APPENDIX 2

CONSULTATION SURVEY REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the results of a multi-stakeholder consultation survey on attitudes to the Gatsby Benchmarks, the experience of implementation, particularly highlighting key areas of challenge, and suggestions for changes and refinements to the framework going forward.

The survey was completed by 1,209 respondents who were drawn from a range of key roles involved in the implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Respondents were split across three surveys which focused on the experience of schools (46% of respondents), colleges (13%) and stakeholders (42%). Responses represented a wide range of roles, geographical locations, Ofsted ratings and levels of engagement with the Gatsby Benchmarks. However, unsurprisingly a significant majority of the respondents to this survey were highly engaged with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Respondents of all types and across various settings are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the benchmarks, with 94% agreeing that the Gatsby Benchmarks provide a strong framework for organising careers guidance, 88% agreeing that they have had a strong impact on their organisation and 81% agreeing that they have had a strong impact on young people.

While there are some minor differences between different types of respondents, the data is highly consistent. The vast majority of respondents agree that the Gatsby Benchmarks are useful and can articulate a range of value that they see in them. Many respondents also highlight a range of challenges that they have experienced in implementing the benchmarks. Some of these challenges have already been overcome by institutions, and some could be alleviated by changes in practice, resourcing and policy or through the provision of additional support or resources, while others suggest a need to consider potential refinements to the benchmarks.

BENCHMARK 1

There is overwhelming support for Benchmark 1 across various roles and settings. Out of 718 respondents, 707 (98%) agreed that Benchmark 1 is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Respondents highlighted the emphasis on support from the senior leadership team (SLT) and the focus on planning and strategic approaches to careers guidance as the most valuable elements of Benchmark 1.

Many respondents, spanning different roles and settings, found the evaluation elements in Benchmark 1 the most challenging aspects of this benchmark. Those from special schools and alternative provision settings specifically pointed out challenges related to updating and managing the website information.

The main suggestion for the development of Benchmark 1 in the future was more clarification on what constitutes a structured careers programme. Within this group, some wanted clarity on training, role specifics and time allocations for careers leaders, while others sought details on programme content. Another significant portion wanted more clarity and support around the evaluation requirements of Benchmark 1.

BENCHMARK 2

Responses to the survey suggest that Benchmark 2 has had a significant impact on the use and understanding of labour market information (LMI) in a variety of settings. Out of 657 respondents, 634 (96%) agreed that Benchmark 2 is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Users of Benchmark 2 have widely reported that LMI helps students to make informed decisions about their careers, as well as providing key careers information to parents. The benchmark has also enabled users to be more considerate of local labour market demand, providing relevant careers opportunities and information to young people.

Respondents reported that at times, they found implementing Benchmark 2 challenging. The benchmark requires users to provide students with 'good-quality' LMI, however this was the highest ranked challenge amongst the respondents across all settings. Despite this, the majority of respondents did not think that Benchmark 2 needed to be changed, validating the inclusion and impact of Benchmark 2, but suggesting that more could be done to support users to implement the benchmark's existing requirements.

BENCHMARK 3

Almost all respondents acknowledged the critical role of Benchmark 3 in the framework, a perception unanimously shared across different educational institutions including schools, colleges, and special schools and alternative provision. Out of 654 respondents, 639 (98%) agreed that Benchmark 3 is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Respondents highlighted the value of Benchmark 3, including its focus on addressing the individual needs of the students, challenging stereotypes and emphasising the importance of record-keeping.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents highlighted difficulties in tracking and recording destination data for a span of three years, a task compounded by constraints in capacity, resources and obtaining necessary permissions. The issue of overlapping data collection efforts with local education authorities and the inability to share data collected by other institutions were among the other noted concerns. Limited resources and time were another significant obstacle, brought up by some of the participants, encompassing restrictions in staffing, finances and role-based time constraints.

Respondents advocated for various refinements to alleviate these issues. A significant portion of this group called for reconsidering the three-year requirement for tracking destination data, emphasising the need for support in data gathering through collaborative efforts with local and national bodies, and promoting data sharing across different institutions. Regarding the record-keeping, recommendations were made for a unified platform showcasing exemplary record-keeping strategies and facilitating the sharing of career development records between schools, with a fraction urging to empower students with more control over the process.

In addition to the suggested changes around tracking and record-keeping, some participants also suggested that the sub-benchmark addressing stereotypes should be broadened to encourage a more inclusive approach to equality and diversity encompassing various protected characteristics, such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and mental health concerns.

BENCHMARK 4

A large majority of respondents acknowledged the significance of Benchmark 4 in the Gatsby Benchmarks. Out of 612 respondents, 593 (97%) agreed that Benchmark 4 is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. They particularly appreciated its role in linking curriculum learning with careers and facilitating the engagement of teachers and staff in embedding careers across school settings. A proportion of respondents found it challenging to implement Benchmark 4, mainly due to difficulties in engaging teachers and staff who are constrained by time and are unclear about their roles in this initiative.

For effective future implementation, respondents suggested that the benchmark should be expanded beyond its existing focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects to include all disciplines. In order to support this, respondents asked for more resources and for the wider curricula focus to be better reflected in the Compass tool. Other suggestions were to offer clearer guidelines with activity examples and establishing metrics for accountability and measurement of success in this benchmark.

The feedback varied based on the type of institution, with only a quarter of respondents from colleges feeling the need for refinements, as opposed to higher percentages from schools and special schools and alternative provision settings.

BENCHMARK 5

Almost all the respondents believe that Benchmark 5 has had an impact on the way in which young people encounter and experience the world of work. Out of 647 respondents, 638 (99%) agreed that Benchmark 5 is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Respondents across all settings and roles were highly appreciative of the fact that this benchmark allows young people to gain real-world insights into the world of work and broadens their knowledge and understanding of what career options they have and can aspire too.

Success has not come without its challenges, as the respondents find it challenging to engage employers who are committed to providing high-quality encounters, meeting the needs of a large cohort of students. Conflicting time schedules between schools and employers also makes it difficult to organise encounters for the majority of the respondents.

Despite these challenges, the number of respondents who believe that Benchmark 5 should have any refinements was lower than those who believed it does not. Reviewing the wording of the benchmark, as well as establishing the number or breadth of encounters required to achieve the benchmark were future considerations that were suggested. This suggests that although respondents would like to see some minor adjustments to the benchmark, the overall essence of what the benchmark is trying to achieve should not undergo significant change.

BENCHMARK 6

A large majority of respondents appreciate the critical role of Benchmark 6. Out of 633 respondents, 615 (97%) agreed that Benchmark 6 is an important aspect of the benchmarks. They highlight the value of the benchmark in readying students for the 'real' workplace and fostering essential skills and behaviours. The insights highlight the important role of the benchmark in aiding skill development and helping students make informed decisions about their future careers.

Many respondents highlighted challenges in delivering this benchmark. Key issues centre around successfully engaging employers and sourcing sufficient placements. Respondents raised concerns about both the willingness of employers to provide placements and the level of competition with other educational institutions who are also seeking employer engagement and placements. Significant concerns also exist over costs, funding and logistical matters such as transport and workplace safety.

Looking ahead, a significant proportion of respondents call for further support and refinements in implementing the benchmark. There is a strong demand for well-defined terms and examples to guide its application, including clarifying the nature and duration of meaningful work experiences. Some respondents advocate for recognising the worth of remote and virtual experiences and seek the integration of part-time work and volunteering into the benchmark. The feedback generally encourages a more structured and inclusive approach to the benchmark, reflecting the evolving dynamics of the modern workplace.

BENCHMARK 7

There is overwhelming support for Benchmark 7 across various roles and settings. Out of 552 respondents, 542 (98%) agreed that Benchmark 7 is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. The majority highlighted its role in enlightening students about the education and training pathways available to them after school.

The implementation of Benchmark 7 is marked by challenges, the most significant of which is provider access, especially in the school setting. The respondents were concerned about the difficulty of sourcing sufficient and suitable engagement from post-secondary providers. Other notable issues included the breadth of experiences especially in local areas, and the costs associated with implementing the benchmark.

