1. The Gatsby benchmarks

Benchmark	Description
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 pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers.
2. Learning from career and labour market information	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.
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil	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.
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.
5. Encounters with employers and employees	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.
6. Experience of workplaces	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.
7. Encounters with further and higher education	All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes academic and vocational routes, and learning in schools, colleges, universities and the workplace.
8. Personal guidance	Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers 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 and timed to meet their individual needs.

Source: The Gatsby Foundation 2014

Schools within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are subject to the same requirements and expectations around career guidance as schools throughout England. Several career guidance providers are active in the area, spanning both national and local organisations, and offering a range of services and support. Providers are a mixture of community interest companies, social enterprises, local authority funded initiatives, further education colleges and universities.

1.1.2. The importance of career guidance

The importance of career guidance has been emphasised in a recent report (Rogers et al. 2020) revealing a disconnect between young people's career aspirations and the current and projected available jobs in the UK. The report presents results of a survey of over 7,000 young people. Survey findings show that the sectors that young people aspire to work in differ greatly from the jobs available. In addition, young people at age 17/18 have similar job choices as when they were 14/15, with similar patterns to the jobs to which children aspire at age 7/8. This disconnection between aspiration and opportunity starts early and is consistent throughout teenage years.

The report recommends that effective careers support should start in primary schools and continue throughout secondary school and college years. It suggests that a significant expansion of career related learning should start in primary schools to allow children to be exposed to a range of people from different backgrounds and doing different jobs in order to broader young people's horizons and raise aspirations. This should be followed by providing more support for career guidance in secondary schools, including better labour market information for young people and better use of this information. The study results also suggest that parents and employers should be more engaged to help reduce young people's disconnection between aspirations and labour market opportunities. The report concludes that extending and improving career activities would require close and continuous collaboration and engagement of secondary schools and colleges, parents and employers.

1.2. Study aims, objectives and research questions

Against this background, Cambridge Ahead and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority have commissioned this research to examine the provision of career guidance in the region and how services can best meet the needs of children and young people.

The aim of the study is to inform the development of national and local policy to ensure that career guidance services best meet the needs of children and young people. The study has four objectives:

1. To understand and map out career guidance services in secondary schools, sixth form colleges and further education establishments across Cambridgeshire (the Combined Authority area)
2. To outline types of career guidance delivery and providers active in the area
3. To examine current gaps and overlaps in the career guidance services
4. To understand how the quality of career guidance delivery is understood and measured by providers of career guidance services.

The study analyses are guided by the following research questions:

1. **What are the types of career guidance services available in secondary schools in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area?** This research question covers factors such as the nature of career guidance delivery in schools, the type of services offered by local providers, aims and objectives of services, where services are delivered and in what format, the frequency of delivery, which students and stakeholders are involved, and how services are funded.

2. **What are the gaps and overlaps in career guidance provision in schools in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area?** This research question relates to providers' relationships with one another and the degree of collaboration and competition in the sector, as well as perceived gaps in service delivery.
3. **How the quality of career guidance provision is defined and measured in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area?** This research question covers how the quality of career guidance services is understood and measured and the challenges involved in doing so.

At the time of writing, the world is entering a period of unprecedented disruption and uncertainty associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has had, and will continue to have, a profound impact on the education system, imposing new challenges on providers and schools alike. This study was conducted prior to the Covid-19 outbreak and the findings do not capture the impact of the pandemic, although this is incorporated into the discussion where relevant. It is clear that young people currently going through the education system will enter a labour market undergoing severe shocks and experiencing profound uncertainty. In this context, equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to navigate the labour market is more important than ever.

1.3. Methodology

This section outlines the methodology used in the study: a survey of staff in schools and colleges, and interviews with providers of career guidance services.

1.3.1. Survey of schools

The aim of the survey was to give an overview of career guidance services in secondary schools and colleges, including looking at how staff work with providers, and to understand how schools would like to expand or develop their career guidance programme and what, if anything, prevents them from doing so. Most of the survey questions were closed (comprising a list of pre-defined options) to enable respondents to complete them rapidly and to facilitate analysis. In addition, several open-ended questions were included in the survey to allow respondents to further explain and give context for their responses, and to gather more in-depth, qualitative data to supplement the closed questions. The survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 2. The survey was hosted on the Smart Survey platform and took approximately ten minutes to complete.

Before launching the survey, the survey was piloted with two secondary schools. The aim of the pilot interviews was to gather feedback on any technical flaws, the clarity and flow of the questionnaire, the appropriateness of the language used, the accuracy of any routing between questions and the time required to complete the survey. Representatives from the two pilot schools filled out the survey online with a member of RAND Europe staff present to facilitate discussion and record comments and suggestions. Feedback and suggestions received from the pilot interviews were used to adjust the survey before finalising it.

After finalising the questions, the survey was sent to 107 public and independent secondary schools and colleges in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region[8] in November 2019. Career guidance provision in primary schools is outside the scope of this study. The distribution list for the survey was developed by staff at Cambridge Ahead, who compiled a comprehensive list of school contacts in the region based on their existing knowledge and publicly available information. The survey was open for four weeks to provide participants with adequate time to respond. Reminders were sent twice to non-responding schools to encourage completion.

The survey was completed by 54[9] out of the 107 secondary schools and colleges invited to participate (response rate: 50 per cent). It was not possible to identify a working email address for 2 out of the 107 schools. Staff from a further 7 schools replied via email that they were unable to take part in the survey after being invited to take part. Thus 9 schools and colleges were deemed ineligible to take part in the survey.[10] The response rate was higher for state schools than for independent schools. Of the 73 state schools eligible to take part, staff from 52 completed the survey (response rate: 71 per cent). Figure 1 outlines the breakdown of schools and colleges completing the survey, most of which were mainstream secondary schools.

Figure 1. Career guidance survey participation by type of school and college

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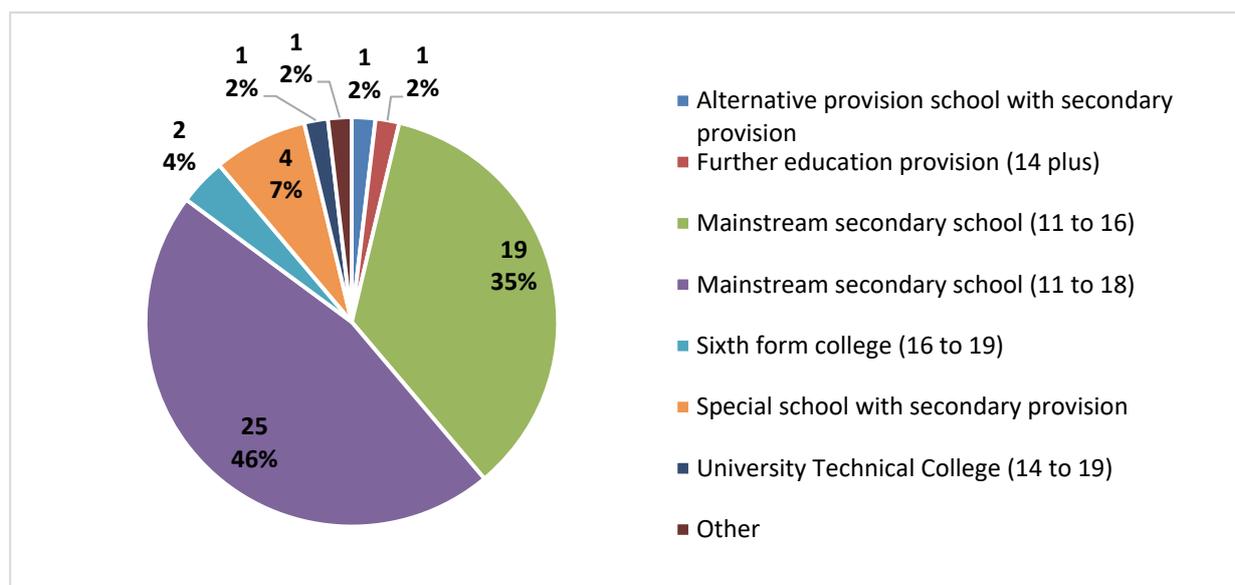
[8] This was designed to be a comprehensive list of all schools and colleges in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region, although it was based on publicly available information rather than official government data and therefore it is not possible to exclude the possibility of schools being omitted.

[9] Number of schools and colleges reported in this paragraph include two pilot schools. For cases where questions did not change following the pilot (the majority), survey responses for pilot schools and other schools are analysed together. Instances where pilot schools were not asked questions are noted in the report text.

[10] Schools and colleges were deemed ineligible to take part for a variety of reasons, including being a special school with no career guidance provision and undergoing a restructure at the time of the survey.

Data cleaning took place after the survey was closed, with data checked for consistency and completeness. Staff from ten schools or colleges responded to the survey more than once and in all these cases there were small inconsistencies between responses. Data from the careers leader were prioritised on the grounds that these individuals were likely to be most knowledgeable and informed about career guidance provision in schools; the other responses for these schools were discarded. All individuals who responded to the survey on behalf of these ten schools were informed of this decision.

The analysis of the survey is based on descriptive statistics for multiple-choice questions and coded responses to open-ended questions. The qualitative analysis of the responses to the open-ended survey questions was used to provide additional contextual information and to draw out quotes and observations to illustrate and nuance the quantitative analysis. Owing to a relatively small sample size, the numbers of both responses and response percentages are reported.

To explore differences across schools and colleges, sub-group analyses were conducted for the following characteristics:

- School type (mainstream school vs other)

- Whether the careers leader has a dedicated budget (yes/no)

- Geographical location, based on local education authority (LEA): Cambridgeshire vs Peterborough

- Number of pupils (1–899 vs 900+)

- Ofsted rating (outstanding, good and requires improvement/special measures).

We conducted sub-group analyses for all questions but only included in the report data where there appears to be a pattern. Survey responses were consistent across schools and colleges in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough unless stated in Chapter 2 (on research findings). Findings from the sub-group analysis are referenced in the text and data tables are included in Appendix 1. Because of the relatively small sample size, these results should be taken as indicative only and not extrapolated to the general population. Some sub-group differences are not included in the report because the number of schools and colleges was too small to draw meaningful conclusions, for example, in relation to schools and colleges classified by Ofsted as requiring improvement or put into special measures. With only four such schools and colleges included in the sample, it was not possible to identify trends and therefore the sub-group analysis for Ofsted rating focused on comparing schools and colleges rated as good and outstanding.

1.3.2.   Interviews with career advice providers

The aim of the interviews was to gather in-depth qualitative data on the career guidance provision from the perspective of service providers, to supplement information gathered through the online survey. More specifically, the objective of the interviews was to explore the key characteristics of the career guidance providers, including the aims of the career guidance services, how the services are delivered (nature, mode and frequency) and the employer engagement in the career guidance services. Furthermore, the interviews explored the career guidance providers' views on the gaps, overlaps and quality of career guidance provision

in the region. The development of the interview protocol (see Appendix 3) was informed by the findings emerging from the preliminary analysis of the survey data.

Drawing from a list of career guidance providers provided by Cambridge Ahead and supplemented by data from the online survey, we invited representatives from 29 organisations to take part in an interview, 10 of whom agreed to take part. The others declined to participate or did not respond to the invitation (see Appendix 4). Representatives were selected from the staff members delivering services or the supporting staff, for instance those administering and managing supply of services. The interviews were semi-structured to facilitate consistent data extraction and analysis while allowing for some flexibility in the discussion. Before the interview we gave interviewees an information sheet outlining the purpose of the interview and asked them to give written consent in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, were audio recorded and written up in the form of detailed notes. All participants consented to being recorded and to the use of anonymised quotes from their interviews.

To facilitate the qualitative analysis, notes were taken from the interviews based on the interview protocol. This framework was used to draw together responses to assess the extent to which providers' views aligned with each other and how much they diverged. All relevant responses are included, even if they are mentioned by one interviewee only.

1.4. Structure of this report

Chapter 2 presents the results of the study including findings from the survey of schools and colleges and interviews with providers of career guidance services. In order to reduce repetition, we use 'schools' throughout the report to encompass both schools and colleges. Where verbatim quotes are used in the report, research participants are coded using a unique identifier to maintain anonymity (S1, S2, S3 etc. for schools participating in the survey; P1, P2, P3 etc. for providers participating in interviews). Chapter 3 summarises the key findings and draws together recommendations for policy. Appendices 1 to 4 outline the survey and interview data collection tools and supplementary survey data tables.

2. Research findings

2.1. The set-up and organisation of career guidance in schools

This section outlines the set-up and organisation of career guidance provision in schools, drawing on survey data, and where relevant supplemented by findings from the interviews with providers of career guidance services. It covers whether schools have a careers programme in place and whether they have appointed a careers leader and/or a careers adviser. This section also outlines how the delivery of career guidance is influenced by national policy and guidelines, including the Gatsby benchmarks and use of the Compass and Tracker tools.

2.1.1. The majority of surveyed schools have a stable and embedded careers programme in place and have appointed a careers leader

A large majority of respondents to the survey (51 out of 54) reported having a careers programme in place, as shown in Figure 2. A careers programme was defined in the survey as an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known by pupils, parents, teachers and employers, a definition aligned with Gatsby benchmark 1 ('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') (see Table 1). This finding suggests that schools in the region are making good progress in relation to Gatsby benchmark 1. Out of the three schools that did not have a careers programme in place, the respondent from one school reported that they were currently developing a careers programme and another highlighted difficulties securing the resources required to establish a careers programme. All three of these schools were small (1–899 students), but most smaller schools who participated in the survey did have a careers programme in place.

Figure 2. School/college has a careers programme
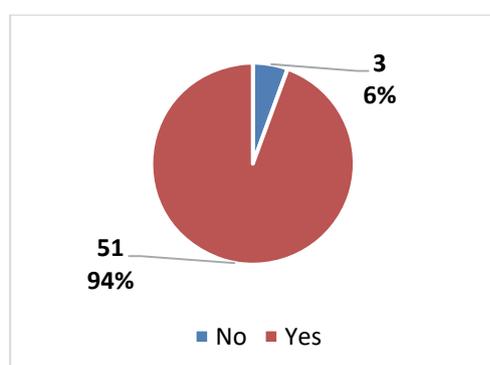
The Gatsby Foundation (2014) recommends that schools should have a careers plan and publish it on the school's website. Schools are also required to evaluate the careers programme regularly, using feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers (Gatsby Foundation 2014). The majority (44 out of 51) of surveyed schools with a career guidance programme included information about the programme on their website, and most (42 out of 51) review it at least once per year (Figure 3).

Figure 3. How often the careers programme is reviewed
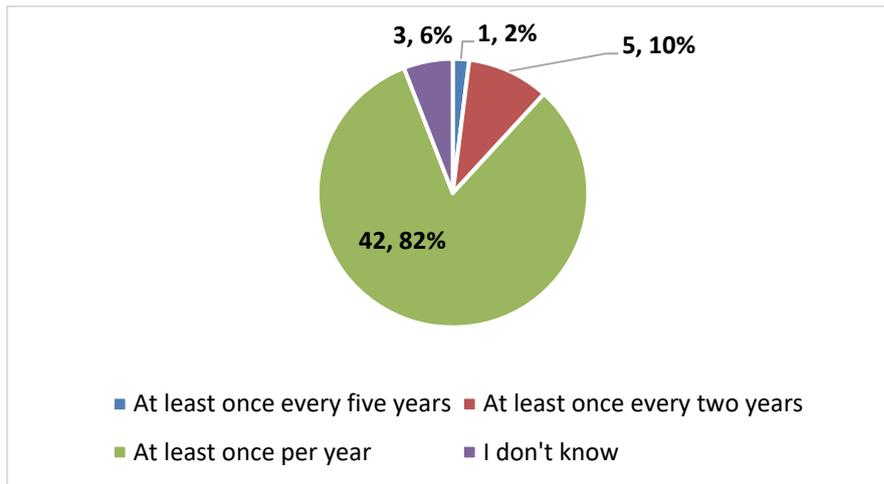
Almost all (50 out of 51) surveyed schools reported that they have appointed a careers leader, and in three-quarters (37 out of 51) of these schools the careers leader filled out the survey on behalf of the school. In just under three-quarters (35 out of 48) of surveyed schools the careers leader was a member of teaching staff; in the remaining 13 schools this position was undertaken by a dedicated member of support staff (see Figure 5). Again in nearly three-quarters (33 out of 48) of schools, the careers leader has a dedicated budget (see Figure 4). This is more often the case in larger schools (26 out of 29) with 900+ pupils than in smaller schools (9 out of 17).

