

# The Careers & Enterprise Company



## England

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) is the national body for careers education in England, supporting schools and colleges to deliver modern, 21st century careers education. Our mission is to help every young person find their best next step. Our work is at national scale and delivered through our network of Careers Hubs. Reaching 96% of secondary schools and colleges in England, Careers Hubs bring together schools, colleges, employers, and apprenticeship providers in local areas across England, and work in partnership with Mayoral and local authorities to connect with local skills need. As a result, young people are more than twice as likely to report awareness of apprenticeships between Year 7 and 11. Learners in 64% of schools have 10 or more encounters with employers by the time they leave school.

### Our work within the framework Global Career Readiness Initiative

The Effective Transitions Fund (ETF) supports disadvantaged young people in England through targeted career education. Following successful Phase 1 outcomes in local contexts, Phase 2 aims to build evidence for national implementation.

### Evidence of Impact

The Careers & Enterprise Company has driven significant progress in careers education across England. Schools and colleges now achieve an average of 6.0 out of 8 Gatsby Benchmarks (up from ~2 in 2016/17), with 94% reporting via Compass and 98% of students receiving at least one employer encounter. Awareness of apprenticeships more than doubles from Year 7 to Year 11, and high-quality provision narrows equity gaps for disadvantaged young people (e.g., Free School Meals-eligible students achieve parity in benchmark scores). The Effective Transitions Fund (ETF), funded by JPMorgan Chase, supported over 1,000 disadvantaged participants; an independent evaluation by the Institute for Employment Studies found 94% successfully transitioned to post-16 education/training, with 93% sustained after six months—outperforming national averages. High-quality careers provision reduces NEET risks by up to 8% (20% in disadvantaged schools), generating estimated £300 million in annual public savings.

### Organizational priorities

This research-driven expansion focuses on maximizing program outcomes and implementing programs effectively in diverse settings. With five key projects, ETF Phase 2 will develop a framework for creating an efficient, scalable model for effective career transitions nationwide.

### Partnerships & Alliances

- CEC is the national body for careers education in England, working in partnership with the UK government to ensure consistent, high-quality provision.
- Supports over 1,350 employers, 4,000 business volunteers and 50 sector bodies in England to support meaningful engagement with schools and colleges.
- Supports 400 training and delivery providers to promote and showcase their activities, resources and support direct to schools and colleges.
- A network of [Careers Hubs](#) bring together schools, colleges, employers, and apprenticeship providers in local areas across England, providing dedicated teams and support to enable quality careers education provision.

# England Landscape

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Data - Transition From School To Work (United Kingdom)  
Indicators for youth between 15 - 24 years old

Labor Force Participation Rate (ILO, 2025)	Youth Not In Education, Employment or Training ("NEET") (ILO, 2025)		Unemployed Youth (ILO, 2025)	
56% total	15.2% male	13.6% female	17.3% male	13.0% female

## Current State of Career Readiness

- **The National Work Experience Guarantee** is the government's vision to ensure that every young person has 2 weeks' worth of high-quality work experience.
- **Youth Guarantee** provides young people with access to education, training, or support to help them secure employment and reduce unemployment.
- **Skills England**, an arms-length government body brings together government, employers, training providers, and local partners to plan and deliver skills development.

## Challenges and Gaps

- A persistent gap in career readiness exists between the most and least economically disadvantaged young people. Students on free school meals show career readiness 2-5 percentage points lower than their peers, with the gap widest in Year 11. High-quality careers provision can close this gap by meeting individual needs.

## Emerging Trends

- 96% of schools and colleges use the CEC's Compass tool to report against the **Gatsby Benchmarks**, covering 3 million students.
- Compass enables **student-level reporting** and widespread use of the Future Skills Questionnaire with over 330,000 young people.
- High-quality resources support Careers Leaders, Advisers, Careers Hub staff & employers through **digital platforms**.

## Recommendations for Leaders Shaping Career Education Policy and Practice

- Continued adherence to the **Gatsby Benchmarks**. This widely recognized framework of eight benchmarks defines high-quality careers provision and offers schools and colleges a clear structure for developing their programmes. Consistent implementation can improve the quality of career guidance and help reduce the career-readiness gap experienced by disadvantaged young people