Approximately half of participants indicated a need for more support and possible refinements in the implementation of Benchmark 7. In all educational settings, the most frequently cited area is the inclusion of various schools or age groups of students and clarifying the exact requirements for meaningful encounters.

BENCHMARK 8

The survey feedback indicates that Benchmark 8 is an important and valued component of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Out of 615 respondents, 610 (99%) agreed that Benchmark 8 is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Respondents highlighted the value of individualised advice from qualified careers professionals and noted that it aided students in making well-informed choices regarding their future career paths.

However, implementing Benchmark 8 presents some challenges, including the high student-to-professional ratio making one-on-one support difficult, especially given time constraints. The lack of sufficient resourcing for personal guidance poses a significant challenge to this benchmark's successful implementation. There is also a noted shortage of qualified careers professionals, hindering the attainment of the goals set out in Benchmark 8.

Despite these challenges, most respondents believe that Benchmark 8 does not require substantial revisions. They did, however, suggest potential improvements for the future, such as rethinking the structure of individual sessions with careers advisers, debating whether these sessions should be compulsory, and more precisely specifying the necessary qualifications for careers professionals.

INTRODUCTION

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation (Gatsby) has a long-standing interest in careers guidance. In April 2014 the organisation published a report which identified what good career guidance looked like and set out a framework of eight Gatsby Benchmarks for secondary schools and colleges.[1]

Table 1.1: The Gatsby Benchmarks

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY
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 (LMI)	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 the 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 and college's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.
4 LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS	All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of 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 EXPERIENCES 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.

[1] Holman, J. (2014) *Good career guidance*. or for more information https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/

BENCHMARK	SUMMARY
7 ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION	All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.
8 PERSONAL GUIDANCE	Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career 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 but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

Following a successful pilot in the North East of England, the Gatsby Benchmarks became the bedrock of the government's careers guidance strategy for schools and colleges. They now inform Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework[2] and have had a substantial impact on careers guidance in schools and colleges. There is growing evidence that implementing the Gatsby Benchmarks:

- improves destination outcomes

- reduces the likelihood of students – particularly those in disadvantaged circumstances – becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training)

- increases career readiness

- has a positive impact on academic performance.[3]

To fulfil Gatsby's aim to continue improving careers guidance over the next decade, a comprehensive programme of stakeholder consultation, research and analysis was undertaken.

At the centre of this consultation was a multi-stakeholder survey. The International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) at the University of Derby developed the survey and gathered thoughts and insights about the benchmarks from a range of people from education, business and the careers sector involved with careers guidance for young people.

[2] Ofsted (September 2023) *Guidance: education inspection framework*.
[3] Percy, C. and Tanner, E. (2021) *The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations*. The Careers & Enterprise Company.

METHOD

This report presents the results of the online consultation survey. We invited participants to visit a single landing page, from which they were directed to one of three distinct surveys aimed at schools, colleges and other stakeholders.

The principal target for the survey were the main user groups of the benchmarks, such as school and college careers leaders, school and college senior leadership teams (SLTs) and headteachers.

The secondary audience included enterprise coordinators, enterprise advisers, cornerstone employers[4], hub leads and those involved in the training and support of careers leaders and careers programmes in schools. They play a significant role, directly or indirectly, because they facilitate the delivery of careers guidance and shape career-related programmes and policies.

The tertiary audience included all other stakeholders, so anyone else with an interest in the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Differentiating these audiences meant the questions and data gathering could be tailored so that contextually relevant, precise and insightful feedback was provided. This inclusive approach to the consultation recognised the diversity of the stakeholders that interact with, and influence, the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The survey was launched online on 20 March 2023 and remained open until 28 April 2023. To encourage participant engagement and gather comprehensive data, the survey was designed to be completed online and it was estimated to take 20 to 30 minutes. The survey was distributed through multiple channels including the mailing lists of the Careers & Enterprise Company and the Career Development Institute. There was also a social media campaign that targeted relevant groups, such as Careers Leaders UK, on Facebook and directly targeted careers leaders on LinkedIn.

A total of 1,209 responses were received. This report provides a descriptive analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative findings. Generally descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data. Systematic cross tabulations were then created to look at the differences between key groups and settings. Next we analysed survey responses using a chi-square (χ^2) test with the p-value (p) set at .05, to see if there were statistically significant differences between the groups. Where p was less than 0.5 (<.05), it indicated a statistically significant difference between the groups. However, due to the small sample size of some groups, comparisons could not always be tested using the chi-square test.

A large proportion of the questions asked in the survey were open-ended. These questions produced a large volume of qualitative data. To analyse the qualitative data, we use thematic analysis to code and subcode the responses to each question. The primary codes that emerged from the analysis were the themes raised most often, while the subcodes captured further insights and nuances in each primary code. A codebook was developed and tested with an intercoder reliability exercise. This measures the extent to which different coders agree on the assignment of primary codes and subcodes and it enhanced the consistency and validity of our analytical process.
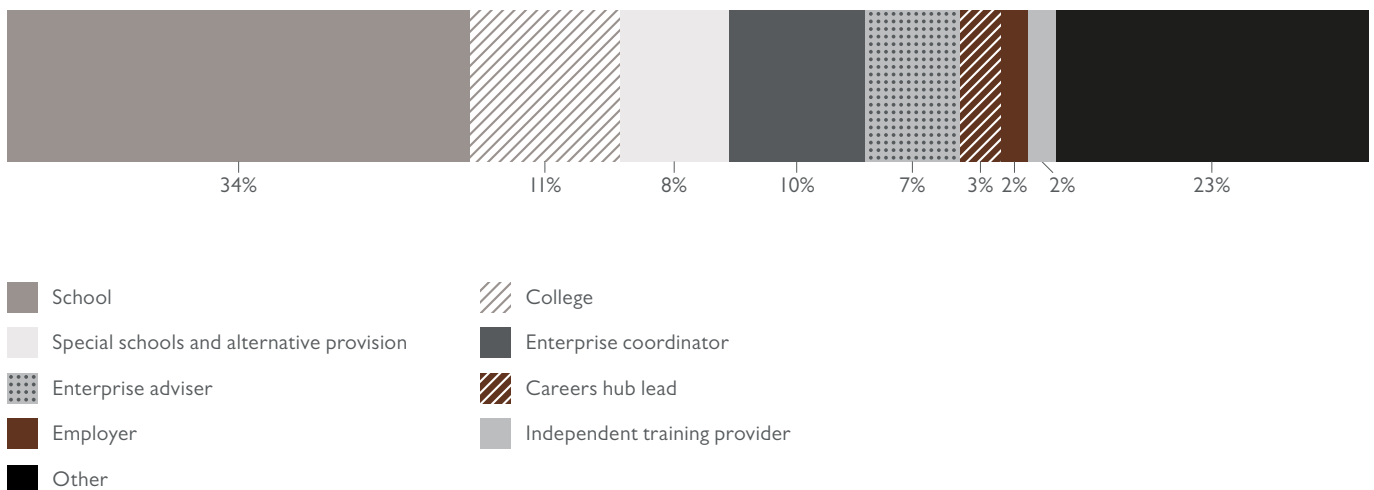
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[4] A 'cornerstone employer' is an employer who works collaboratively and strategically with networks of schools, colleges, and local stakeholders to improve careers education (The Careers & Enterprise Company, n.da.).

All the primary codes are presented in this report, as are the most frequently raised themes for each question. The subcodes are presented to provide further insights.

OVERVIEW

From the three surveys, we received 1,209 responses. Of the responses 34% (417 respondents) were from school settings, 11% (137 respondents) came from colleges and 8% (92 respondents) from special schools and alternative provision. The surveys also captured the views of a wider set of critical users of the benchmarks (47% of overall responses), including external careers organisations and providers, independent training providers (ITPs), employers, careers hubs and others (see Figure 1.1 for a breakdown of respondents by setting).