Figure 4. Careers leader has a dedicated budget
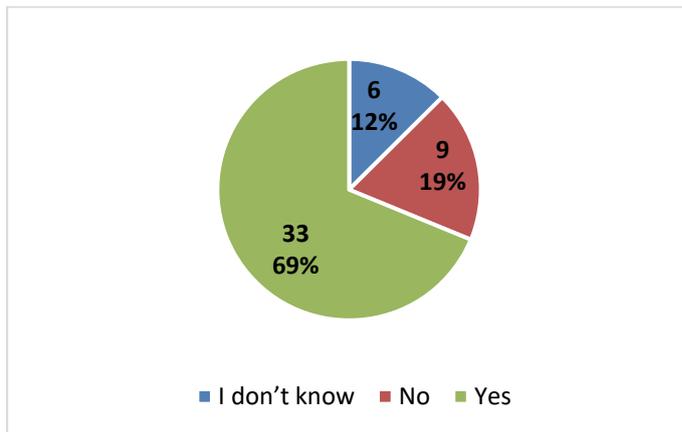
Pie chart showing:
- I don't know: 6, 12%
- No: 9, 19%
- Yes: 33, 69%

Legend: ■ I don't know ■ No ■ Yes

The importance of the careers leader role was discussed during interviews with providers of career guidance services. Three commented on how having an experienced and engaged careers leader in a school is a key factor that helps them to deliver high-quality career guidance. Conversely, two providers observed that it is challenging for providers to work with careers leaders who are busy and time-pressured. In the quotation below, one provider implies that careers leaders have less time to engage with providers in schools where this role is undertaken by a member of teaching staff. Although most schools in the area have appointed a careers leader, this person may face challenges of time and resources, which limit their effectiveness (see Section 2.2 for challenges and barriers faced by schools) and this may be particularly true in schools where the role is taken up by a member of teaching staff.

> It [the extent to which engaging schools is a challenge] does vary how much resource [the schools] put into it [careers] and who they employ to do it [the Careers Leader role], whether it's a very stretched teacher or someone who comes in for a day a week. (P5)

One of the Gatsby benchmarks is that every pupil should have opportunities for guidance sessions with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level (Gatsby benchmark 8). Survey data show that most (42 out of 49) schools have a careers adviser as well as a careers leader (in 12 schools the same member of staff took up both positions). In over a third (16 out of 42), the careers adviser was someone external to the school rather than a member of staff (see Figure 6). Four of the providers of career guidance services offer one-to-one career advice to students.

Figure 5. Profile of the careers leader

Pie chart legend:
- A dedicated member of support staff — 13, 27%
- Member of teaching staff (non-SLT) — 17, 35%
- Member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) — 18, 38%
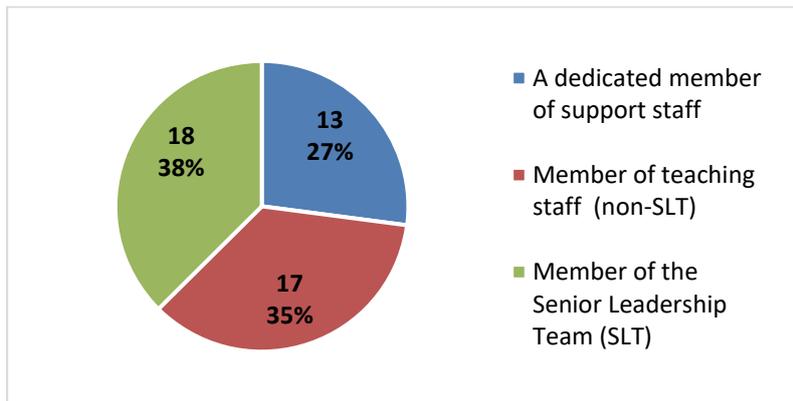
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=48 (all schools with a careers leader); two pilot schools were not asked for this information

Figure 6. Profile of the careers adviser

Pie chart legend:
- A member of staff other than the careers leader — 14, 33%
- External to the school/college — 16, 38%
- The careers leader — 12, 29%
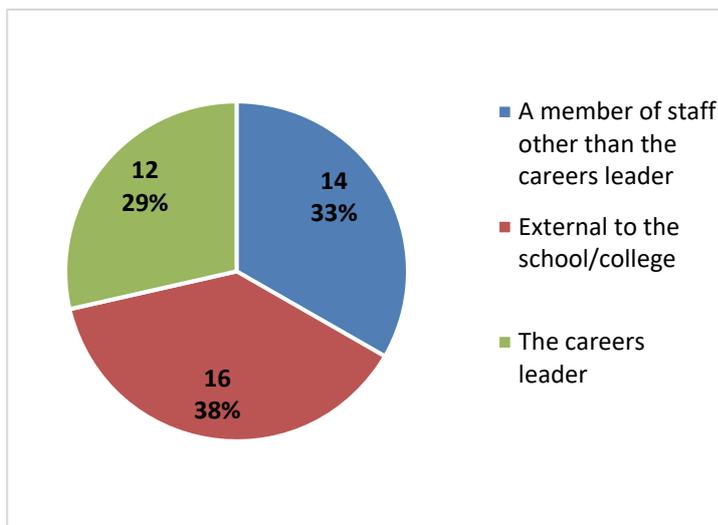
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=42 (all schools with a careers adviser); two pilot schools were not asked for this information

Guidance from the Department for Education (2018) emphasises the importance of starting career guidance activities early on in a student's secondary school career. There is a recommendation that students have at least one encounter with employers per year from years 7 to 13. In general, across surveyed schools all year groups participate in career guidance activities. However, there is a trend whereby students in higher year groups are more likely to participate in career guidance activities (see Figure 7). Six providers interviewed as part of the study reported working with all age groups in secondary schools, from Year 7 to Year 13. Two of them also work with younger students in primary schools and three work with older students in universities or further education (FE) colleges.

Figure 7. Participation in career guidance activities by year group
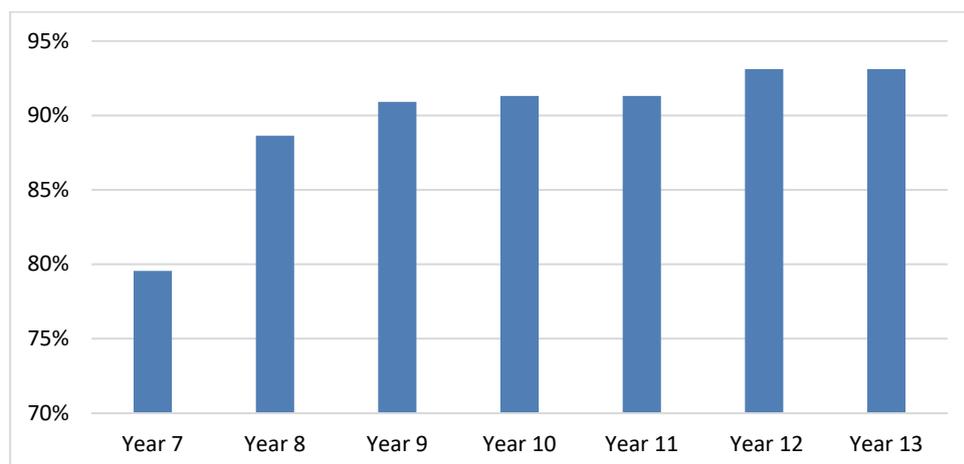
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
N	35	39	40	42	42	27	27
Total	44	44	44	46	46	29	29

Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges; total number of responses differed by school type[11]

In most (51 out of 54) schools career guidance activities are mandatory, although around a fifth (11 out of 54) also organise activities where attendance is voluntary (in the survey school representatives could select both options if their school organised both voluntary and mandatory career guidance activities). Only one school indicated that attendance for all career guidance activities was voluntary for students.

2.1.2. The Gatsby benchmarks are a key factor influencing the provision of career guidance for schools and providers, but a range of other sources are also consulted

Survey respondents reported that they had consulted a range of sources in developing their careers programme (see Figure 8), most commonly the Gatsby benchmarks (49 out of 51 schools), Ofsted guidance (41 schools) and information from the CEC (33 schools). Schools less commonly consult the Careers Development Institute (20 schools) and the National Careers Service (17 schools).

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[11] Answers to this question are filtered on school type since not all schools cover all age groups. Answers for Years 7, 8 and 9 are shown for mainstream secondary schools (age 11–16 or 11–18). Answers for Years 10 and 11 are shown for mainstream secondary schools (age 11–16 or 11–18), FE providers (age 14+) and university technical colleges (age 14–19). Answers for Years 12 and 13 are shown for mainstream secondary schools (age 11–18), FE providers (age 14+), university technical colleges (age 14–19) and sixth form colleges. Special schools (N=5) are not included in the sample because the age range they cover is unknown.

Figure 8. Sources consulted in developing the careers programme

Source	Value
The Gatsby benchmarks	49
Ofsted guidance	41
The Careers & Enterprise Company	33
Careers Development Institute	20
National Careers Service	17
I don't know	2
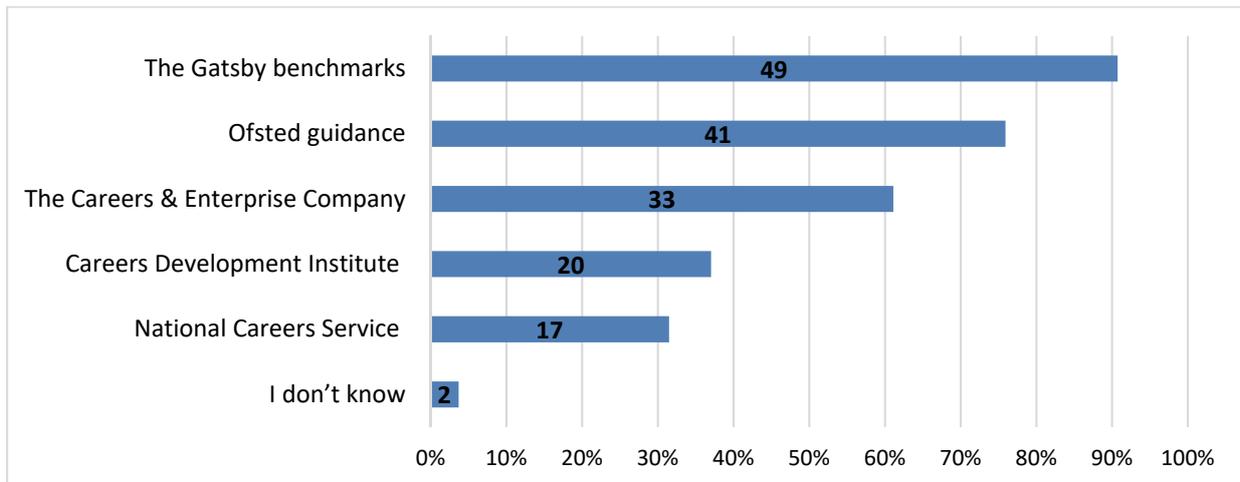
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=51

The central importance of the Gatsby benchmarks was mirrored in the interviews with providers of career guidance services, eight of whom identified the Gatsby benchmarks as a key factor influencing their career guidance offer, as well as the type of career guidance services schools are looking for. Some of these providers had revised their careers offer in response to the Gatsby benchmarks. One provider highlighted greater emphasis on integrating career guidance into the curriculum following the publication of the Gatsby benchmarks, making it easier for them to engage schools on this topic. Another provider described how more schools have been looking to offer one-to-one career advice since the Gatsby benchmarks were published. Three providers reported that the publication of the Gatsby benchmarks did not prompt them to change their offer so much as reframe or repackage it, drawing more explicit links with the benchmarks:

> After the Gatsby benchmarks and the new policy in career guidance the schools realised that there was an expectation from them to offer 1-2-1 career advice to students. Most schools couldn't afford to hire their own careers adviser, so they asked us to hire someone that the schools could buy from us. Now we have 2 professionals careers advisers and the schools buy in the days from us. (P1)

> Having funding from the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC)[12] we are all working towards the Gatsby benchmarks and it has been a major push for us to revise and create content to help schools to reach those benchmarks. (P9)

Three providers identified the direction from Ofsted as a factor influencing their career guidance offer, including a push from Ofsted to provide careers advice for younger students. However, in the view of one provider illustrated in the quotation below, Ofsted still does not place enough emphasis on giving career guidance. This provider argued that coupled with other pressures such as school league tables, Ofsted inspections that neglect careers could lead to career guidance being side-lined or under-resourced:

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[12] Not all schools and colleges in the region are eligible to access provision funded via the CEC (see section 1.1.1).

> Ofsted do not necessarily rate career guidance as a massive priority for schools. I am working with a school that has excellent career guidance provision, they have passed all the Gatsby benchmarks, the students are really well informed and then Ofsted didn't mention that in their latest report at all when they went into the school. The Office for Students focus on the importance of careers to narrow the gap in participation and we have another department, Ofsted, who doesn't seem to rate the Gatsby system and undermines everything we do. (P8)

In addition, one provider commented on how schools have become more adept at identifying and articulating what sort of career guidance services they want since the publication of the Gatsby benchmarks and Ofsted guidance.

Lastly, some providers reported that the CEC influenced their career guidance offer, particularly the two providers that receive funding from them. One provider observed that the CEC supported and reinforced their existing offer, which is linking up businesses with school.

2.1.3. Most schools use the Compass and Tracker tools and find them useful

Respondents from the majority (50 out of 54) of surveyed schools reported that they had used the Compass and Tracker tools to monitor the progress of their career guidance programme against the Gatsby benchmarks. Only three had not used the tools (one survey respondent said they did not know). Two reported that they were happy monitoring progress against the Gatsby benchmarks themselves, as illustrated by this quotation:

> I was happy to track against the Gatsby myself and work with local provider (name of provider) to develop our programme. (S22, open-ended question response)

The survey respondent from the third school expressed an intention to use the Compass and Tracker tools in the future.