Figure 1.1: Proportion of survey responses by setting
(total number of responses=1,209)

34%	11%	8%	10%	7%	3%	2%	2%	23%

Legend:
- School
- Special schools and alternative provision
- Enterprise adviser
- Employer
- Other
- College
- Enterprise coordinator
- Careers hub lead
- Independent training provider

Notes:

• School refers to secondary school, including all-through schools eg, 4-18, middle schools, multi-academy trusts, schools 11-16, schools 11-18, studio schools/free schools and university technical colleges (UTCs).

• College refers to art, design or performing arts colleges, college groups, general further education colleges, land-based colleges and sixth form colleges.

• Special school and alternative provision refers to special schools, special educational colleges and pupil referral units/alternative provision.

• Primary schools and independent schools are not included in school, college and special schools and alternative provision settings for the analysis.

• Other refers to careers guidance providers, lecturers, skills leads, etc.

The educational institutions who responded to the survey were drawn from a diverse geographical area. Matching the school information to the Department for Education's guidance shows that between 7% and 17% of the respondents come from each of the regional categories. The regions with the highest number of respondents were Lancashire and West Yorkshire (17%, 106 respondents), East Midlands and the Humber (16%, 97 respondents), and South-East England and South London (14%, 88 respondents) (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2: Response by region
(number of responses=624)

Region	No. of response	%
Lancashire and West Yorkshire	106	17%
East Midlands and the Humber	97	16%
South East England and South London	88	14%
North West London and South Central England	79	13%
West Midlands	78	13%
South West England	71	11%
North of England	62	10%
East of England and North East London	43	7%
Total	624	100%

Respondents generally worked in institutions that were more likely to have been rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, compared to the national average. The overwhelming majority, 91% (379 respondents) of schools and 98% (131 respondents) of colleges, reported that they had received a good or outstanding rating in contrast to the national average of 75% for schools[5] and 88% for colleges.[6]

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[5] Ofsted (accessed 2023) *State-funded school inspections and outcomes: management information*.
[6] Noble, J. (2022) Sixth form and FE college quality hits new high. *FE Week*, 25 November 2022.

Respondents used the benchmarks in their work in education. Table 1.3 shows the breakdown of responses by role in different educational settings. The most significant number of responses came from those working in schools as careers leaders (278 respondents), careers advisers (151 respondents) and in the SLT (105 respondents). This was followed by careers leaders working in colleges (71 respondents) and careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision (67 respondents).

Table 1.3: Number of responses by role in educational setting
(number of responses=646)

	School (n=417)	College (n=137)	Special schools & alternative provision (n=92)	Total (n=646)
Careers leader	278	71	67	416
Careers adviser	151	48	12	211
Senior leadership team	105	25	40	170
Middle leader (ie, subject leader or pastoral leader)	44	11	15	70
Careers/work experience administrator/coordinator	50	5	12	67
Classroom teacher	36	3	8	47
Head of careers or student services/student support	4	23	3	30
Other role	21	3	5	29

Note: Respondents may have had more than one role.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

Whole sector response

Figure 1.2 shows the overwhelming majority of respondents (94%, 1,136 respondents) across the entire sample agreed that the Gatsby Benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance: 46% (556 respondents) strongly agreed and 48% (580 respondents) agreed, 4% (45 respondents) were neutral and 2% (26 respondents) disagreed or strongly disagreed. The near universal agreement demonstrates that the benchmarks have been accepted as a pivotal tool for shaping careers guidance.

It is evident that the benchmarks have made a positive impact on organisations that have utilised the framework. Forty-six per cent (554 respondents) agreed and 42% (501 respondents) strongly agreed that the benchmarks have had a positive impact on their organisation. Ten per cent (122 respondents) were neutral, and a small number of respondents disagreed (2%, 24 respondents).

The majority of respondents (81%, 978 respondents) were largely positive when looking at the benchmarks' influence on young people: 51% (613 respondents) agreed and 30% (365 respondents) strongly agreed that the benchmarks had had a positive impact on the outcomes of young people. A sixth of the sample were neutral (16%, 190 respondents) and a small minority strongly disagreed (1%, 7 respondents).

The survey results also show that the majority of all respondents, 72% (858 respondents) believed that the Gatsby Benchmarks had positively influenced the relationship between educational organisations and employers: 26% (307 respondents) strongly agreed and 46% (551 respondents) agreed. Only 1% (15 respondents) of participants strongly disagreed with this statement.

Figure 1.2: Perspectives on the Gatsby Benchmarks
(all respondents)
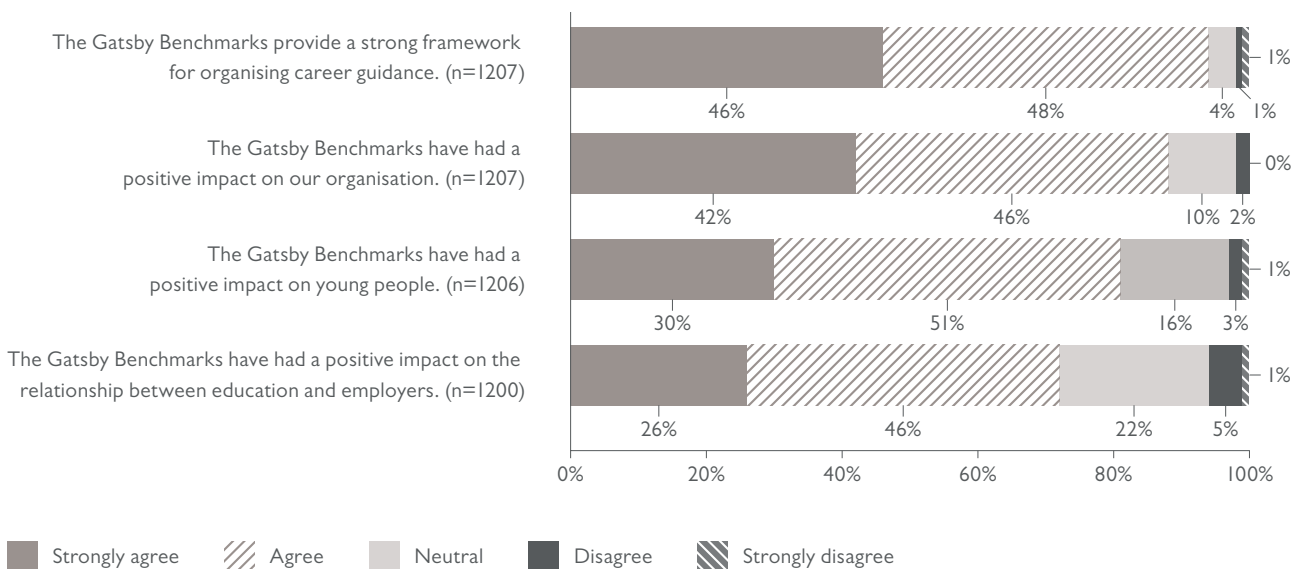
Secondary schools, colleges and special schools

A total of 96% (618 respondents) of the schools, colleges, and special schools and alternative provision that responded, agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 90% (579 respondents) felt that the benchmarks had had a positive impact on their organisation. Eighty-four per cent (541 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for students. And 68% (439 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between their educational institution and employers.

School careers leaders

More school careers leaders responded to our sample than any other role (278 respondents) and several key findings emerged: 99% (274 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, while 95% (263 respondents) had observed a positive impact on their institution as a result of the implementation of the Gatsby Benchmarks. In addition, 87% (240 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for students and 78% (214 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between their educational institution and employers.

College careers leaders

Similarly, 96% (68 respondents) of the 71 college careers leader respondents agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 92% (65 respondents) felt the implementation of the benchmarks had had a positive impact on their institution. In addition, 89% (63 respondents) believed the framework offered clear benefits for students. Two-thirds, 66% (46 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between their educational institution and employers, while 30% (21 respondents) were neutral on the topic and 4% (3 respondents) disagreed.

All respondents in special schools and alternative provision

In special schools and alternative provision settings, 95% (87 respondents) of all respondents (92 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, 90% (83 respondents) felt the implementation of the benchmarks had had a positive impact on their institution. In addition, 82% (75 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for students. However, only 57% (52 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between their educational institution and employers, while 30% (27 respondents) were neutral on the topic and 13% (12 respondents) disagreed.

Careers advisers in education setting

Of careers advisers in educational settings (211 respondents), 98% (206 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 92% (194 respondents) felt the implementation had had a positive impact on their organisation. In addition, 86% (182 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for young people and 73% (152 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between their educational institution and employers.

Senior leadership teams

Of SLTs in educational settings (170 respondents), 98% (166 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 94% (159 respondents) felt the implementation had had a positive impact on their organisation. In addition, 88% (148 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for students, and 70% (118 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between their educational institution and employers.

Other stakeholders

Independent training providers
Of the 20 independent training provider (ITP) responses, 85% (17 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 80% (16 respondents) felt the implementation had had a positive impact on their organisation. In addition, 75% (15 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for young people, and 70% (14 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between educational institutions and employers.

Enterprise coordinators
An overwhelming majority of the 115 enterprise coordinators that answered were positive about the Gatsby Benchmarks: 95% (109 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 96% (110 respondents) felt the implementation had had a positive impact on their organisation. In addition, 95% (109 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for young people, and 87% (100 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between educational institutions and employers.

Careers hub leads
Similar to enterprise coordinators, careers hub leads were positive about the Gatsby Benchmarks: 98% (41 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 100% (42 respondents) felt the implementation had had a positive impact on their organisation. In addition, 90% (38 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for young people, and 90% (36 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between educational institutions and employers.

Enterprise advisers
Of enterprise advisers (90 respondents), 91% (82 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 81% (73 respondents) felt the implementation had had a positive impact on their organisation. In addition, 76% (68 respondents) believed the benchmarks offered clear benefits for young people, and 74% (67 respondents) felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between educational institutions and employers.

Employers
Of employers, 90% (26 respondents) agreed that the benchmarks provided a strong framework for careers guidance, and 76% (22 respondents) felt that the implementation of the benchmarks had improved the relationship between them and the educational institutions. However, only 62% (18 respondents) believed that the benchmarks offered clear benefits for young people, and 55% (16 respondents) felt the implementation had had a positive impact on their organisation.

Table 1.4: Number of responses by role in other stakeholders.

Other stakeholders	
Independent training providers	n=20
Enterprise coordinators	n=115
Careers hub leads	n=42
Enterprise advisers	n=84
Employers	n=29

SUMMARY OF PERSPECTIVES

The majority of respondents were positive about the Gatsby Benchmarks. The survey responses showed that there was widespread agreement that the benchmarks were a strong framework for careers guidance. However, only 57% (52 respondents) of those in special schools and alternative provision felt that implementing the benchmarks had improved the relationship between their educational institution and employers, while 30% (27 respondents) were neutral on the topic and 13% (12 respondents) disagreed.

IMPORTANT ASPECTS

There was an overwhelming consensus across all the respondents to the survey that the benchmarks were useful and impactful. When questioned about each individual benchmark, there was agreement that every benchmark was an important element of the framework. The level of agreement ranged between 96% and 99% of those who answered this question for each benchmark (see the y axis of Figure 1.3 for the actual numbers of responses). This suggests a high level of approval and satisfaction with the Gatsby Benchmarks by its users.

Figure 1.3: Do you agree that each benchmark is an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks?

Benchmark 1 (n=718) — 98% (n=707)
Benchmark 2 (n=657) — 96% (n=634)
Benchmark 3 (n=654) — 98% (n=639)
Benchmark 4 (n=612) — 97% (n=593)
Benchmark 5 (n=647) — 99% (n=638)
Benchmark 6 (n=633) — 97% (n=615)
Benchmark 7 (n=552) — 98% (n=542)
Benchmark 8 (n=615) — 99% (n=610)
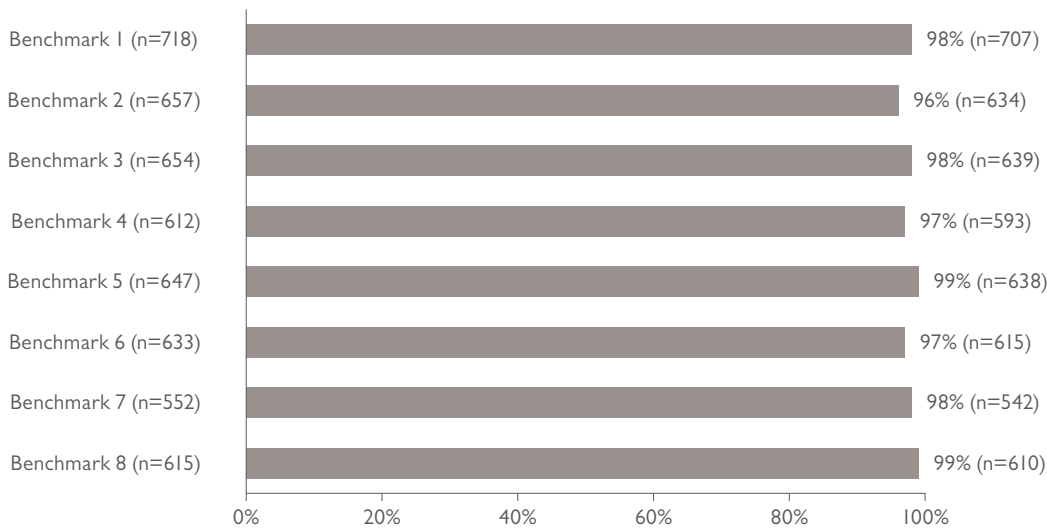
CHALLENGES

Alongside the high level of support for the Gatsby Benchmarks, more than 60% of those who answered this question from all settings reported finding aspects of the benchmarks challenging to implement (see the y axis of Figure 1.4 for the actual number of responses). Benchmark 6 was identified as the most challenging, with 89% (568 of the 640 who responded) saying they had found an aspect challenging to implement. This was closely followed by Benchmark 3, with 85% (547 of the 642 who responded) stating they had found some aspect challenging (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4: Have you found any aspect of the benchmarks challenging to implement?