Respondents from all surveyed schools that had used the Compass and Tracker tools had found them useful to some degree, with half (24 out of 50) of schools finding the tools 'mostly useful' followed by 'very useful' (19 schools) and 'somewhat useful' (7 schools) (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Usefulness of Compass and Tracker tools
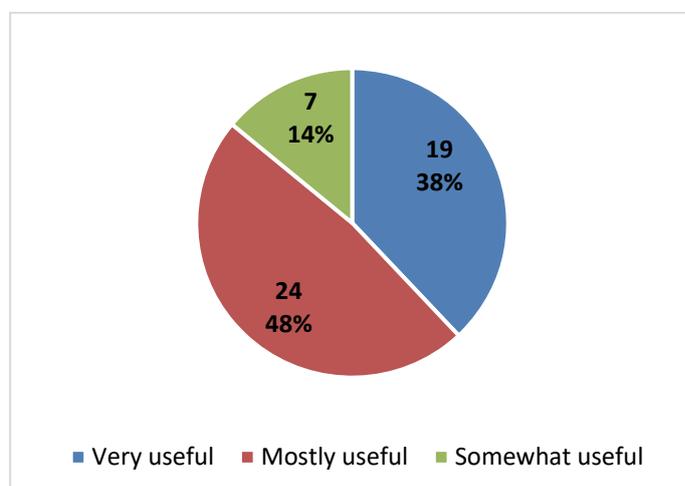
Legend: ■ Very useful ■ Mostly useful ■ Somewhat useful

When asked to elaborate on the rationale for their rating, survey respondents most commonly mentioned that the Compass and Tracker tools allowed them to target areas for improvement (16 out of 50 schools), benchmark against external standards (7 schools), identify gaps in provision (7 schools) and develop a strategy or action plan (7 schools) (Figure 10). Respondents from four schools commented that the Compass and Tracker tools allowed them to track their schools' progress over time, indicating that the value of the tools lies in enabling schools to draw internal as well as external comparisons. One respondent observed:

> [The Compass/Tracker tool] allows you to target areas for development quite clearly. Also allows you to reflect on practice and re-evaluate at the end of the year (comparing beginning of the year to the end). Allows you to gauge progression and areas where you need to target. (S52, open-ended survey response)

Some of the representatives from 50 surveyed schools expressed mixed feelings about the Compass and Tracker tools, because they: were not tailored to the needs of their school (4 schools), were too ambiguous or subjective (4 schools), were unclear or confusing (2 schools), found it difficult to capture all relevant information (2 schools) or found that the indicators were too 'all or nothing' (2 schools). These views are exemplified in the following quotes:

> It doesn't recognise specialist schools (i.e. those that aren't 7–13). (S5, open-ended survey response)

> Some questions can be read in many ways and depending on who interpret[s] the question, the percentage given can vary from very high to very low. For example: every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who is internal or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. What does appropriate level mean? It can be interpreted as someone with a L6 career qualification or someone who has done a 1- or 2-day course in career guidance interviews sometimes in the past. It isn't specific enough. (S11, open-ended survey response)

> The benchmarks vary in how many questions your score is calculated on. Those with few questions are a bit 'all or nothing'. (S42, open-ended survey response)

Figure 10. Reason(s) for rating of Compass and Tracker tools
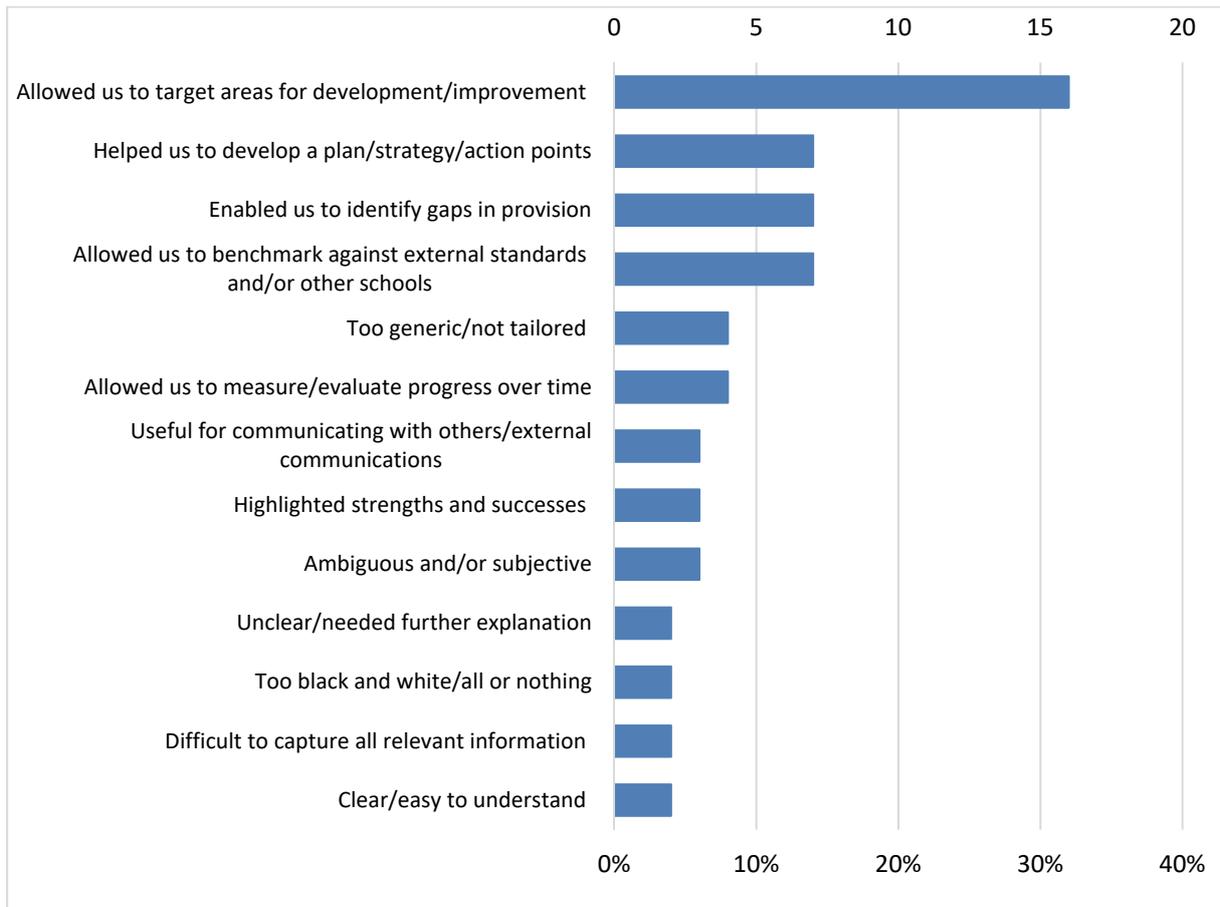
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=50 (all schools who have used the Compass or Tracker tools)

Note: Coding categories were based on responses to open-ended questions and are displayed if mentioned by more than one school

2.2. The content of career guidance in schools

2.2.1. A range of aims and objectives underpin career guidance services in the region; some providers target their provision at disadvantaged students

Four of the ten providers stated that one of the key aims of their services is to make sure that young people understand the opportunities available to them. Other objectives were getting students ready for the world of work (2 providers), giving young people access to relatable role models (2 providers), offering students experience of the workplace or running a business (2 providers), encouraging students to broaden their horizons and aspirations (2 providers) and encouraging students to access higher education (2 providers). Other responses noted less frequently by some providers were: giving young people the knowledge and experience to pursue the career they want (1 provider), making young people into active agents of their own future(1 provider), engaging the business community (1 provider), helping state schools to build networks (1 provider); encouraging students to think about their future (1 provider) and giving young people the opportunity to try different things (1 provider). One observed:

> Our main objective is to help young people to become more aware of what is out there and give children the opportunity to be there and try different things.

> Another aim is making young people aware of the world of work and how you act when you are in it so we did a lot around communication in the workplace e.g. interviews, behaviour in the workplace. So we have these 2 aims: 1) make sure they know what their options are 2) what are the professional skills that they should have. (P7)

Seven providers work predominantly or exclusively with state schools. One provider worked in SEND state schools and two worked with state and independent schools. Three providers have a specific remit to support less advantaged students, one of whom said they targeted geographical areas with lower rates of participation in higher education. This provider commented that their services are designed to support working-class white boys and black and minority ethnic groups. A different provider explained how their career guidance activities are aimed at helping state schools to develop effective networks, something that is often more established in independent schools.

One of the interviewed providers described their offer as universal, targeted at neither disadvantaged students nor high achievers. However, this provider also runs specialist activities for SEND students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

2.2.2. Most providers tailor their career guidance provision to meet the needs of the school

Providers interviewed as part of the study were asked to describe the type, frequency and format of their career guidance activities. There were no clear patterns in the frequency of provision, which was very much linked to the provider: weekly (1 provider), monthly (1 provider), termly (1 provider), yearly (1 provider), dependent on the school (1 provider) or decided ad hoc (1 provider). One provider observed that career guidance activities often do not take place frequently enough as there are difficulties finding space in the curriculum.

Nine of the ten interviewed providers noted that career guidance services are predominantly delivered on school site. One provider highlighted that they run sessions on their own premises. Two interviewed providers offer schools online resources.[13]

Seven providers mostly deliver sessions to students in large groups, whether in the form of assemblies, talks or workshops. Three providers mentioned that they conduct sessions with smaller groups of students or encourage students to work in break-out groups, with one provider offering provision for SEND students in small groups. Other forms of provision included mock interviews, assessment centres, careers fairs, mentoring and workplace visits, all mentioned by one provider.

Four of the interviewed providers offer one-to-one career advice to students. Although it is not possible to establish this from the survey or interview data, the relatively small number of providers who offer one-to-one career advice could be related to the fact that most (26 out of 42) schools which participated in the

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[13] Fieldwork took place before the Covid-19 outbreak and findings do not reflect changes, whether short term or long term, in response to the crisis. This might include an expansion of online career guidance provision, but this cannot be established from the data.

survey that had a careers adviser filled this role internally; see Figure 6 in Section 2.1.1. In the quotation below, one provider emphasises the value of one-to-one career advice:

> We try and offer students as realistic guidance as possible, so we try to work with small groups of students if we can. We do a lot of 1-2-1 work with students, so we can really listen to them and what they know. (P8)

Six of the ten providers tailored the career guidance activities to the school or the profile of students attending specific sessions. Five highlighted the importance of having regular discussions with schools to find out their aims and objectives to ensure the programme meets their needs. Five providers hold discussions at an annual planning meeting with the school at the beginning of the academic year. Four providers tailor the content of sessions to the year group or to a specialism of the school. One provider tailors its career guidance services to the nature of the local labour market, placing greater emphasis on STEM subjects as these industries are dominant in the Cambridge area:

> We have a team that individually work with each of the schools to establish what their needs are and then to plan out and support how we can deliver that activity for them. (P5)

> Some of the tailoring will depend on whether the school has a specialism in a particular subject. If the school has a big music or art department then we might be talking to people about careers in the arts. (P10)

One provider offers standardised career guidance services because of the size of the provider business and one because it is difficult to tailor services when providers know little about students before the day itself.

2.2.3. A wide range of topics and activities are covered in career guidance provision but topics on job readiness and technical education are not given equal weight

The career guidance topics covered by most schools were educational institutions and courses (51 out of 54 schools), career pathways (49 schools), soft skills (45 schools) and apprenticeships or other employment opportunities with on-the-job training (44 schools). Just over three-quarters (42 schools) include employment sectors and trends in their career guidance programme and around half (31 schools) cover financial planning, enterprise (30 schools) and job demands and working life (24 schools) (see Figure 11). It is noteworthy that less than half of the schools cover job demands and working life as part of their career guidance programme because a common complaint from employers is that young people enter the labour market without being 'work ready' (Shury et al. 2010). Looking across sub-groups, larger schools were more likely than smaller schools to offer career guidance on several topics including employment sectors and trends, job demands and working life and financial planning (see Appendix 1, Table 3). Schools are more likely to offer career guidance on all topics if the careers leader has a dedicated budget.

Figure 11. Topics covered as part of the career guidance programme

Topic	Value
Educational institutions, courses, qualifications, entry requirements and costs	51
Career pathways and progression routes in the local labour market	49
Soft skills e.g. communication, confidence	45
Jobs with training and apprenticeships	44
Job applications and interviews	44
Employment sectors, employers, jobs, salaries and employment trends	42
Financial planning	31
Enterprise	30
Job demands and working life	24
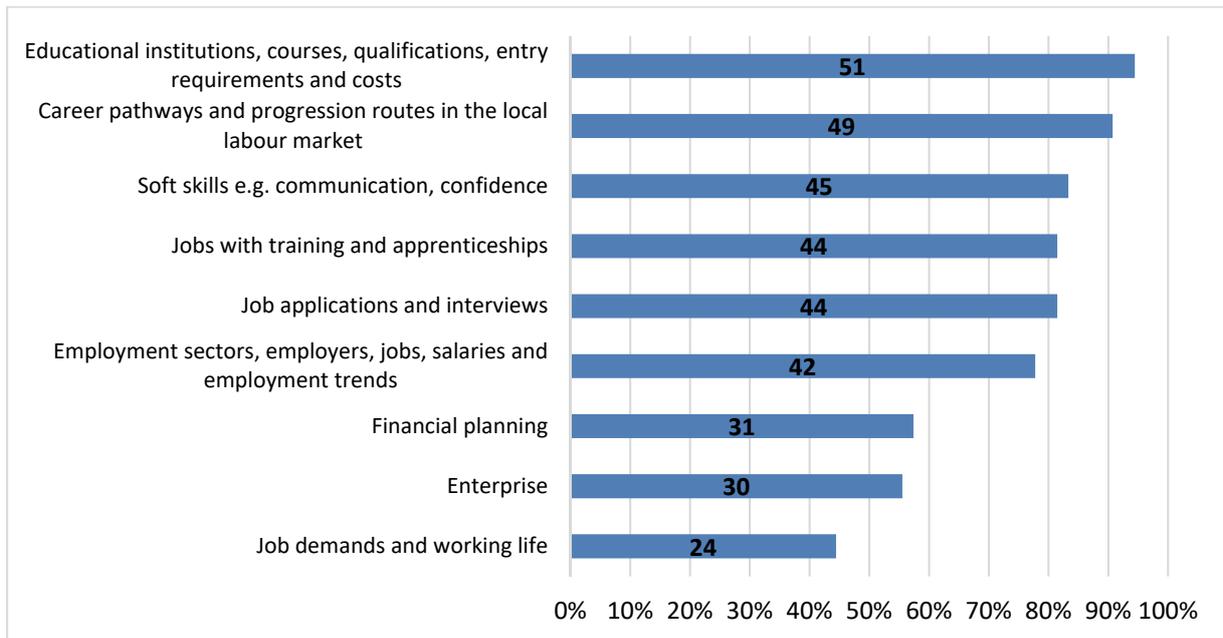
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

The number of schools offering career guidance on academic education pathways (50 out of 54 schools) is higher than the proportion offering guidance on apprenticeships (46 schools), technical education pathways (30 schools) and entry into the armed services (30 schools) (see Figure 12). This suggests that some schools in the area have a way to go in meeting Gatsby benchmark 7 ('All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them'), including both academic and vocational career pathways. Looking across sub-groups, schools are more likely to offer guidance on all types of educational pathways if they are a mainstream secondary school than another type of school, if they are larger rather than smaller, and if the careers leader has a dedicated budget (see Appendix 1, Table 4).

Figure 12. Educational pathways covered by career guidance

Pathway	Value
Academic qualifications	50
Apprenticeships	46
Technical qualifications	38
Entry into armed services	30
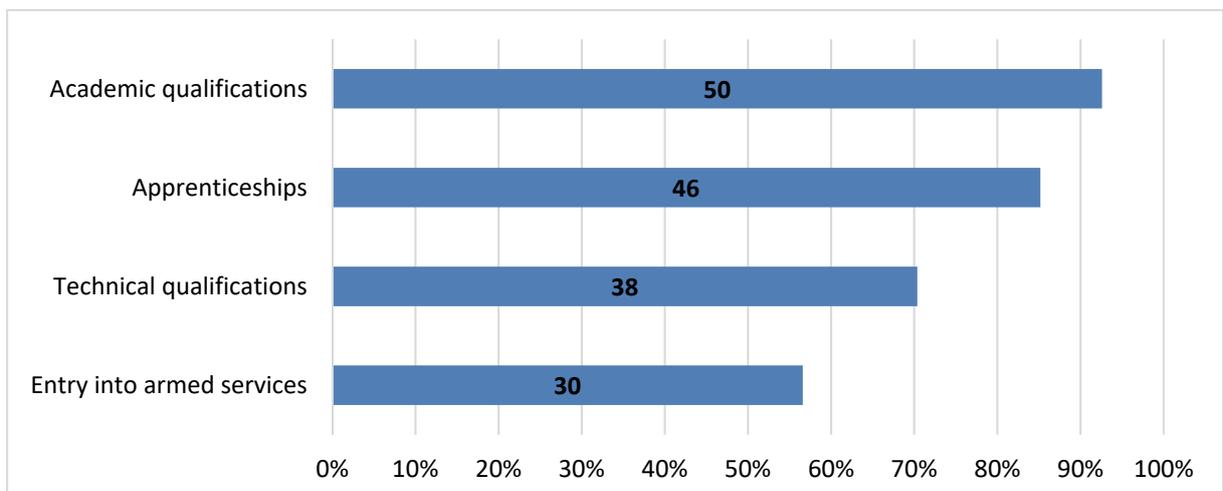
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

Most schools offered careers fairs or events (50 out of 54 schools), speakers (50 schools), access to information and resources (48 schools), face-to-face discussions (48 schools) and work experience (45 schools) as part of their career guidance programme. In contrast, only around half (28 schools) offered mentoring opportunities (see Figure 13), with one additional school stating that they were planning to introduce mentoring from employers in the future. Only one provider included mentoring as part of their offer.