Benchmark 1 (n=707) — 62% (n=437)
Benchmark 2 (n=652) — 72% (n=468)
Benchmark 3 (n=642) — 85% (n=547)
Benchmark 4 (n=608) — 70% (n=426)
Benchmark 5 (n=642) — 66% (n=423)
Benchmark 6 (n=640) — 89% (n=568)
Benchmark 7 (n=548) — 65% (n=357)
Benchmark 8 (n=613) — 73% (n=448)
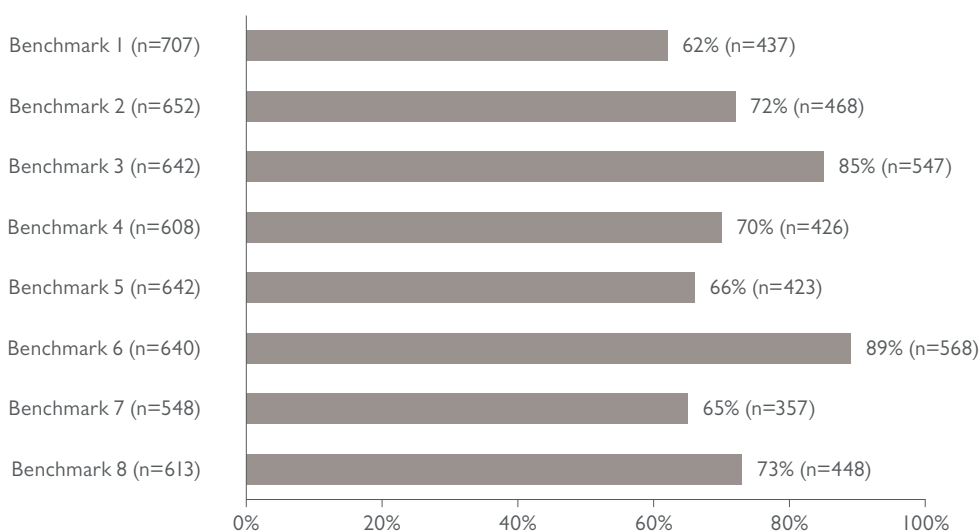
CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Many respondents said the benchmarks either needed refining or that further support needed to be available to help organisations implement them. The qualitative responses from all respondents suggested that many were keen to have additional support and also furthe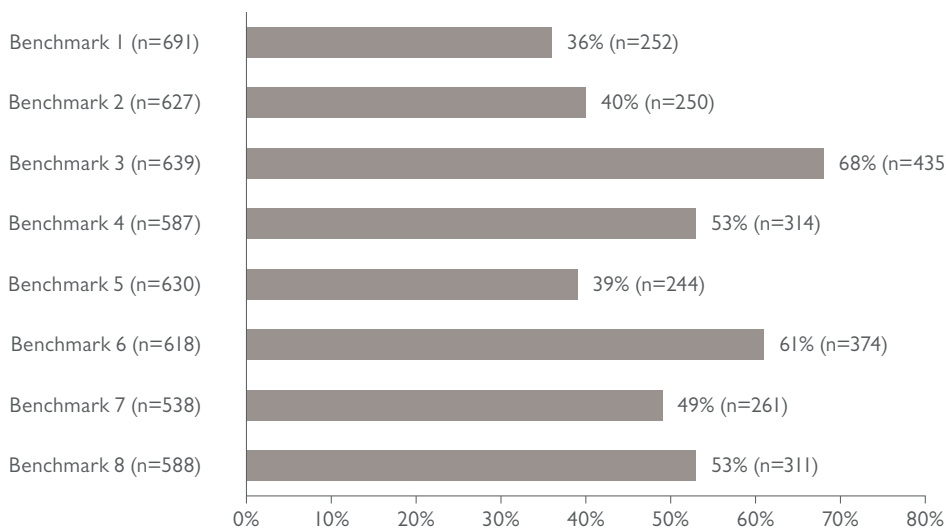r guidance and clarifications on the benchmarks and on what constitutes good careers guidance. While others raised wider systemic issues that they felt stood in the way of them successfully implementing the benchmarks.

Of the 639 who responded to the question about whether refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 3, 68% agreed (435 respondents). For the 618 who responded to the same question about Benchmark 6, 61% (374 respondents) agreed. Around half (53%) of the 587 who answered the question about Benchmark 4 agreed that refinements needed to be made (314 respondents), 53% for Benchmark 8 (311 of the 588 who responded) and 49% for Benchmark 7 (261 of the 538 who responded). The proportions who would like to see refinements are shown in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5: Do you believe that there is a need to make any refinements to any of the benchmarks or any of the sub-benchmarks?

Benchmark 1 (n=691)	36% (n=252)
Benchmark 2 (n=627)	40% (n=250)
Benchmark 3 (n=639)	68% (n=435)
Benchmark 4 (n=587)	53% (n=314)
Benchmark 5 (n=630)	39% (n=244)
Benchmark 6 (n=618)	61% (n=374)
Benchmark 7 (n=538)	49% (n=261)
Benchmark 8 (n=588)	53% (n=311)

Different proportions of stakeholders in different settings stated that specific benchmarks needed refinements. For example, 46% (99 respondents) of school respondents felt Benchmark 4 should be refined, but only 25% (15 respondents) of college respondents felt refinements were needed for this benchmark. Whereas for Benchmark 8, 41% (86 respondents) of school respondents suggested refinements were needed compared to 60% (39 respondents) of college respondents.

Table 1.4 shows the responses made by the various educational settings for each benchmark. Four benchmarks had more than 50% of respondents from at least one setting stating that refinements were needed – these are highlighted on the table.

Table 1.5: Do you believe that there is a need to make any refinements to the benchmarks or any of the sub-benchmarks?

Do you believe that there is a need to make any refinements to the benchmarks or any of the sub-benchmarks?		School		College		Special schools and alternative provisions	
		No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%
Benchmark 1	Yes	60	24%	15	21%	8	18%
	No	188	76%	58	79%	36	82%
	Total	248	100%	73	100%	44	100%
Benchmark 2	Yes	66	28%	21	33%	15	39%
	No	169	72%	43	67%	23	61%
	Total	235	100%	64	100%	38	100%
Benchmark 3	Yes	177	**71%**	32	**52%**	17	47%
	No	72	29%	30	48%	19	53%
	Total	249	100%	62	100%	36	100%
Benchmark 4	Yes	99	46%	15	25%	16	50%
	No	115	54%	45	75%	16	50%
	Total	214	100%	60	100%	32	100%
Benchmark 5	Yes	70	31%	23	38%	7	18%
	No	154	69%	37	62%	31	82%
	Total	224	100%	60	100%	38	100%
Benchmark 6	Yes	133	**58%**	33	**58%**	14	41%
	No	98	42%	24	42%	20	59%
	Total	231	100%	57	100%	34	100%
Benchmark 7	Yes	82	41%	22	39%	17	**57%**
	No	120	59%	35	61%	13	43%
	Total	202	100%	57	100%	30	100%
Benchmark 8	Yes	86	41%	39	**60%**	14	40%
	No	125	59%	26	40%	21	60%
	Total	211	100%	65	100%	35	100%

In the following sections, we examine each benchmark in detail, looking at the feedback from key educational settings (schools, colleges, and special schools and alternative provision settings). We compare insights from our principal respondents in schools, namely careers leaders and members of SLTs, to understand their perspectives on each benchmark. We also include specific sections on ITPs and employers.

BENCHMARK 1:
A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME

For schools:
Every school should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers and employers.

- Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it.

- The careers programme should be published on the school's website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers and employers to access and understand it. The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process.

For colleges:
Every college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by learners, parents, teachers, employers and other agencies.

- Every college should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team, and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it.

- The careers programme should be published on the college's website in a way that enables learners, parents, college staff and employers to access and understand it. The programme should be regularly evaluated, with feedback from learners, parents, college staff and employers as part of the evaluation process.

SUMMARY

There was overwhelming support for Benchmark 1 from various roles and settings. Increased support from the senior leadership team (SLT) and the emphasis on planning and taking a strategic approach to careers guidance were seen as the most valuable elements of Benchmark 1 by all key roles except for careers leaders in colleges. For this group, the standout value of Benchmark 1 was the requirement to share the career programme on the college's website.

Many respondents, from different roles and settings, found the evaluation element in Benchmark 1 to be the most challenging aspect. Those from special schools and alternative provision settings specifically highlighted updating and managing information on the website as a challenge.

Approximately a third of participants want Benchmark 1 to be refined or want further guidance and support to help them implement it. The main suggestion from these respondents was for clarification on what is meant by a structured careers programme. Within this group, there were requests for clarity on training, role specifics and time allocations for careers leaders, while others want details of programme content. Another significant portion want clarity and support for the evaluation requirements built into Benchmark 1.

SCHOOLS

All responses

Of the 264 responses received, ninety-eight per cent (258 respondents) of respondents in school settings felt that Benchmark 1 was an important aspect of the framework. Of the 222 who provided qualitative responses about what they felt were the most important aspects of Benchmark 1, 32% highlighted senior leader engagement (71 respondents), 24% the focus on strategic planning (53 respondents) and 23% the requirement for stakeholder engagement (51 respondents).

Fifty-one per cent (133 respondents) of 262 respondents in school settings said they had found implementing aspects of Benchmark 1 challenging. Of all the 133 respondents that gave qualitative answers about the main challenge for schools, 38% (51 respondents) said collecting feedback from stakeholders. Fourteen per cent (19 respondents) said SLT engagement and 11% (15 respondents) said updating and managing their information on the website.

Twenty-four per cent (60 respondents) of the 248 in school settings who responded to this question wanted further guidance and support about how to implement this benchmark. Of the 68 respondents who provided qualitative responses about the refinements they would like made to Benchmark 1, 18% (12 respondents) wanted further guidance on evaluation. Fifteen per cent (10 respondents) wanted a definition of a structured careers programme and 10% (7 respondents) wanted further guidance on how they should evidence and report the implementation of benchmark criteria.

Careers leaders

Of the 167 careers leaders in schools who provided qualitative responses about the refinements they would like made to Benchmark 1, the most important aspects were support from SLT (29%, 49 respondents) and planning and strategy (28%, 46 respondents). Of the 36 respondents who were careers leaders and were also part of the senior leadership team, a greater proportion ranked planning and strategy (42%, 15 respondents) as the most important aspect. Of 55 respondents who were careers leaders and were also careers advisers a greater proportion ranked support from SLT (40%, 22 respondents) as the most important aspect. The quotes below illustrate the responses from careers leaders about the aspects they value:

> **It is a visible tool that supports the understanding from SLT and whole school.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about support from SLT

> **This benchmark has ensured the backing of senior management to embed careers within the curriculum and have a more prominent profile in school.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about planning and strategy and support from SLT

Helps to plan the year ahead to ensure you meet the benchmarks and set the programme up correctly. Once this is done, additional events can be added to allow workload to be managed and supplementary activity can provide the extra boost that students need in some areas.
Careers leader in a school speaking about planning and strategy

Just under half (46%, 90 respondents) of the 194 careers leaders in schools who answered the question about implementing Benchmark 1 said certain aspects were challenging (see Figure 2.1). Of 90 respondents, 36% (32 respondents) said getting feedback was the most challenging aspect of implementing Benchmark 1. This is reflected in the quotes below:
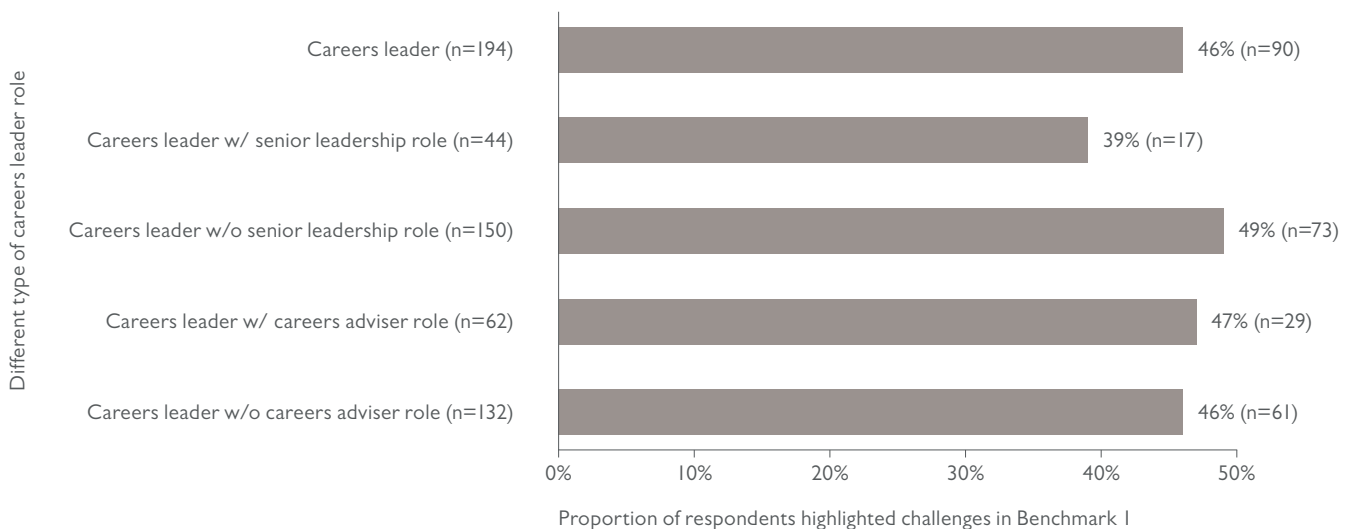
Feedback from stakeholders can be a challenge – especially providers. Capturing what we're doing can be time consuming and there is limited time allocated to staff for career work alongside other roles.
Careers leader in a school speaking about getting feedback

Gaining feedback from students, parents, and even staff, can be difficult to get in sufficient numbers to be meaningful.
Careers leader in a school speaking about getting feedback

Figure 2.1: Have you found any aspect of the Benchmark 1 challenging to implement? (Careers leaders in school settings)

Proportion of respondents highlighted challenges in Benchmark 1

Different type of careers leader role:
- Careers leader (n=194): 46% (n=90)
- Careers leader w/ senior leadership role (n=44): 39% (n=17)
- Careers leader w/o senior leadership role (n=150): 49% (n=73)
- Careers leader w/ careers adviser role (n=62): 47% (n=29)
- Careers leader w/o careers adviser role (n=132): 46% (n=61)

Around a quarter (23%, 42 respondents) of the 185 careers leaders in schools who answered the question reported a need to address challenges or better support Benchmark 1 (see Figure 2.2). However, only 7% (3 respondents) of careers leaders in schools with a senior leadership role said there was a need to refine Benchmark 1. Statistically, this percentage is significantly lower than that reported by careers leaders without a senior leadership role ($\chi^2(1) = 7.895$; $p < .05$). Of the 46 who provided qualitative responses about the challenges they would like addressed for Benchmark 1, 15% (7 respondents) wanted clarification on what constitutes a structured careers programme and 15% (7 respondents) wanted evaluation requirements. The quotes below illustrate the main themes of structured careers programme and evaluation:

It (Benchmark 1) doesn't state the "ideal" or options for the resourcing structure for a careers programme as I know that many people are doing the 3 jobs like me (careers leader and careers adviser and work experience coordinator) or many have teaching roles etc. It would be helpful if this benchmark was more specific around resourcing and time that each role should allocate etc.
Careers leader in a school speaking about the need for a structured careers programme

I think the question about monitoring and evaluation should be more specific to what elements should be evaluated and how often.
Careers leader in a school speaking about evaluation requirements

Figure 2.2: Do you believe that there is a need to make any refinements to Benchmark 1 or any of its sub-benchmarks? (Careers leaders in school settings)
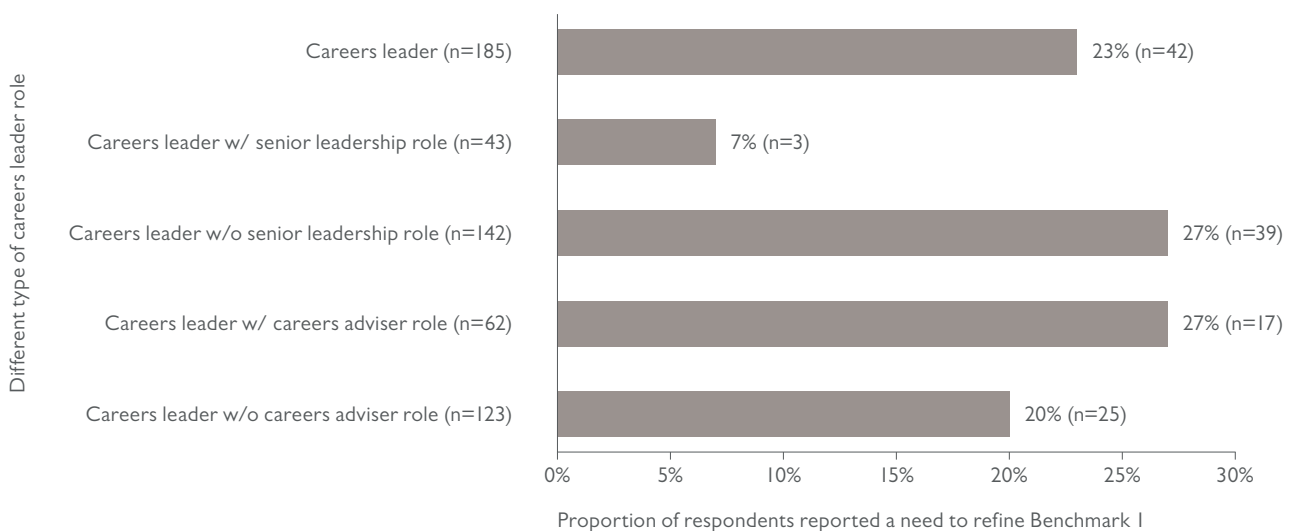
Senior leadership teams

Of the 46 SLT members who responded to the question, 35% (16 respondents) ranked planning and strategy as the most important aspect of Benchmark 1.