Looking across sub-groups, larger schools are more likely than smaller schools to offer all activities, opportunities and resources, and in most cases (career fairs being the exception) schools where the careers leader has a dedicated budget are more likely than other schools to offer activities, opportunities and resources (see Appendix 1, Table 5).

Figure 13. Activities, opportunities and resources provided as part of the career guidance programme
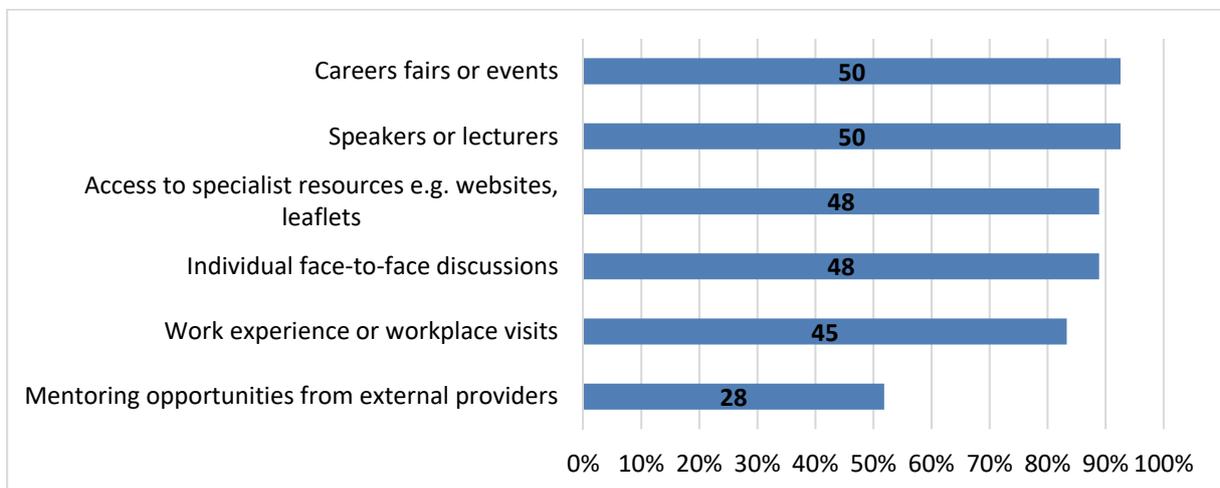
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

2.2.4. Working with employers is a key factor of career guidance provision for schools and providers, but some schools struggle to arrange work experience for students

Seven of the ten providers worked with local employers, connecting them to schools. One provider emphasised the importance of enabling students to meet employers and representatives from different sectors and industries:

> We have a Theory of Change which shows that when you leverage the support of the business community you give young people insight into careers and a knowledge and understanding and a motivation that they wouldn't get through by simply taking information by one careers adviser or only online resources, brochures, etc. (P1)

Two providers commented that businesses in the region, particularly in Cambridge, are happy to engage with schools and providers of career guidance services. These providers observed that employers are aware

that education is key to addressing skills shortages in the local area and can also be motivated by more altruistic concerns, wanting to make a difference in the local area. One told us:

> We work with big companies in Cambridge. These companies are committed to this because they have skill shortages and they want to make a difference in the local community to create a talent pipeline. (P1)

The main barriers associated with working with local employers are time constraints (1 provider), practicalities such as securing Disclosure and Barring Service checks (1 provider) and difficulties persuading employers to travel to schools located in rural areas (1 provider).

Employers were integrated into schools' career guidance programme to a certain extent, mostly by giving talks (47 out of 54 schools), offering work experience opportunities at their premises (43 schools) and delivering activity sessions[14] (40 schools) (Figure 14). Employers were less commonly involved as an enterprise adviser (27 schools),[15] through inputting into career guidance (18 schools) and by mentoring students (12 schools). Looking across sub-groups, some types of employer engagement, for instance, giving talks, inputting into career guidance and acting as an enterprise adviser, were more commonly mentioned by respondents from mainstream secondary schools than other schools and colleges. Smaller schools appear to face barriers engaging with employers, since they are less likely than larger schools to report all forms of employer engagement. All forms of employer engagement are more common in schools where the careers leader has a dedicated budget (see Appendix 1, Table 6).

Figure 14. How employers are integrated into the career guidance programme
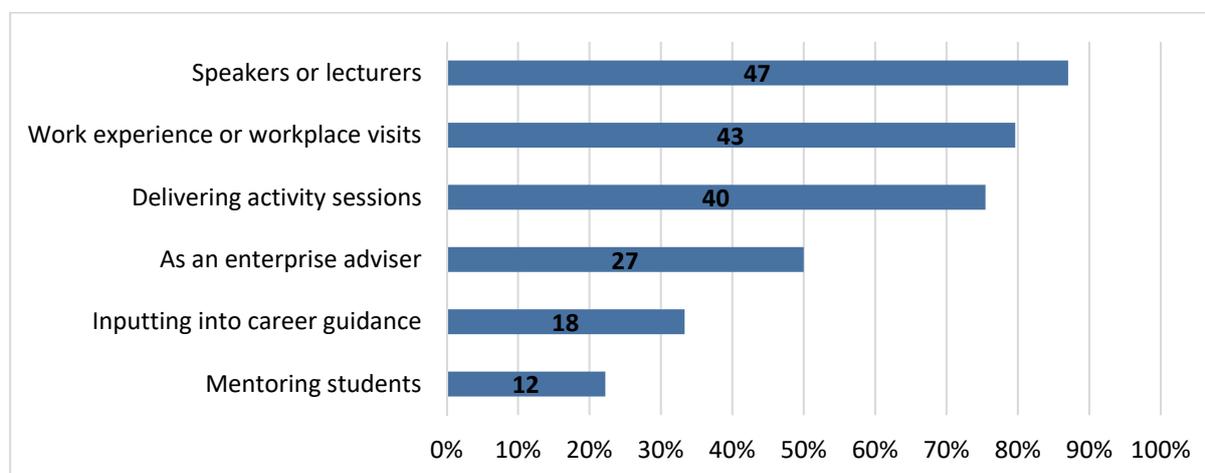
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

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[14] For instance, attending a careers event to talk about their sector or organisation, answer questions or otherwise assist with providing programmes

[15] An enterprise adviser is a professional who works with a school to develop the careers programme. The scheme is organised by the Careers & Enterprise Company. As of 28 April 2020:
https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers-volunteers/join-enterprise-adviser-network

Respondents from around three-quarters of schools reported arranging work experience with local employers. Nine schools wanted to expand or enhance their work experience programme, four of which already offer some work experience opportunities for students. One respondent stated that they would like to extend their work experience offer to students aged under 16. Three schools found it difficult to persuade local employers to engage and participate; one respondent from a specialist school suggested this was because of perceptions of SEND students (see Box 1).

To summarise, although most (43 out of 54) surveyed schools offered work experience as part of their career guidance programme, it is evident that a minority of schools face challenges in this area. These challenges may be particularly acute for SEND and AP schools as they are ineligible for certain sources of funding (see Section 1.1.1).

Box 1. Examples from special schools that participated in the survey

Only four special schools participated in the survey, all smaller in size (fewer than 900 students), so it was not possible to assess systematically whether there were differences between special schools and mainstream schools. However, selected findings for two special schools are presented here as examples to offer some insight into careers provision in a specialist setting.

The difficulty in engaging employers because of their perceptions of SEND students (among other factors) is a barrier that prevents one specialist school from developing a career guidance programme. Although the school engages with employers which offer experience, delivering career guidance sessions and acting as an enterprise adviser, this school would like to expand this work, offering more talks and workshops, as well as opportunities for work shadowing. The survey respondent observed that the school fully meets Gatsby benchmark 6 ('Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace'), but only mostly meets benchmark 5 ('Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work').

A survey respondent from another special school rates the Compass and Tracker tools as mostly 'rather useful' instead of 'very useful' because they offered tailored statements that don't always apply to a specialist learning environment, describing the school as mostly or fully meeting most of the Gatsby benchmarks, except for linking careers to the curriculum (somewhat) and there is nothing they would like to add or further develop about their career guidance programme.

2.2.5. Around two-thirds of schools would like to expand or develop their career guidance programme to include more work experience or collaboration with employers

Respondents from two-thirds (37 out of 54) of schools identified areas where they would like to expand or develop their career guidance programme. The most commonly mentioned possibilities were new or improved opportunities for work experience (9 schools) and closer collaboration with local employers (5 schools) (Figure 15). Respondents from two schools expressed a desire to expand their career guidance opportunities for SEND students:

> Increased employer engagement through workshops/speaking to groups. Improved resources adapted for SEND students, opportunities for work shadowing with local employers. (S32, open-ended survey response)

Ways of linking employers/businesses with particular subjects and departments.
(S51, open-ended survey response)

Figure 15. Activities, opportunities and resources schools would like to add to their career guidance programme
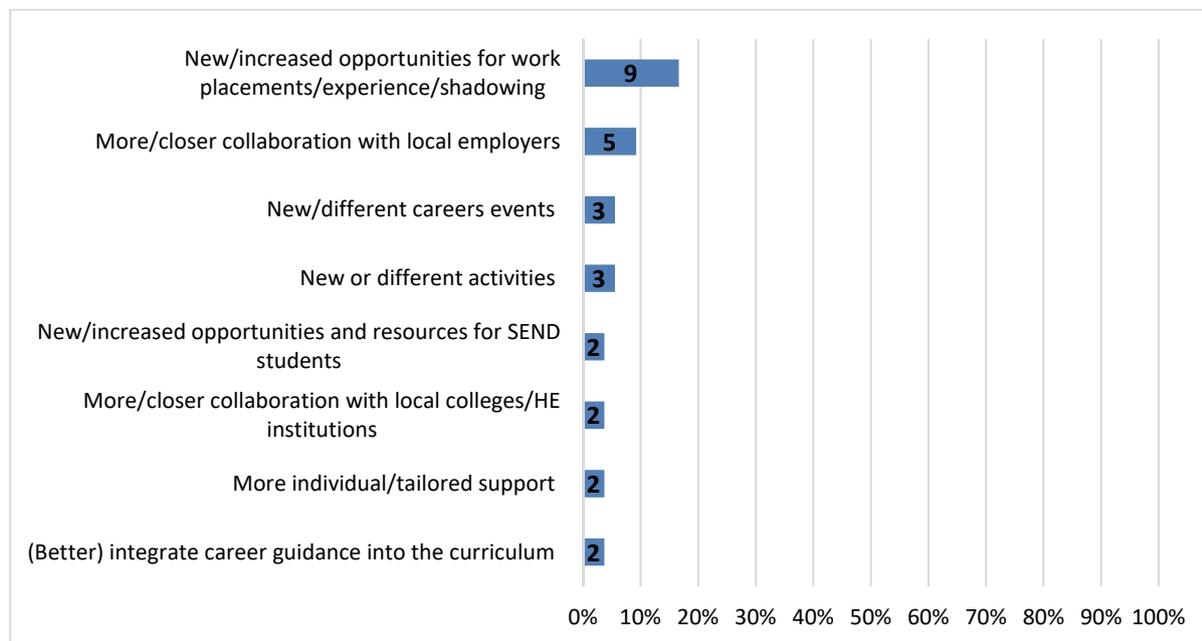
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

Note: this was an open-ended question; responses are only displayed if mentioned by more than one school

Of the respondents from 37 schools who expressed a desire to expand or develop their career guidance programme, 33 reported factors that prevented them from making the desired changes or made it more difficult for them to do so. The constraint most commonly mentioned was a lack of funding (14 schools), followed by a lack of staff time and capacity (11 schools) (see Figure 16).

Survey respondents also flagged issues relating to funding and finances when asked about other factors relevant to their career guidance programme.[16] Two mentioned a lack of funding available to train staff as a Level 6 or Level 7 careers adviser,[17] as illustrated by one of the quotations below. Funding for staff training is available for eligible schools via the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area and the CEC (see Section 1.1.1). The CEC offers a Level 6 Careers Leader bursary to all schools,[18] but not all schools are aware of this:

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[16] This question was analysed qualitatively but not coded since responses were varied and disparate.

[17] The Careers Development Institute is the body responsible for overseeing the Qualification in Careers Development, which is available at different levels, the highest being levels 6 and 7. A number of universities offer programmes. As of 28 April 2020: https://www.thecdi.net/Qualification-in-Career-Development

[18] As of 28 April 2020: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/training-careers-leaders

If there was funding available, we could do so much more. The problem with asking schools to do more careers education but not providing any specific funding is a massive issue. Also, the provision of a Level 6 careers adviser is not feasible for all schools, due to cost. We currently do not have one – I am completing the qualification over the next 18 months though this isn't ideal as I also teach. This is because the guidance expects us to have one but we can't afford the £250 per day that is being charged. (S2, open-ended survey response)

Cost – I can't afford to take students out on workplace visits. One trip to Cambridge for the year group would cost me my entire year's budget. (S2, open-ended survey response)

Four respondents mentioned lack of space in the curriculum as a factor that made it more difficult for them to expand or develop their career guidance programme (Figure 16). Although it is not possible to establish this from the survey data, a lack of space in the curriculum may contribute to the relatively slow progress reported by schools in relation to meeting Gatsby benchmark 4 ('All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers'), including in STEM subjects (Figure 17).

Figure 16. Factors preventing schools from adding activities, opportunities and resources to their career guidance programme
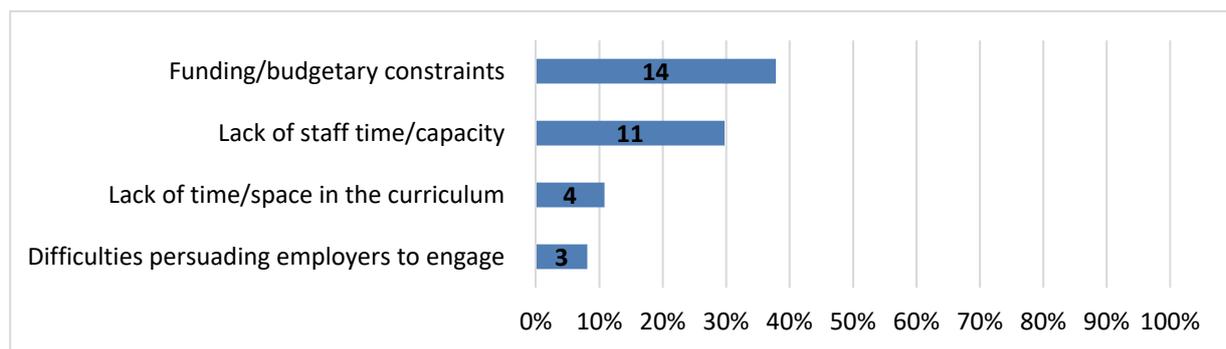
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=37 (schools that would like to add activities, opportunities, resources)

Note: this was an open-ended question; responses are only displayed if mentioned by more than one school

Almost a third (17 out of 54) of schools reported that there were no activities, opportunities and resources that they would like to add to their career guidance programme.

2.2.6. Parents are not always integrated into career guidance services offered by providers and tend to play a marginal role

Three of the ten providers of career guidance services interviewed stated that they did not involve parents in any way in their career guidance services.[19] Five providers involved or sought to involve parents, one provider had resources for parents, and three providers invited them to events. One provider described giving talks to parents and involving them in award ceremonies. Two providers mentioned difficulties in

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[19] This topic was not covered in the survey so there is no comparable data for schools.

engaging with parents and including them in career guidance activities. One attributed this to a lack of funding available for activities involving parents and one to difficulty in engaging parents:

> We do try to involve parents, but we have a catch 22 problem. Part of the problem in trying to engage these students is that their parents didn't go to university. So having events about attending the university don't particularly attract those parents because they didn't go to university themselves, they don't see the value on it so it is all about breaking that cycle! (P8)

2.2.7. Schools report making good progress in relation to the Gatsby benchmarks, but there is room for improvement in integrating career guidance into the curriculum

Figure 17 sets out schools' self-rated progress against the Gatsby benchmarks. Self-reported progress is greatest in relation to Gatsby benchmark 7 ('**All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes academic and vocational routes…**').[20] All schools reported making some progress in relation to this benchmark, with 38 schools fully meeting the benchmark and a further 13 mostly meeting the benchmark. However, data collected elsewhere in the survey suggests that schools do not always give equal weight to technical and academic education. When asked about educational pathways covered as part of the career guidance programme, 50 out of 54 schools said they covered academic pathways whereas 46 schools selected apprenticeships, 38 technical qualifications and 30 entry into the armed forces (see Figure 12). Of the 16 schools whose career guidance programme does not cover technical education, survey respondents from 9 schools stated that they fully met Gatsby benchmark 7 and a further 6 schools mostly met this benchmark. This suggests that careers leaders in schools may consider a 'light touch' approach sufficient to meet Gatsby benchmark 7, for instance making information about technical or vocational pathways available on request but not making it a core component of the career guidance programme.

Respondents from most schools reported good progress in relation to meeting Gatsby benchmark 3 ('**Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil…**'): 31 reported that they fully met this benchmark and a further 19 schools mostly met this benchmark.

A slightly more mixed picture emerges in relation to how closely schools met Gatsby benchmark 6 ('**Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience…**'). Although respondents from 35 schools said they fully met this benchmark and a further 9 mostly met it, 8 respondents said they only somewhat met this benchmark and 2 did not at all. A similar picture is seen in the extent to which schools met Gatsby benchmark 5 ('**Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace**'). Around half of respondents (28 schools) said that they fully met this benchmark and a further 17 mostly met this benchmark. However, 2 schools do not meet this benchmark at all and another

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[20] All schools are required to publish a fair provider access policy on their website, which states among other things that students in years 8–13 are entitled to find out about technical qualifications and apprenticeships and to hear from a range of providers, including those covering technical education and apprenticeships.

7 only somewhat meet the benchmark. These findings are consistent with respondents expressing a desire to expand or develop their work experience offer for students, discussed in Section 2.2.4

More than half the respondents (31 schools) reported that they fully met Gatsby benchmark 8 ('**Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser**') and a further 7 mostly met it. However, 4 schools do not meet this benchmark at all and another 9 schools only somewhat meet it. Respondents from schools with a careers adviser reported making greater progress in meeting this benchmark: almost three-quarters (30 out of 42) fully met this benchmark, compared with no schools without a careers adviser meeting it. Respondents from one-third (2 out of 6) of schools without a careers adviser said they did not meet this benchmark at all compared with only 1 school out of 40 with a careers adviser. Schools without a careers adviser may find it more difficult to meet Gatsby benchmark 2 ('**Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities**'): 26 schools fully met Gatsby benchmark 2 and a further 19schools mostly met it. However, respondents from 8 schools reported only somewhat meeting this benchmark. This option was selected by respondents from one-third (2 out of 6) of schools with a careers adviser, compared with about one-tenth (5 out of 42) of schools without a careers adviser.

Schools have made less progress in meeting Gatsby benchmark 4 ('**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**'). Respondents from only 15 schools reported fully meeting this benchmark and a further 24 mostly met it. Around a one-quarter of schools either only somewhat met this benchmark (12 schools) or did not meet this benchmark at all (1 school). Respondents from two schools reported that they wished to improve their career guidance programme by offering better integration of career guidance into the curriculum (see Figure 15). The sessions of four interviewed providers are integrated into the curriculum. One provider commented that this is more common for STEM subjects than for other subjects. Three providers observed that integrating activities into the curriculum depended on the school; the career guidance activities of one provider always take place outside the curriculum.

Although 51 out of the 54 schools had a careers programme in place (see Figure 2), not all schools claimed to meet Gatsby benchmark 1 ('**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**'): respondents from eight schools said they only somewhat met this benchmark and one does not meet it at all. This may be because some schools with a careers programme in place are not communicating this effectively to all stakeholder groups – students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.

Figure 17. Schools' self-rated progress against the Gatsby benchmarks

Gatsby benchmark 7: Our career guidance enables students to understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them, including both academic and vocational routes — Fully 38, Mostly 13, Somewhat 3

Gatsby benchmark 6: We offer all students first-hand experience of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience — Fully 35, Mostly 9, Somewhat 8, Not at all 2

Gatsby benchmark 8: Every student in our school is offered guidance interviews with a careers adviser — Fully 31, Mostly 7, Somewhat 9, Not at all 4, I don't know 3

Gatsby benchmark 3: We offer students career guidance tailored to different stages of education and according to personal needs — Fully 31, Mostly 19, Somewhat 3, 1

Gatsby benchmark 5: We offer all students multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and skills — Fully 28, Mostly 17, Somewhat 7, 2

Gatsby benchmark 2: Students and their parents have access to good quality information about study options and labour market opportunities supported by an informed adviser — Fully 26, Mostly 19, Somewhat 8, 1

Gatsby benchmark 1: We provide a stable and embedded careers programme that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers — Fully 25, Mostly 20, Somewhat 8, 1

Gatsby benchmark 4: We link curriculum learning to career guidance, including in STEM subjects — Fully 15, Mostly 24, Somewhat 12, Not at all 1, I don't know 2

Legend: ■ Fully ■ Mostly ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all ■ I don't know

Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

Looking across sub-groups, self-reported progress against the Gatsby benchmarks is on average greater for larger schools than for smaller schools (see Appendix 1, Table 7). For instance, respondents from 27 out of 31 schools with 900 students or more reported that they fully or mostly met Gatsby benchmark 8 ('Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser') compared with 11 out of

23 schools with fewer than 900 students. Schools where the careers leader has a dedicated budget made greater progress in meeting the Gatsby benchmarks than other schools.

Respondents from five schools rated themselves as having made no progress against at least one of the Gatsby benchmarks and were asked to elaborate on any factors that made it difficult for them to meet the benchmark (or benchmarks). Schools pointed to a lack of time and resource, difficulties accessing funding and a lack of staff qualified to the appropriate level:

> Finding the time and having the resources and funds to embed a stable careers programme that meets all of the benchmarks. (S17, open-ended survey response)

> No qualified Level 6 careers adviser as of yet. (S15, open-ended survey response)

2.3. The relationship between schools and providers

2.3.1. All schools work with at least one provider

All of the surveyed schools worked with at least one provider of career guidance[21] and on average schools work with five providers. The providers with the greatest reach in the region are Anglia Ruskin University (31 out of 54 schools), Form the Future (31 schools), the Skills Service (29 schools) and Cambridge Regional College (27 schools), all of which work with 50 per cent or more of the surveyed schools. Other providers are only selected by one or two schools (Figure 18). Many of the most active providers are organisations specific to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region (and surrounding areas): Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge Regional College, Edge, Form the Future, NEACO, the Skills Service, and Youthoria. Other providers that work with a large number of schools in the region are national organisations such as Aim Apprenticeships, Future First and Young Enterprise. Some of the providers are funded via the CEC or NEACO, so not all schools in the region are eligible to access funds (see 1.1.1).

Looking across sub-groups, some regional differences emerge. Some providers are more active in Cambridgeshire than in Peterborough (e.g. Cambridge Regional College, Form the Future, Youthoria), whereas for others the reverse is true (NEACO, the Skills Service) (see Appendix 1, Table 8). This is linked to the funding of brokerage services (CEC, NEACO) and how this is shaped by the socio-economic profile of regions. Peterborough has larger identified areas of disadvantage than Cambridgeshire and therefore more schools are eligible for provision funded via the CEC and NEACO.

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[21] Respondents from schools were given a pre-defined list of providers but also had the option to write in the names of other providers not included on the list.

Figure 18. Career guidance providers schools use
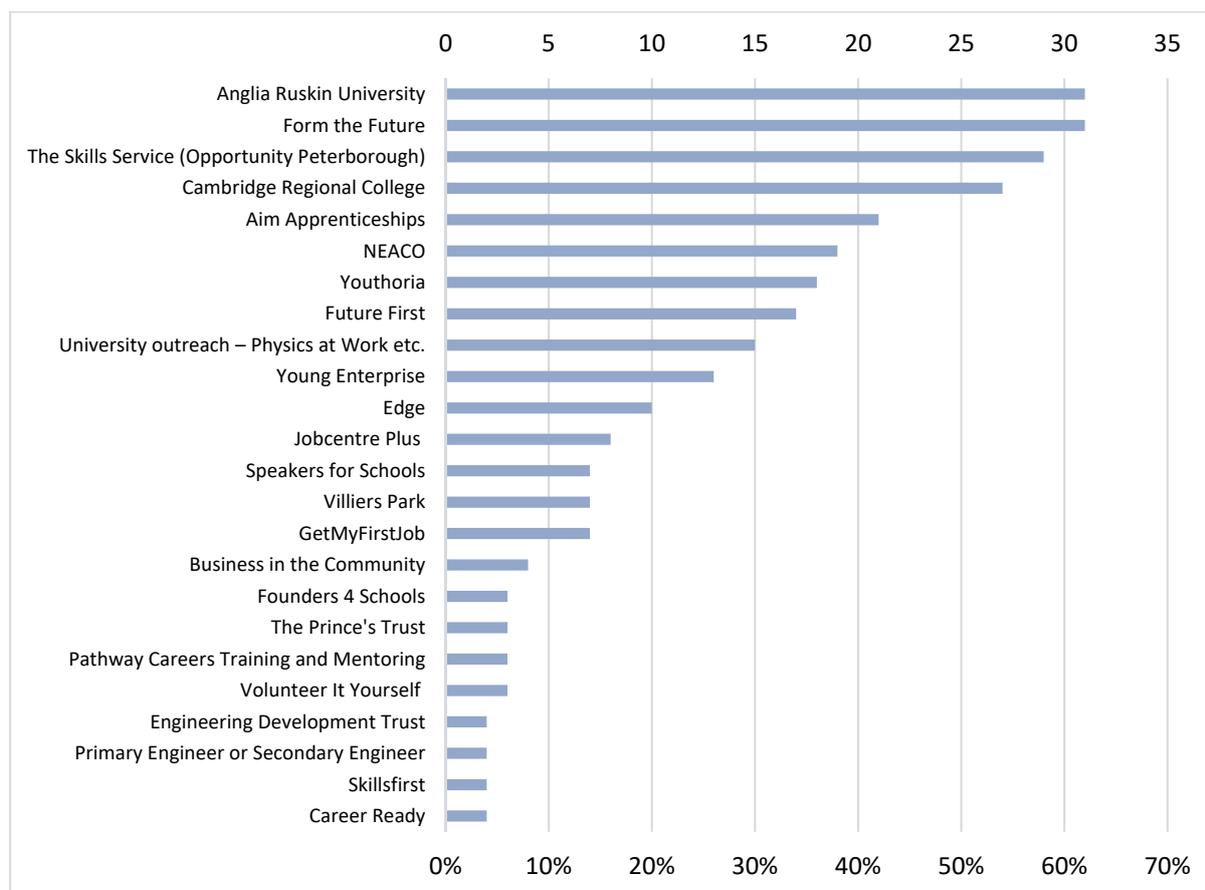
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

2.3.2. Schools' decision of which providers to work with is driven by availability rather than the needs of the local labour market

The factors identified as reasons for working with particular providers included: the availability of providers (38 out of 54 schools), student needs (33 schools), confidence in the provider's ability to deliver high-quality career guidance (29 schools) and funding (29 schools). Respondents from only around a quarter (14 out of 54) of schools identified the needs of the local labour market as a factor influencing their decision (Figure 19). Looking across sub-groups, the needs of the local labour market were less important for mainstream secondary schools than other schools (sixth form colleges, FE colleges etc.) (see Appendix 1, Table 9). In addition, the needs of the local labour market seem to influence more choices by careers staff of larger schools than smaller schools, and all respondents who identified this as important had a dedicated careers budget. Funding is identified as an important factor in choosing which provider(s) to work with by around three-quarters (27 out of 42) of respondents from schools in Cambridgeshire but only 1 school out of 11 in Peterborough. This may be because a higher proportion of schools in the Peterborough area are eligible for NEACO-funded provision, which is targeted at regions with low participation in higher education (a higher number of schools in Peterborough than Cambridgeshire reported working with NEACO; see Table 8 in Appendix 1). Although it is not possible to establish this from the survey data, it

seems that, at least for some schools, convenience surpasses bespoke approaches that would be tailored to the local context.

Figure 19. Reason(s) for selecting provider(s)
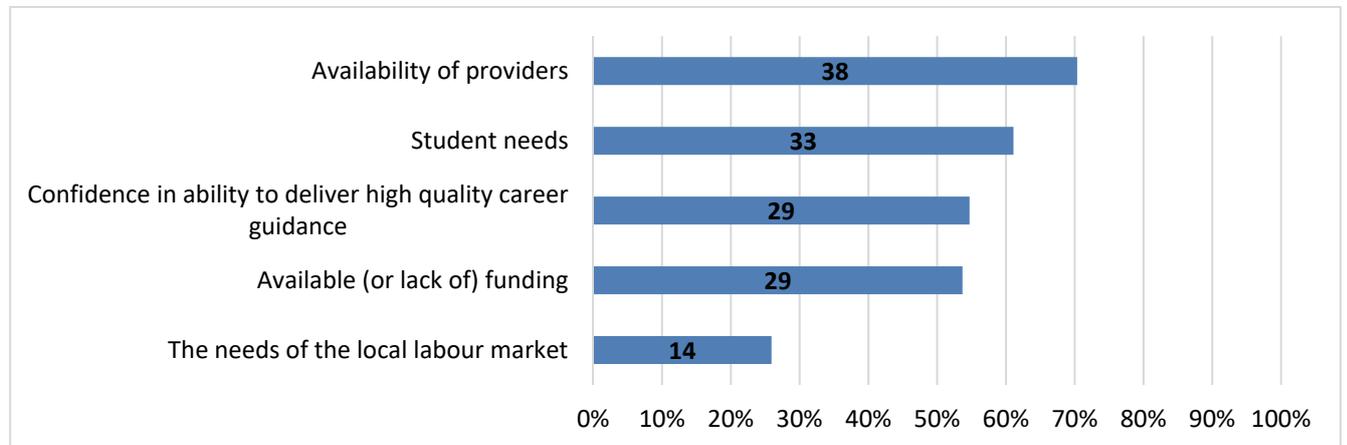
Source: Career guidance survey with schools and colleges, N=54

2.3.3. In the view of some providers, the variety of funding arrangements and providers available locally is a challenge for schools in deciding which provider(s) to work with

As discussed above, funding is an important factor for schools and the dominance of certain providers in the region is likely to be partly driven by funding arrangements (see Section 1.1.1). Four of the ten interviewed providers (including from national and regional organisations) mentioned being part of the CEC virtual wallet system, a pre-approved list of providers contracted to offer funded career guidance services for eligible schools. Three providers interviewed as part of the study were able to deliver partially funded services in collaboration with NEACO. Other funding sources mentioned by providers were the combined authority (1 provider), corporate sponsors (3 providers) and charitable trusts (2 providers). All ten providers offer fully funded career guidance services, at least to some schools some of the time. However, depending on geographical location and other factors such as the profile of students attending the school, not all schools are eligible for funded provision. Five providers charge some schools for career guidance activities or have certain activities that schools must self-fund.