We have seen that 46% of careers leaders in schools said there were challenges implementing some aspects of Benchmark 1. A similar percentage, 45% of the 62 SLT members who answered this question (28 respondents), also said there were challenges. Of the 27 respondents who gave qualitative responses, 48% (13 respondents) said obtaining feedback was the most challenging aspect of implementing Benchmark 1 for SLTs. This is shown in the quote below:

> **Some elements of feedback are harder to achieve – especially employers but it also depends on what regularly means.**
> SLT in a school speaking about getting feedback

Of the 60 SLT members in school settings who responded to the question, 17% (10 respondents) reported a need to address challenges with Benchmark 1.

Nine respondents from SLTs made suggestions about how to address the challenges, including focusing on evaluation and providing more guidance on what should be evaluated, and standardising the feedback forms and timings.
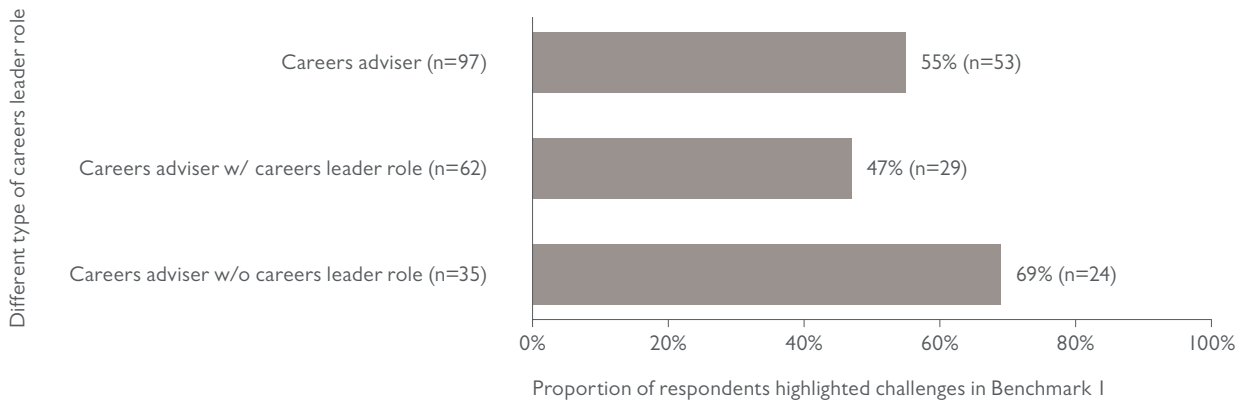
Careers advisers

Of the 89 careers advisers in a school setting who answered the question, 40% (36 respondents) ranked support from SLT as the most important aspect of Benchmark 1. In the school setting, careers advisers who do not hold the careers leader role are unlikely to be responsible for implementing aspects of Benchmark 1 but a significant proportion, 69% of the 35 who answered this question (24 respondents), said there were challenges implementing certain aspects of Benchmark 1 (see Figure 2.3). In contrast, only 47% (29 respondents) of the 62 careers advisers with a careers leader role who answered echoed these difficulties (as shown in Figure 2.3). However, of the 54 careers advisers who gave qualitative responses, 37% (20 respondents) said obtaining feedback was the most challenging aspect of implementing Benchmark 1. This is illustrated by the quote below:

> **Feedback is challenging. It is simple enough to send out surveys and form focus groups, but this often misses out those who will give a different perspective (and are perhaps less likely to volunteer information).**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about getting feedback

Figure 2.3: Have you found any aspect of the Benchmark 1 challenging to implement? (careers advisers in school settings)

Of the 94 careers advisers in schools who answered the question, 26% (24 respondents) reported the need for refinements and future clarification to Benchmark 1 (see Figure 2.4). Of the 30 careers advisers who gave qualitative responses, 13% (4 respondents) said clarification about a structured careers programme, and 13% (4 respondents) said evaluation requirements would address challenges with Benchmark 1. The quotes below provide examples of some of the careers advisers suggestions:

I think a more specific list of what is required to ensure that there is a stable careers programme will help ensure that SLT will be even more understanding of what resources need to be released in order to have an outstanding careers programme.
Careers adviser in a school speaking about the need for a structured careers programme

A standard set of evaluation questions/prompts would be useful.
Careers adviser in a school speaking about the need for evaluation

Figure 2.4: Do you believe that there is a need to make any refinements to Benchmark 1 or any of its sub-benchmarks? (careers advisers in school settings)

Proportion of respondents reported a need to refine Benchmark 1
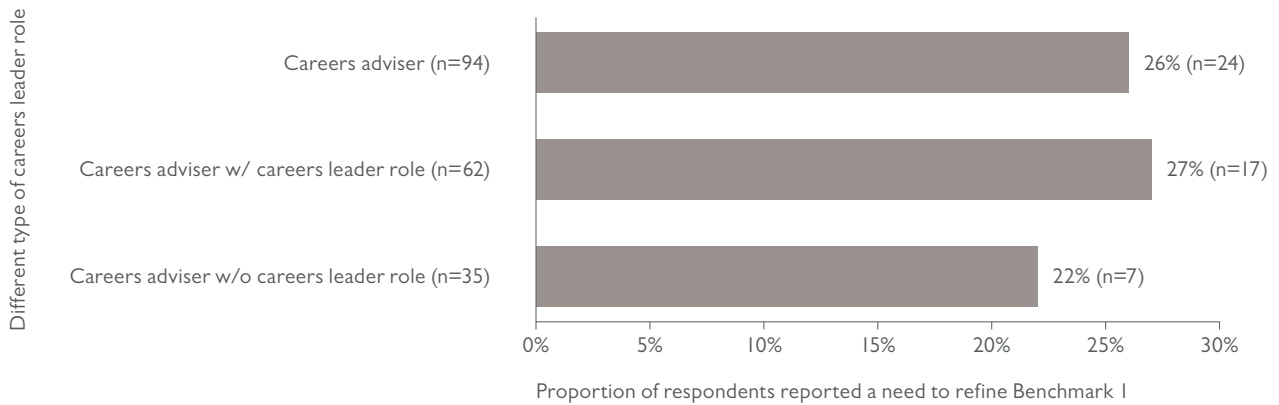
COLLEGES

All responses

Of the 73 respondents in a college setting who answered the question, almost all (99%, 72 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 1 was important. Of the 68 respondents who provided qualitative data on the important aspects 18% (12 respondents) highlighted the importance of senior leader engagement, 18% (12 respondents) the importance of stakeholder engagement and 16% (11 respondents) publishing the careers programme on websites.

Around half (48%, 35 respondents) also reported challenges with implementing certain aspects of Benchmark 1. Of the 35 respondents who provided qualitative data about the challenges, 49% (17 respondents) said the most challenging aspect was obtaining stakeholder feedback, 23% (8 respondents) said engagement with parents and 14% (5 respondents) said engagement with SLT.

Of the 73 respondents in a college setting who answered the question, around a fifth (21%, 15 respondents) reported needing more support to implement Benchmark 1. Of the respondents who suggested this, 19% (3 respondents) identified the need for further clarification on evaluation requirements.

Careers leaders

Of the 44 careers leaders in college settings who responded to the question, 18% (8 respondents) ranked focusing on the website as the most important aspect. This is represented by the quote below:

> **By publishing information on websites and making this mandatory, it gives much more backbone to careers.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about the website

Careers leaders in college settings, similar to those in school settings, ranked getting feedback as the most challenging part of implementing Benchmark 1. Some careers leaders in colleges mentioned facing challenges adapting to curriculum changes during the pandemic, which made getting stakeholder feedback difficult.