One provider identified the complexity of the careers funding sources as a factor making it more difficult for schools to decide which provider(s) to work with:

> There is a lot of money sloshing around, but actually how much of it is benefitting the students?... cut out some players and simplify funding. It should either come directly to the local LEP [local enterprise partnership] or combined authorities to work with, or again nationally there should not be so many different pots; that makes the landscape very complex. You don't need so many people in the same space. (P5)

According to three providers, the variety of options in terms of which provider(s) to work with is also a challenge for the time-constrained career leaders. Two providers believed that schools have 'too much'

choice of provider and found this overwhelming. One provider commented that schools may decide to work with providers in a last-minute panic or stay with the same provider simply because they do not have time to investigate alternatives. The pressure on busy careers leads to select providers may be why availability was the most common reason they gave for choosing a provider (see Figure 19):

> I think it is a bit overwhelming for schools, to be honest, there is an overwhelming abundance of different providers. (P3)

According to one provider, the CEC virtual wallet makes the process of selecting provider(s) easier for eligible schools because careers leads are given a pre-approved list of fully funded providers.

Providers found it harder than average to reach rural schools, schools without named contacts on their website and schools with high staff turnover (1 provider) and schools in areas where the local community is less engaged in education (1 provider).

One interviewed provider saw value in having a strong relationship with the school in order to facilitate the interaction between schools and providers, by having key members of staff within the school who have the time and inclination to engage with career guidance provision.

2.3.4. Some degree of competition between providers is inevitable, but most providers prefer to avoid competition and take a more collaborative approach

Seven of the ten providers noted that they have collaborated or tried collaborating with some other providers in the past. Two highlighted the shared values and common purpose of organisations providing career guidance services, many of which are not for profit. This shared purpose made two providers more inclined to collaborate and less comfortable with the idea of competition. In the words of one interviewee:

> At the end of the day, we are all there for the same reason: to improve career guidance and help students. (P3)

One provider commented that they are more inclined to collaborate with one another when each organisation occupies a distinctive niche:

> Sometimes we try to look whether there are collaborative opportunities to work together but it has to make sense when we do that. We do that where there are gaps… so we don't try to step on each other's toes. (P4)

Some providers describe effective partnerships, such as one organisation recruiting students and the other recruiting employers for a careers event. Another provider described partnerships that were not sustainable in the long run, perhaps because they were too ambitious or because working with other providers placed a strain on their resources.

It should be noted that providers differ in the degree to which they view themselves as engaged in competition with other providers. Three providers viewed themselves as occupying a distinctive niche, as demonstrated in this comment:

> I don't think that there is any other like us. There are providers doing similar things, but no one is doing quite what we are doing, as far as I know. (P2)

Six providers believed there is some degree of overlap between the services offered by their organisation and other providers of career guidance active in the area. Two providers were reluctant to compete with one another for business, preferring to rely on unspoken agreements about the delineation between two providers' scope and geographical reach. One provider recalls scaling back provision in the Cambridgeshire area after the funding landscape changed, with more funding directed towards all-school provision. The same provider described how they could have offered these services but decided not to. This was because another organisation, with whom they had a friendly working relationship, was already providing these services for schools in Cambridgeshire. Incidentally, the other provider referenced mentioned how as an established organisation they may make it harder for other organisations to break in to the area:

> The funding landscape changed and CEC put a lot of funding on whole school approaches and it doesn't make sense for us to do the whole school approach in Cambridge because [provider name] is doing that in the region. Our strategy is changing so we tried to do something different.... It was a case that we had a professional partnership with [provider name] so it wasn't feeling right to be doing the same things as them. (P7)

Another provider described how they cover the same ground as another organisation but have an informal agreement to cover different geographical areas. This provider commented that the Council's decision to work with the other provider (who was not dominant in the area) caused some friction between the two providers, and between providers and schools.

Two providers described how tension can be created when there is a commercial element to competition, particularly when another provider is trying to sell services to schools (at cost), which would be fully funded through their own organisation.

Providers found the following gaps in the provision of career guidance services in the region: a lack of providers offering opportunities for mentoring (1 provider), the absence of a career's hub where school staff could come together, share best practice and access training and support (1 provider), and the fact that few providers engage with parents in a meaningful way (1 provider).

2.4.   The quality of career guidance services

2.4.1.   High-quality career guidance service depends on a range of factors

Providers identified a wide range of factors related to ensuring high-quality career guidance services.[22] Career guidance activities should: be accessible to the target audience (2 providers); be relevant, relatable and engaging (2 providers); set out a wide range of career options for the recipients (2 providers); deliver something that students cannot get from the regular school day (1 provider); expose students to a wide range of businesses and employment sectors (1 provider); inspire them to follow their future career pathways (1 provider); set out a range of career options for students (1 provider); be tailored to the needs of individual schools and students (1 provider); meet the Gatsby benchmarks (1 provider); help students get a clear

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[22] Respondents from schools were not asked in the survey to comment on the quality of career guidance provision so there is no comparable data for schools

direction for their career pathway (1 provider); widen rather than narrow students' career options (1 provider); and listen to students by giving them the opportunity to raise their voices in topics that matter to their lives (1 provider).

2.4.2. A lack of engagement from schools makes it more difficult for providers to deliver high-quality career guidance services; this is attributed to a lack of time and/or funding

Four providers highlighted a lack of interest or engagement from schools as a barrier to providing high-quality career guidance services. One interviewee attributed this to different pressures on schools such as the need to focus on Ofsted inspections (career guidance not being part of the Ofsted assessment) and their position in the league tables (see Section 2.1.2):

> I think that if Ofsted have paid more attention to that, then schools will have taken career guidance more seriously and it will be far easier to access for students. The biggest single barrier is Ofsted because they have put so much pressure on the schools and their requirement[s] change all the time in terms of attainment and behaviour but not for career guidance. (P8)

Three providers identified lack of funding as a challenge, both in general and in relation to their ability to offer services in specific areas such as mentoring. This lack of funding may explain why mentoring was the activity surveyed schools were least likely to offer within their career guidance programmes (see Figure 13):

> The main challenge sits within the school because they don't have much staff, funding, time to dedicate to careers. Schools are always under pressure and they do not have enough funding. (P7)

Two providers observed that school staff are often over-stretched and lack time, making it difficult for them to engage with providers. Conversely, two providers noted that an interested and engaged careers lead or headteacher is an enabling factor. Three providers described how their relationship with schools can be closely shaped by the individual(s) with whom they have contact, so staff turnover can make it more challenging to provide high-quality services.

Providers also pointed to other challenges: finding time in the school curriculum (2 providers), delivering sessions to large groups (1 provider), and coming up with 'one size fits all' sessions to deliver to a range of different schools (1 provider):

> Coming up with something [where] 'one size fits all' [is challenging] because obviously it doesn't necessarily. Finding something you can take from school to school with some flexibility. (P2)

In order to provide high-quality guidance services, one provider suggested that it is helpful when employers in the area are motivated to engage with schools and career guidance providers. However, another commented that it can be difficult to persuade volunteers from the business sector to travel to schools in more rural areas, which can be a barrier in providing high-quality career guidance services (see sections 2.2.4 and 2.3.3):

> Whenever we want volunteers for workplace visits it is easy to get employers to volunteer to do that work but everywhere else is not that easy. People in Cambridge are more forthcoming; probably it has to do with the type of businesses that are in Cambridge which have volunteering time for their staff. (P7)

2.4.3. Providers monitor feedback in a cycle of continuous improvement, but measuring the quality of career guidance services across the sector is difficult

All ten interviewed providers monitor the quality of their services in some way, mostly by gathering feedback from participants (students, schools and volunteers from the business community). This information feeds into a cycle of continuous improvement, helping providers to refine and improve their career guidance offer (7 providers). Depending on the size and specialism of the provider (for some organisations, career guidance is not their sole or primary focus), monitoring activities might range from gathering informal feedback (1 provider) to conducting a large-scale impact assessment (1 provider). One provider believed that high demand for their services and repeat bookings from schools demonstrate the quality of their work:[23]

> Our evaluations measure the quality of our services – by the students, the teachers. The success of them is measured and also is reflected in how many repeat bookings we get from school and the high demand for the programmes. So it is a combination of all these things. (P2)

However, it is difficult to assess longer-term outcomes and the impact of the career guidance services owing to the nature of impacts – the services aim to achieve long-term outcomes that are only measurable when students have left the school (3 providers):

> It is very difficult to have concrete information and evidence on outcomes. Destination data are not measured by us, it varies from county to county. (P5)

Outside their own monitoring and evaluation activities, most providers are not aware of wider metrics for measuring the quality of career guidance services. One exception is the Matrix award,[24] which is held by two of the interviewed providers).[25] One provider highlighted the emphasis placed on evaluating and measuring the impact of their services:

> The government has insisted on having ways to evaluate our work. There was a previous project which was in schools 10 years ago and that didn't have a robust evaluation, so it was very difficult to measure if it had any impact. So the

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[23] On the other hand, it is also possible that the 'repeat bookings' result from the lack of time to search for alternative career guidance providers (see Section 2.3.3).

[24] The matrix standard is a framework for organisations to assess and measure their information, advice and guidance services. It aims to support individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals. As of 28 April 2020: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/matrix-standard-evaluation

[25] Another quality accreditation is available, the Careers Quality Standard, but this was not mentioned by any of the interviewed providers. As of 28 April 2020: https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/

government is very focused on measuring the impact of what we are doing now.
(P8)

Overall, even if providers monitor their services and this factors into a cycle of continuous improvement, there is a lack of sector-wide measures of quality so it can be difficult to establish longer-term outcomes and impact.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter outlines key findings from this study, reflects on their wider relevance, and makes recommendations.

Most schools have a careers leader in place, whose effectiveness depends on the time and resource allocated to the role

Almost all schools met the statutory requirement to appoint a careers leader, who was mostly a member of teaching staff. Providers emphasised the importance of their relationship with schools, which is often linked to a specific individual at school. Having an engaged, knowledgeable and interested careers leader is a key factor enabling providers to deliver high-quality career guidance services. Conversely, it is more challenging for providers to work with schools if the careers leader is over-stretched and time-constrained, as is often the case when the careers leader is a member of teaching staff. Schools where the careers leader had a dedicated budget offered a wider range of activities and opportunities and covered a broader range of topics as part of their career guidance programme than schools without such a budget.

> **Recommendation 1: Maintain the guidance for all schools to have a dedicated careers leader whose main responsibility is to deliver high-quality career guidance provision.**
>
> Ensure there is a sufficient level of resources and a stand-alone budget allocated to the career guidance activities in each school. Ensure that schools are aware of all funding opportunities available at the local and regional level, and how to access financial help to integrate a careers programme.

Almost all schools enable students to understand the full range of learning and career opportunities, but apprenticeships or technical qualifications are often not part of schools' career guidance programmes

Schools reported making good progress in relation to Gatsby benchmark 7 ('All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them'), through both academic and vocational routes. However, the survey evidence suggests that schools typically prioritise academic over technical education. Nevertheless, several schools whose career guidance programme does not cover technical education indicated that they fully meet Gatsby benchmark 7. This suggests that careers leaders from some schools believe a 'light touch' approach is sufficient to meet this benchmark.

> **Recommendation 2: There is a need for some awareness raising activity to ensure that schools cover both academic and technical education as part of the career guidance programme. Additional support could be provided to schools, e.g. as part of the Continuing Professional Development**

programme(s) to ensure that all relevant staff members know and understand the academic and technical routes.

National guidance should emphasise the importance of giving equal weight to all educational pathways. There should be measures allowing careers staff in schools to assess progress against academic and technical education provision.

Each benchmark should provide a more specific and comprehensive description of the requirements to ensure similar understanding across schools and providers.

Some schools and colleges in the region struggle to build relationships with local employers and find it difficult to arrange work experience for students

In line with the guidance from the Department of Education (2018), surveyed schools across all year groups start career guidance activities, including encounters with employers, early on in a student's secondary school career. Typically, employers are integrated into career guidance programmes in schools as speakers, mentors, enterprise advisers or work experience providers. There is good progress in meeting Gatsby benchmark 6 ('Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace'), with most schools rating themselves as fully or mostly meeting it. At the same time, the most commonly cited ambition of survey respondents in expanding or enhancing their career guidance programme is to develop the work experience offer. In addition, some schools still face difficulty persuading local employers to engage and participate in career guidance activities, for instance attending careers events organised by schools located in rural areas or arranging work experience for students with SEND.

Recommendation 3: Providers and schools should facilitate further engagement opportunities for employers. Building closer relationship between providers, schools and businesses would enable students to have a pathway into employment post education. A higher rate of collaboration between employers and education providers would also offer opportunities for students of all ages to understand the skills required in the labour market at local and national level.

The career guidance activities should be tailored to the capabilities and needs of younger and older students to equip them with specific skills and knowledge required at the particular stages of their education and available routes into employment.

There should also be a role for the combined authority and other relevant bodies at the local or regional level to facilitate employer engagement with schools, e.g. through regular events with local employers to highlight the benefits associated with school engagement (covered in Gatsby benchmark 3).

Employers should be given additional incentives to engage in career guidance programmes at schools, e.g. through additional guidelines and dedicated funding available at the national level. Additional barriers (e.g. bureaucratic, practical) for engaging businesses should be explored and adequately addressed to incentivise employers to build closer relationships with schools and providers.

Employers should be given additional incentives to engage with schools providing for disadvantaged or vulnerable students.

Career guidance services insufficiently cover mentoring and matters related to job demands and working life

Schools typically offer students a wide range of activities, opportunities and resources covering a broad spread of topics. However, mentoring activities (e.g. engaging employers as mentors) and provision relating to job demands and working life are still not sufficiently covered in the career guidance provision. Given widespread concerns among employers about the 'work readiness' of young people entering the labour market highlighted in previous research studies, there is a case to be made for strengthening this aspect of provision as a means of benefitting local employers and boosting the economy, as well as young people themselves.

Recommendation 4: Encourage the expansion of mentoring opportunities and training relating to job demands and working life across the region by giving guidance and funding opportunities. Consider the increasing role of industry placements focusing on the quality of engagement between employers, schools and providers, offering work experience, mentoring and industry placement opportunities as appropriate. Ensure that relevant programmes are tailored to equip students with the right tools for their careers.

Policymakers should consider re-formulating Gatsby benchmarks to ensure that aspects related to job demands and working life are clearly covered under the priority areas. This would provide further guidance to careers advisers on skills that students should be equipped with when leaving schools, e.g. practical skills of writing a CV, preparing and attending a job interview.

Parents are not always engaged and integrated into career guidance provision

There is a great level of variety in how providers engage with parents as part of the career guidance services. Difficulties in involving parents were attributed to a lack of funding available specifically for activities with parents, as well as to parents not wanting to engage. Given the (often profound) influence of parents on students' decision making, this insufficient level of parents' involvement suggests that there is a gap in the design of career guidance programmes.

Recommendation 5: Providers and schools should engage with parents at times when students are making key career decisions. They might consider designing programmes that include activities for parents to integrate them into career guidance and strengthen their role, e.g. offer one-to-one personal career guidance session with a careers adviser.

Additional funding should be available to facilitate integration of parents in the career guidance activities.

Schools' decisions about which provider(s) to work with are constrained by time and funding

All schools worked with at least one external provider of career guidance services, and the average was five. Most providers fully fund some or all the services, but this depends on eligibility, which is often determined by factors such as geographical area and the socio-economic profile of students.

The availability of providers and funding were the main factors considered by careers leaders when selecting specific providers. Some interviewees suggested that school staff are typically overwhelmed by choice in a busy marketplace with a complex funding landscape, and often do not have the time to assess all the options available. Then they sometimes make rushed decisions or stay with the same provider out of convenience. Disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to exacerbate this issue, placing additional pressure

on schools and potentially altering the provider landscape. The CEC virtual wallet makes the selection process easier for eligible schools, enabling them to choose from a list of pre-approved fully funded providers. However, this system may make it more difficult to compete for providers offering provision funded via routes such as corporate or charitable funding. CEC funding is only available to eligible schools, so some schools do not benefit from the ease of using the virtual wallet system.

> **Recommendation 6: Centralise and regulate the information available to schools about providers of career guidance.** Widen the virtual wallet system to include a broader range of providers offering a diverse range of activities and open this system up to all schools and colleges. Alternatively, create a new system (online portal) which offers all schools and colleges a clear and comprehensive list of providers available, services offered and the cost associated with them (including funding where available). This system should include information about whether providers meet specific quality assurances. National government should consider the level of founding available in each region and consider establishing a body or equip an existing relevant body to oversee the quality of the services delivered by the approved providers in each region, with a remit to manage provision and funding.

There are some overlaps in provision

There is some overlap in the services career guidance providers offer in the area. Providers are typically reluctant to compete with one another for business because they often share a similar mission and values. Therefore most are open to collaboration and several have tried this, with mixed results.

> **Recommendation 7: Providers should consider their key strengths vis-à-vis other providers, and tailor their offer to capitalise on their strength.**
>
> Providers should ensure that they set out a clear description of their offer (e.g. in the virtual wallet or replacement system; see Recommendation 6) including whether they meet specific quality assurances. If they give a clear and comprehensive comparison of their services, including quality assurances, school staff will be able to assess whether they need more support and make informed choices about specific services.

Providers monitor services and seek feedback to continue to improve provision, but there are no sector-wide measures of quality, and it can be difficult to establish longer-term outcomes and evaluate the impact of career guidance services

Despite challenges in measuring the impact of a career guidance service, all providers monitor the quality of their services, mostly by gathering feedback from participants. This feeds into a cycle of continuous improvement, helping them to refine and improve the quality of the career guidance they offer. Owing to the nature of the subject matter – the outcomes service providers aim to achieve are long term and only measurable when students have left the school – it is difficult to assess longer-term outcomes and impact (e.g. student destination, students' labour market attachment). There are few sector-wide measures or metrics (e.g. regular national surveys) to assess the quality of career guidance services, so assessing the effectiveness of the career guidance provision is challenging as the quality assessment is not part of the Gatsby benchmarks. In addition, providers observed that the lack of or insufficient recognition of career guidance services during Ofsted inspections disincentivises schools to make more effort to improve the quality of their offer.

Finally, even if most careers leads in schools find the Gatsby benchmarks a key factor influencing and shaping the development of their career programmes, the collected evidence suggests that the formulation of the benchmarks could be improved. For instance, the benchmarks are quite generic, which leaves room for interpretation and implementation of specific measures by particular schools. Furthermore, the benchmarks seem to focus on measuring the quantity rather than the quality of outputs and outcomes.

> **Recommendation 8:** The national regulatory body (Ofsted) should develop standard metrics to assess and monitor the quality of career guidance provision. This assessment should constitute an integral part of the Ofsted evaluation of all secondary schools and colleges.
>
> The Gatsby benchmarks should be reviewed to ascertain whether and where there are failings and improvements needed. The benchmarks should put more emphasis on providing quality career guidance and relevant measures to assess it.
>
> Schools should be required to collect information regularly on the quality of the career guidance provision to enable longer-term outcomes to be tracked. Careers leaders should use the quality metrics to benchmark their provision vis-à-vis expected standards and those achieved by similar schools, and to continue to improve the quality of their career guidance provision.
>
> Careers leaders should systematically and regularly assess metrics to measure and test the learning outcomes of each student, using students' destination data (e.g. higher education data collected by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) to monitor their post-secondary school or college education and career paths. There should be regular national surveys of career guidance provision to allow systematic monitoring and management of the career guidance provision.

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5. Appendices

5.1. Appendix 1: Additional survey results

This section presents additional results from the survey of schools and colleges based on sub-group analyses. To explore differences across schools, sub-group analysis was conducted according to the following factors:

- School type (mainstream school vs other)

- Whether the careers leader has a dedicated budget (yes/no)

- Geographical location (LEAs Cambridgeshire vs Peterborough)

- Number of pupils (1–899 vs 900+)

- Ofsted rating (outstanding, good, requires improvement or requires special measures).

Analysis was conducted for all sub-groups as defined above for all questions in the survey, but data are only displayed here where there appear to be a pattern. As the sample size is relatively small, these results should be taken as indicative only not extrapolated to the general population.

Table 2. Whether schools or colleges have a careers programme (an embedded programme of career education and guidance known by pupils, parents, teachers and employers)

	Overall	School size		Area	
		1–899	900+	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
No	3 (6%)	3 (13%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	2 (18%)
Yes	51 (94%)	30 (87%)	31 (100%)	41 (98%)	9 (82%)
Base	*54*	*23*	*31*	*42*	*11*

Table 3. Topics covered in the career guidance programme

	Overall	School size		Careers budget	
		1–899	900+	Yes	No
Career pathways and progression routes in the local labour market	51 (91%)	20 (87%)	29 (94%)	31 (94%)	8 (89%)
Job applications and interviews	49 (82%)	17 (74%)	27 (87%)	29 (88%)	7 (79%)
Educational institutions, courses, qualifications, entry requirements and costs	45 (94%)	21 (91%)	30 (97%)	32 (97%)	8 (89%)
Employment sectors, employers, jobs, salaries and employment trends	44 (78%)	16 (70%)	26 (84%)	28 (85%)	7 (78%)
Jobs with training and apprenticeships	44 (82%)	16 (70%)	28 (90%)	31 (94%)	3 (33%)
Job demands and working life	42 (44%)	8 (35%)	16 (52%)	18 (55%)	2 (22%)
Financial planning	31 (57%)	9 (39%)	22 (71%)	21 (64%)	4 (44%)
Soft skills e.g. communication, confidence	30 (83%)	20 (87%)	25 (81%)	29 (88%)	7 (78%)
Enterprise	24 (56%)	12 (52%)	18 (58%)	22 (67%)	5 (56%)
Base	*54*	*23*	*31*	*33*	*9*

Table 4. Career guidance offered relating to educational institutions, by courses, qualifications, entry requirements and costs cover

	Overall	School type		School size		Careers budget	
		Mainstream	Other	1–899	900+	Yes	No
Academic qualifications	50 (93%)	41 (93%)	9 (90%)	20 (87%)	30 (97%)	32 (97%)	7 (78%)
Apprenticeships	46 (70%)	33 (75%)	5 (50%)	14 (61%)	24 (77%)	27 (82%)	4 (44%)
Technical qualifications	38 (85%)	39 (89%)	7 (70%)	17 (74%)	29 (94%)	30 (91%)	6 (67%)
Entry into the armed forces	30 (57%)	26 (61%)	4 (40%)	7 (30%)	23 (77%)	24 (73%)	1 (11%)
Base	54	44	10	23	31	33	9

Table 5. Activities, opportunities and resources provided as part of the career guidance programme

	Overall	School size		Careers budget	
		1–899	900+	Yes	No
Individual face-to-face discussions	50 (89%)	19 (83%)	29 (94%)	32(97%)	7 (78%)
Speakers or lecturers	50 (93%)	20 (87%)	30 (97%)	31 (94%)	8 (89%)
Work experience or workplace visits	48 (83%)	18 (78%)	27 (87%)	29 (88%)	7 (78%)
Careers fairs or events	48 (93%)	20 (87%)	30 (97%)	31 (94%)	9 (100%)
Access to specialist resources e.g. websites, leaflets	45 (89%)	19 (83%)	29 (94%)	32 (97%)	7 (78%)
Mentoring opportunities from external providers	28 (52%)	10 (44%)	18 (58%)	19 (58%)	2 (22%)
Base	54	23	31	33	9

Table 6. The extent to which employers are integrated into the career guidance programme

	Overall	School type		School size		Careers budget	
		Mainstream	Other	1–899	900+	Yes	No
Work experience or workplace visits	43 (80%)	35 (80%)	8 (80%)	18 (78%)	25 (81%)	28 (85%)	7 (78%)
Speakers or lecturers	47 (87%)	41 (93%)	6 (60%)	17 (74%)	30 (97%)	31 (94%)	7 (78%)
Mentoring students	12 (22%)	10 (23%)	2 (20%)	2 (9%)	10 (32%)	9 (27%)	0 (0%)
Inputting into career guidance	18 (33%)	16 (36%)	2 (20%)	3 (13%)	15 (48%)	14 (42%)	1 (11%)
As an enterprise adviser	27 (50%)	26 (59%)	1 (10%)	9 (39%)	18 (58%)	19 (58%)	5 (56%)
Delivering activity sessions	40 (76%)	32 (74%)	8 (80%)	16 (70%)	24 (80%)	28 (85%)	7 (78%)
Base	*54*	*44*	*10*	*23*	*31*	*33*	*9*

Table 7. The extent to which schools and colleges meet the Gatsby benchmarks for career guidance delivery

			School size		Careers budget	
	Overall	1–899	900+		Yes	No
Gatsby benchmark 1: We provide a **stable and embedded careers programme** that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers	45 (83%)	16 (70%)	29 (94%)		31(94%)	7 (78%)
Gatsby benchmark 2: Students and their parents have access to **good quality information about study options and labour market opportunities** supported by an **informed adviser**	45 (83%)	16 (70%)	29 (94%)		31 (94%)	7 (78%)
Gatsby benchmark 3: We offer students career guidance **tailored to different stages of education and according to personal needs**	50 (93%)	19 (83%)	31 (100%)		33 (100%)	7 (78%)
Gatsby benchmark 4: We **link curriculum learning to career guidance**, including in STEM subjects	39 (72%)	15 (66%)	24 (77%)		26 (79%)	5 (56%)
Gatsby benchmark 5: We offer all students **multiple opportunities to learn from employers** about work, employment and skills	45 (83%)	36 (74%)	9 (90%)		30 (91%)	6 (67%)
Gatsby benchmark 6: We offer all students **first-hand experience of the workplace** through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience	44 (82%)	17 (74%)	27 (87%)		28 (85%)	6 (67%)
Gatsby benchmark 7: Our career guidance enables students to understand the **full range of learning opportunities** that are available to them, including academic and vocational routes	51 (94%)	20 (87%)	31 (100%)		33 (100%)	7 (78%)
Gatsby benchmark 8: Every student in our school is offered **guidance interviews with a careers adviser**	38 (70%)	11 (48%)	27 (87%)		27 (82%)	5 (56%)
Base	*54*	*23*	*31*		*33*	*9*

Table 8. The career guidance providers schools and colleges work with

	Area		
	Overall	Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
Aim Apprenticeships	21 (39%)	17 (40%)	4 (36%)
Anglia Ruskin	31 (57%)	24 (57%)	7 (64%)
Business in the Community	4 (9%)	4 (10%)	1 (9%)
Cambridge Regional College	27 (50%)	25 (60%)	1 (9%)
Career Ready	2 (4%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Edge	10 (19%)	8 (19%)	2 (18%)
Form the Future	31 (57%)	28 (67%)	2 (18%)
Founders 4 Schools	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	2 (18%)
Future First	17 (32%)	13 (31%)	4 (36%)
GetMyFirstJob	7 (13%)	7 (17%)	0 (0%)
Jobcentre Plus	8 (15%)	7 (17%)	1 (9%)
NEACO	19 (35%)	12 (29%)	7 (64%)
Pathway Careers Training and Mentoring	3 (6%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)
Primary Engineer or Secondary Engineer	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	1 (9%)
The Prince's Trust	3 (6%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)
Skillsfirst	2 (4%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
The Skills Service (Opportunity Peterborough)	29 (54%)	22 (52%)	7 (64%)
Speakers for Schools	7 (13%)	5 (12%)	2 (18%)
University Outreach	15 (28%)	12 (29%)	3 (27%)
Villiers Park	7 (13%)	4 (10%)	3 (27%)
Young Enterprise	13 (24%)	9 (21%)	4 (36%)
Youthoria	18 (33%)	18 (43%)	0 (0%)
Base	*54*	*42*	*11*

Table 9. Reasons for choosing particular providers

	Overall	School type		School size		Careers budget		Area	
		Mainstream	Other	1–899	900+	Yes	No	CAM	PBH
Availability of providers	38 (70%)	33 (75%)	5 (50%)	14 (61%)	24 (77%)	24 (73%)	6 (67%)	28 (67%)	9 (82%)
Student needs	33 (61%)	26 (59%)	7 (70%)	12 (52%)	21 (68%)	24 (73%)	3 (33%)	24 (57%)	8 (73%)
Availability (or lack) of funding	29 (54%)	25 (57%)	4 (40%)	10 (44%)	19 (61%)	19 (58%)	4 (44%)	27 (64%)	1 (9%)
The needs of the local labour market	14 (26%)	10 (23%)	4 (40%)	2 (9%)	12 (39%)	10 (30%)	0 (0%)	13 (31%)	1 (9%)
Confidence in ability to deliver high-quality career guidance	29 (55%)	26 (61%)	3 (30%)	11 (48%)	18 (60%)	20 (61%)	3 (33%)	21 (51%)	7 (64%)
Base	54	44	10	23	31	33	9	42	11

Note: CAM=Cambridgeshire; PBH=Peterborough

5.2.   Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the survey with schools and colleges

Study on career guidance provision in schools in Cambridge and Peterborough

Cambridge Ahead, in collaboration with RAND Europe, is conducting a study on career guidance provision in schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Cambridge Ahead is a business and academic membership group working on the long-term sustainable growth of Cambridge and its region. RAND Europe is an independent not-for-profit research institute whose mission is to help improve policy and decision making through research and analysis. This research study aims to build a comprehensive picture of the provision of career guidance services in the region and how these services meet the needs of children and young people. It is intended that the research findings would be used to shape policy discussions at the local, regional and national level.

As part of this study, RAND Europe is currently conducting an online survey of all secondary schools and colleges in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. Your contact details were shared with RAND Europe by Cambridge Ahead, who developed a comprehensive list of school contacts in the region based on their existing knowledge and publicly available information. We would appreciate if a member of the careers team, whether you or someone else, could provide information about the career guidance services provision in your school. If you can provide answers on behalf of more than one school, please complete this survey separately for every school.

Participation in the survey is voluntary, but the study team are aiming to collect data from **all** schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. **All participating schools will be entered into a random draw to win a 3D printer.** The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

All information you provide will be kept confidential and will be stored and processed in accordance with GDPR regulations. Results from the survey will be analysed at an aggregate level and not in such a way as to identify any school or individual. Survey data will be stored securely and deleted by the end of 2020, when the research will be complete. If you have any questions or would like to view, amend or withdraw the data for your school, please contact study-on-career-guidance@rand.org. By clicking 'Start survey' you give permission to the study team to store and analyse your response to this survey.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Q1.1 What is your school's/college's name?

[open-ended text box]

Q1.2 What is your school/college Unique Reference Number (URN)?

Please leave this blank if you don't know your school's/college's URN

[open-ended text box]

Q1.3a What is your name?

[open-ended text box for name]

Q1.3b What is your position?

   a)   Head teacher

   b)   Member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

   c)   Member of teaching staff (non-SLT)

   d)   Member of support staff

   e)   Other *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q1.4 Which of the following categories best describes your school/college?

   a.   Mainstream secondary school (11–16)
   b.   Mainstream secondary school (11–18)
   c.   Sixth form college (16–19)
   d.   Further education provision (14+)
   e.   University technical college (14–19)
   f.   Alternative provision school with secondary provision
   g.   Special school with secondary provision
   h.   Other *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q1.5 Please indicate whether your school is:

   a.   State school (including academies)
   b.   Independent school

SECTION 2: POLICIES AND PLANNING

Q2.1 Does your school/college have a careers programme (by this we mean an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known by pupils, parents, teachers and employers)?

   a.   Yes
   b.   No
   c.   I don't know

Q2.2 [ask only if Q2.1 = a]

Is information about the careers programme included on the school's/college's website?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. I don't know

Q2.3a [ask only if Q2.1 = a]

Does your school/college have a dedicated member of staff who is responsible for implementing the careers programme (i.e. a Careers Leader)?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. I don't know

Q2.3b [ask only if Q2.3a = a]

Which of the following best describes the Careers Leader in your school/college?

    a) Member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

    b) Member of teaching staff (non-SLT)

    c) A dedicated member of support staff

    d) Other *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q2.3c [ask only if Q2.3a = a]

Does the Careers Leader in your school/college have a dedicated budget?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. I don't know

Q2.3x [ask only if Q2.1 = a]

Does your school/college have someone who delivers one-to-one career guidance for students (i.e. a Careers Adviser)?

    a. Yes

    b. No

    c. I don't know

Q2.3d [ask only if Q2.3x = a]

Which of the following best describes the Careers Adviser in your school/college?

a) The Careers Leader

b) A member of staff other than the Careers Leader

c) External to the school/college

Q2.4 [ask only if Q2.1 = a]

Which of the following sources, if any, did your school/college consult when developing your careers programme? *Please select all that apply*

a. Ofsted guidance
b. The Gatsby benchmarks
c. The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC)
d. National Careers Service (NCS)
e. Careers Development Institute (CDI)
f. I don't know
g. None of these
h. Other *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q2.5 [ask only if Q2.1 = a]

To your knowledge, how often is your school's/college's careers programme meant to be reviewed?

a. At least once per year
b. At least once every two years
c. At least once every five years
d. Less often than once every five years
e. Never
f. I don't know

Q2.6 [ask only if Q2.1 = b]

Please indicate why your school/college does not currently have a careers programme? *Please select all options that apply*

a. We have not thought about setting up a careers programme
b. Our school/college is not required to have a careers programme
c. We are currently developing a careers programme/planning to develop it in the near future

d. We do not have the resources to set up a careers programme
  e. We do not see value in having a careers programme
  f. I don't know
  g. Other *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q2.7 [ask all]

Compass is a tool that enables schools and colleges to evaluate their careers activity against the eight benchmarks of best practice known as the Gatsby benchmarks. The Tracker tool enables schools and colleges to record and identify how they are improving their careers activity against the Gatsby benchmarks.

For more information see:

https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/understand-gatsby-benchmarks

Have you or colleagues at your school/college used the Compass or Tracker tools for career guidance?

  a. Yes
  b. No
  c. I don't know

Q2.8a [ask only if Q2.7 = a]

How useful were the Compass and/or Tracker tools?

  a. Very useful
  b. Mostly useful
  c. Somewhat useful
  d. Not useful at all
  e. I don't know

Q2.8b Please explain the reasons for your answer:

[open-ended text box]

Q2.9 [ask only if Q2.7 = b]

You have indicated that your school/college did not use the Compass or Tracker tools. Could you please explain why this was the case?

[open-ended text box]

The Gatsby benchmarks are eight standards of best practice for career guidance in schools and colleges. For more information see: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/understand-gatsby-benchmarks

Q2.10 In your opinion, how well is your school/college meeting the Gatsby benchmarks for career guidance delivery based on the descriptions below?

	1. Not at all	2.Somew hat	3 Mostly	Fully	I don't know
We **provide a stable and embedded careers programme** that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers					
Students and their parents have **access to good quality information about study options and labour market opportunities** supported by an informed adviser					
We offer students **career guidance tailored to different stages of education and according to personal needs**					
We **link curriculum learning to career guidance**, including in STEM subjects					
We offer all students multiple **opportunities to learn from employers** about work, employment and skills					
We offer all students **first-hand experience of the workplace** through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience					
Our career guidance **enables students to understand the full range of learning opportunities** that are available to them, including					

both academic and vocational routes					
Every student in our school is offered **guidance interviews with a careers adviser**					

Q2.11 [ask only if any of Q2.10 = 1]

Please explain any particular reasons that you believe prevent your school/college from meeting the Gatsby benchmarks.

[open-ended text box]

SECTION 3: PROVISION

Q3.1 With which provider(s) of career guidance services does your school/college work? *Please select all that apply [RANDOMISE LIST EXCEPT FOR V, W AND X]*

By working with providers we mean integrating their resources (whether in person, online or paper) into your career guidance programme

   a. Form the Future
   b. Career Ready
   c. Skillsfirst
   d. GetMyFirstJob
   e. Youthoria
   f. Edge
   g. Future First
   h. Villiers Park
   i. University outreach – Physics at Work etc.
   j. Anglia Ruskin University
   k. Accelerate East
   l. Young Enterprise
   m. Primary Engineer or Secondary Engineer
   n. Pathway Careers Training and Mentoring
   o. The Prince's Trust
   p. Founders 4 Schools
   q. Speakers for Schools
   r. Cambridge Regional College
   s. NEACO
   t. The Skills Service
   u. Business in the Community
   v. Aim Apprenticeships

w. Jobcentre Plus

x. None

y. I don't know

z. Other *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q3.3 [ask only if Q3.1 = None]

Why does your school/college not work with any career guidance providers?

[open-ended text box]

Q3.3b Please could you indicate why this provider was (or these providers were) your preferred choice? *Please select all that apply*

a. Availability of providers

b. Student needs

c. Available (or lack of) funding

d. The needs of the local labour market

e. Confidence in ability to deliver high-quality career guidance

f. Other *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q3.4 [ask only if Q3.1 ≠None or I don't know]

Which of the following topics are covered in the career guidance programme provided by your school/college?

Please select all that apply

Please add additional topics covered by the careers programme provider at the end of the list, if applicable.

	[Name of provider 1]	[Name of provider 2]	[Name of provider 3]
a. Career pathways and progression routes in the local labour market			
b. Job applications and interviews			
c. Educational institutions, courses, qualifications, entry requirements and costs			
d. Employment sectors, employers, jobs, salaries and employment trends			
e. Jobs with training and apprenticeships			
f. Job demands and working life			
g. Financial planning			

h. Soft skills e.g. communication, confidence			
i. Enterprise			
j. Other, *please specify* [open-ended text box]			
k. I don't know			

Q3.6 [ask only if Q3.4.3 was ticked for any of the providers]

What does the career guidance offered by your school/college relating to educational institutions, courses, qualifications, entry requirements and costs cover? *Please select all that apply*

    a.   Academic qualifications
    b.   Technical qualifications
    c.   Apprenticeships
    d.   Entry into armed services
    e.   Other (***please specify***)

Q3.7 [ask only if Q3.1 ≠None or I don't know]

Which of the following activities, opportunities and resources are provided as part of the career guidance programme offered by your school/college? *Please select all that apply*

    a.   Individual face-to-face discussions
    b.   Speakers or lecturers
    c.   Work experience or workplace visits
    d.   Careers fairs or events
    e.   Access to specialist resources e.g. websites, leaflets
    f.   Mentoring opportunities from external providers
    g.   None
    h.   Other, *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q3.8 [ask only if Q3.1 ≠None or I don't know]

How, if at all, are employers integrated into the career guidance programme offered by your school/college? *Please select all that apply*

    a.   Work experience or workplace visits
    b.   Speakers or lecturers
    c.   Mentoring students
    d.   Inputting into career guidance
    e.   As an Enterprise Adviser
    f.   Delivering activity sessions
    g.   None

h.   Other, *please specify* [open-ended text box]

Q3.9 [ask only if Q3.1 ≠None or I don't know]

Which year groups participate in the career guidance programme offered by your school/college? *Please select all that apply*

a.   Year 7 (age 11–12)
b.   Year 8 (age 12–13)
c.   Year 9 (age 13–14)
d.   Year 10 (age 14–15)
e.   Year 11 (age 15–16)
f.   Year 12 (age 16–17)
g.   Year 13 (age 17–18)

Q3.10a [ask only if Q3.1 ≠None or I don't know]

Is participation in activities relating to the career guidance programme voluntary or mandatory for students? *Please select all that apply*

a.   Voluntary
b.   Mandatory
c.   I don't know

Q3.10b [ask only if Q3.1 ≠None or I don't know]

Would you like to add any activities, opportunities and resources to your career guidance programme for students?

a.   Yes, *please specify* [open-ended text box]
b.   No

Q3.11 [ask only if Q3.10b = a]

Is there anything that prevents you from offering this to your students as part of your school's/college's career guidance programme?

a.   Yes, *please specify* [open-ended text box]
b.   No

Q3.12 [ask only if Q3.1 ≠None or I don't know]

Do you have any other comments about the career guidance programme services in your school/college?

[open-ended text box]

Q3.13 [ask all]

Are there any other members of staff at your school whom we could contact to obtain more information about the career guidance provision in your school/college? *Please provide their name and email address/phone number.*

[open-ended text box]

Thank you for completing this survey

5.3. Appendix 3: Protocol for interviews with career guidance providers

Interview topic guide for career guidance providers

Introduction to study (2 minutes)

- Introduce self and RAND Europe
- Purpose of the interview
  - o RAND Europe, in collaboration with Cambridge Ahead, is conducting a study on the provision of career guidance in schools in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The study aims to build a comprehensive picture of how career guidance is provided in the region and how services can best meet the needs of children and young people. The aim of the interviews with career guidance providers is to gain more in-depth qualitative data on delivery of career guidance from the perspective of service providers.
- Permission to record: Explanation that we'll be making notes but recording means that we don't have to scribble everything down. Any questions?
- Voluntary. You don't have to take part and don't have to answer anything you don't want to – free to withdraw from study at any time.
- Confidentiality. The analysis will not be written up in such a way as to identify any individuals or organisations.
- Clarify: Ask if they have any questions before starting the interview – this is a chance to clarify any questions on the participant information sheet, privacy notice and or consent form. If respondent requires clarification:
  - o Cambridge Ahead is a business and academic membership group working on the long-term sustainable growth of Cambridge and its region.
  - o RAND Europe is an independent not-for-profit research institute whose mission is to help improve policy and decision making through research and analysis.

Introduction to provider (8 minutes)

1. To start, could you please tell me a bit about your role in the provision of career guidance? (Prompt: how long have you worked in this role?)
2. Could you please briefly describe the size and geographical scope of your organisation (Prompt: national, regional, local?)
3. How many schools/colleges do you work with in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region? What type of schools/colleges do you work with? (Prompt: state/independent, mainstream schools, sixth form college, further education colleges, special schools?)
   - Are there any schools/colleges or types of schools/colleges that are hard to reach or engage with? How do you engage with them?
4. Which age groups do you work with in schools/colleges?
5. Could you talk me through the cost of your career guidance services for recipients? (Prompt: free, funded, partly funded?)
6. How long has your organisation been operating as a career guidance provider? Have there been any major changes to provision in the last 5–10 years that you are aware of? What has been driving these

changes? (If interviewee does not know answer to this question, explanation can be provided by email, or they can suggest another colleague to speak to)

Key characteristics of provision (15 minutes)

7. How would you describe the **aims and objectives** of the career guidance services you provide? What type of services do you offer? (Prompts: provision of information, support with work experience, vocational technical learning opportunities, support with traineeship/apprenticeship/university application(s), mentoring approach etc.?)

8. Could you please tell me more about how your organisation provides career guidance, specifically:
   - The **delivery model** (Prompts: provision in-house at the school vs externally – community, employer premises, providers' premises; online provision?)
   - The **delivery mode** (Prompts: one-to-one, group sessions, peer support network etc.?)
   - The **frequency** of career guidance services that you provide (Prompts: weekly, monthly, less frequent, one-off, until placement found etc.?)

9. To what extent (if at all) and how do you tailor career guidance services to the needs of different schools/school types? (Prompt: is there a standard model of provision or does provision vary on a case by case basis?)

10. How, if at all, are the career guidance services you provide integrated into the school curriculum? (Prompts: part of curriculum, after-school activity, enrichment activity, trips to experience how businesses operate etc.?) Is the career guidance compulsory for students to attend?

11. How, if at all, are employers integrated into the career guidance programme that you offer? (Prompts: work experience or workplace visits; speakers or lecturers; mentoring students; inputting into career guidance etc.?)
    - Are these local or national employers? How closely are your career guidance services aligned with the local employers' needs? What are the challenges in working with local/national employers?

12. How, if at all, are parents consulted or involved in the career guidance services you provide?

13. How does national policy and guidance influence your career guidance services? (Prompt: which are the most influential or important strategies/policies/guidance?)

Gaps and overlaps in career guidance provision (5 minutes)

14. To what extent do the career guidance services you provide overlap with those provided by other organisations active in the area/region/nationally?
    - Are you aware of other career advice providers active in the same school(s)? Can you tell me a bit more about this? (Prompts: Which providers? How does the provision differ?)

15. In your view, are there any particular providers active in particular schools/colleges? If yes, why and how it is determined? (Prompts: Demand vs supply, e.g. student needs, availability of providers, available or lack of funding?)

16. To what extend do you collaborate with other career advice providers? If yes, how? (Prompts: to complement each other service, to support each other, come up with joint programmes/schemes etc.?) If not, why not?

17. In your view, is there any competition between providers? If so, what are the main reasons for that? (Prompts: available funding, skills demand from employers?)

Quality of career advice provision in schools (5 minutes)

18. Do you gather feedback on the career guidance services you provide? If so how and from whom do you gather feedback? If not, why?
19. In your view, what are the key characteristics of high-quality career guidance provision?
    - Who defines what high-quality career guidance provision looks like? Are there any standards/criteria that need to be met? (Prompt: provider, service recipient, wider stakeholders?)
20. What would you say are the **key challenges** in providing high-quality career guidance services?
21. Which factors enable organisations to provide high-quality career guidance services?
22. To what extent and how is the quality of career guidance services measured, either in your own organisation or more widely? If it is, please describe how this is done. If not, why? Prompts if quality is measured:
    - What are the key measurement criteria? Against what benchmarks? Do you have any long-term strategy to monitor effectiveness of your career guidance provision? Can you look at change across time and if so how? (Prompt: what metrics or data do you collect to monitor quality?)
    - To what extent are the service recipients aware of these quality measures?
    - To what extent do specific actions follow on from measurement? What are the consequences?
    - If quality does not meet the required/expected standards, are improvement measures implemented (how)? Who monitors this implementation?

Any other comments/feedback?

Thank you very much for your time.

5.4.   Appendix 4: Interviewees

Below we list (in alphabetical order) all career guidance providers who took part in this study.

1. Anglia Ruskin University

2. Career Ready

3. Edge/Urban&Civic

4. Form the Future

5. Future First

6. NEACO

7. Success at School

8. The Skills Service (Opportunity Peterborough)

9. Volunteer It Yourself

10. Young Enterprise

5.5. Appendix 5: Survey participants (from schools and colleges)

Below we list (in alphabetical order) all schools and colleges that took part in this study:

1. Abbey College, Ramsey
2. Bassingbourn Village College
3. Bottisham Village College
4. Cambourne Village College
5. Cambridge Academy for Science and Technology
6. Cambridge Regional College
7. Chesterton Community College
8. City of Peterborough Academy
9. Coleridge Community College
10. Comberton Sixth Form
11. Comberton Village College
12. Cottenham Village College
13. Cromwell Community College
14. Ely College
15. Ernulf Academy
16. Hampton College
17. Hampton Gardens School
18. Harbour School
19. Highfield Ely
20. Hills Road Sixth Form College
21. Hinchingbrooke School
22. Impington Village College
23. Jack Hunt School
24. Ken Stimpson Community School
25. King's Ely
26. Linton Village College
27. Littleport and East Cambridge Academy
28. Long Road Sixth Form College

29. Longsands Academy

30. Marshfield School

31. Marshland High School

32. Meadowgate Academy

33. Melbourn Village College

34. Neale-Wade Academy

35. Nene Park Academy

36. North Cambridge Academy

37. Oakes College

38. Octavia AP Academy

39. Parkside Community College

40. Queen Katharine Academy

41. Saffron Walden County High School

42. Sawston Village College

43. Sir Harry Smith Community College

44. Soham Village College

45. St Bede's Inter Church School

46. St John Fisher Catholic School

47. St Mary's School

48. St Peter's School

49. Swavesey Village College

50. The King's (The Cathedral) School

51. The Netherhall School

52. Thomas Clarkson Academy

53. Trumpington Community College

54. Witchford Village College