In college settings, careers leaders felt that refinements and more support would be most helpful for the evaluation requirements.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses
Of the 44 respondents from a special schools and alternative provision setting who answered the question, almost all (98%, 43 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 1 was important. Of the 41 respondents who provided qualitative data about the most important aspects of the benchmark, 39% (16 respondents) highlighted senior leader engagement, 20% (8 respondents) publishing the careers programme on their website and 20% (8 respondents) evaluation.

Half (21 respondents) of the 42 respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered the question said there were challenges implementing certain aspects of Benchmark 1.
Of the 22 respondents who gave qualitative responses about the challenges of implementing Benchmark 1, 27% (6 respondents) said website issues, 23% (5 respondents) said getting feedback from stakeholders and 18% (4 respondents) said engaging with SLT.

Around a fifth (18%, 8 respondents) of the 44 respondents in this setting said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 1 or they needed to receive more support to implement this benchmark.

Careers leaders
Of the 33 careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered this question, 39% (13 respondents) ranked support from SLT as the most important aspect of Benchmark 1. The quote below illustrates this sentiment:

> **This benchmark has encouraged senior management and governance 'buy-in'
> and has paved the way for meaningful and relevant 'careers' pathways for SEND
> [special educational needs and disabilities] pupils.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about support from SLT

Similar to those in school settings, 26% (5 respondents) of the 19 careers leaders who gave qualitative answers to the question in special schools and alternative provision settings ranked getting feedback as the most challenging aspect of implementing Benchmark 1.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators

Of the 87 enterprise coordinators who answered the question, 30% (26 respondents) valued Benchmark 1 for being the foundation for the other benchmarks. Of the 70 who gave qualitative responses about the challenges of implementing Benchmark 1, 39% (27 respondents) said the main challenge they faced was getting stakeholder feedback. Of the 56 that gave qualitative responses about the improvements they would like to see, 34% (19 respondents) said the issue of evaluation should be the focus.

Careers hub leads

Like enterprise coordinators, the majority of the 37 careers hub leads who answered the question, 54% (20 respondents) valued Benchmark 1 as being the foundation for the other benchmarks. Of the 32 who gave qualitative answers to the question 38% (12 respondents) said getting stakeholder feedback was the most challenging element. Of the 29 that gave suggestions for amendments, 48% (14 respondents) focused on evaluation.

Enterprise advisers

Of the 29 enterprise advisers who answered, 6 said they valued the planning and strategy aspects of Benchmark 1. Of the 23 who said what the most challenging element of implementing Benchmark 1 was, 8 said they found lack of funding and resources the most challenging. Of the 10 respondents who said improvements could be made, 3 said evaluation should be a focus.

Employers

Of the 8 employers who commented specifically on Benchmark 1, 2 of them (25%) value planning and strategy in Benchmark 1. Two of the 7 respondents who commented on the challenges of implementing Benchmark 1 said website issues were the most significant challenge. And two of the four respondents who suggested amendments said they needed to be made to the evaluation.

Independent training providers

The one respondent from an independent training provider (ITP) wanted the feedback/inclusion of families and parents to be included in Benchmark 1.
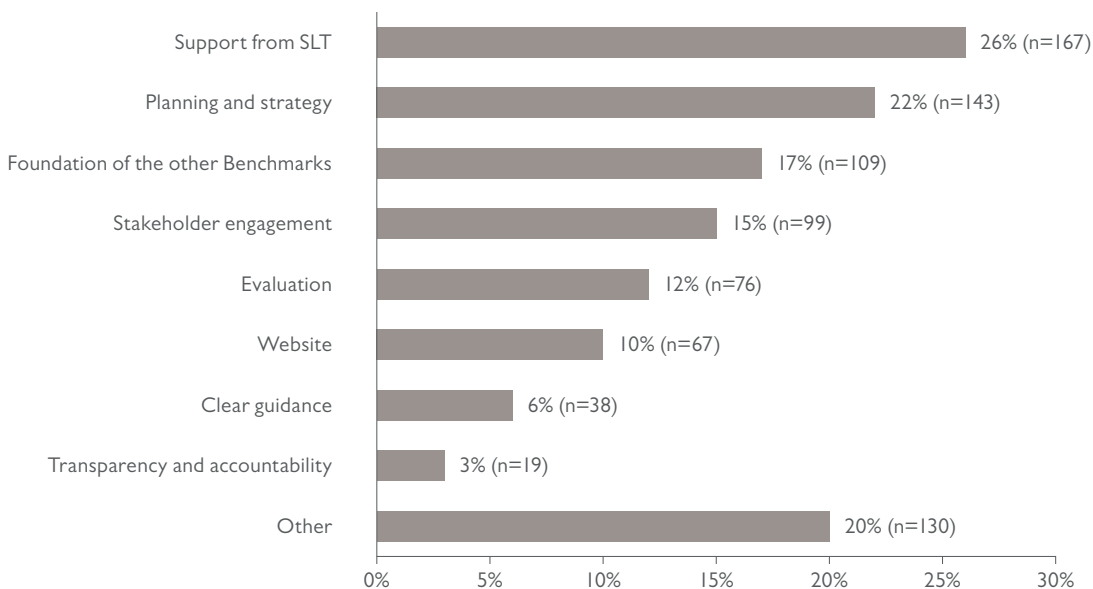
ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Of the 718 respondents who answered the question, 98% (707 respondents) felt Benchmark 1 was an important part of the benchmarks. This includes 98% (258 respondents) of those from school settings, 99% (72 respondents) from colleges, and 98% (43 respondents) from special schools or alternative provision settings.

Six hundred and forty respondents provided further detail about what they specifically value about this benchmark. Twenty-six per cent (167 respondents) highlighted the importance of senior leader engagement, 22% (143 respondents) strategic planning and 17% (109 respondents) valued Benchmark 1 as a foundation for the other benchmarks (see Figure 2.5). Other important aspects included stakeholder engagement (15%, 99 respondents), evaluation requirements (12%, 76 respondents) and publishing the careers programme on their website (10%, 67 respondents). While careers leaders found aspects of Benchmark 1 challenging to implement, it was less challenging for those careers leader that were also a member of the SLT, particularly in schools. This highlights the strategic nature of this benchmark and the crucial role of senior leaders in facilitating the benchmarks.

Figure 2.5: Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 1
(number of responses=640)

Challenges

Of the 707 respondents who answered the question about challenges implementing Benchmark 1, 63% (447 respondents) indicated that certain aspects of Benchmark 1 were difficult to implement. The sub-benchmark in Benchmark 1 which states that the careers programme in schools and colleges should be regularly evaluated with feedback from students, parents, school/college staff and employers as part of the evaluation process was mentioned by 30% (134 respondents) of those who provided qualitative data on the challenges they faced in implementing Benchmark 1 (see Figure 2.6).

Of the 134 respondents who said they found getting stakeholder feedback the most challenging element of implementing Benchmark 1, 55% (74 respondents) struggled to get feedback from parents, 24% (32 respondents) from employers, 19% (26 respondents) from staff, and 18% (24 respondents) from students. Other challenges reported included methods for feedback or evaluation (34%, 46 respondents), and constraints such as time, resources, or a lack of knowledge in feedback collection or evaluation techniques (21%, 28 respondents).

Although 30% (134 respondents) of respondents found that getting stakeholder feedback was challenging, of the 640 who answered the question on what they valued about Benchmark 1, 15% (99 respondents) said stakeholder engagement and 12% (76 respondents) said they valued evaluation, seeing them as crucial aspects of the benchmark.

The second most frequently cited challenge, highlighted by 20% (88 respondents) of the 447 respondents who answered this question, was engagement with the senior leadership team. Of those 88 respondents, 72% (63 respondents) pointed to a lack of buy-in from the SLT. They felt a lack of willingness by the leadership teams to actively acknowledge, support and take part in the careers guidance provisions. Twenty-six per cent (23 respondents) attributed this to shifting or competing priorities being set by the SLT, and 15% (13 respondents) believed it came from a lack of knowledge or expertise in the leadership team about careers guidance.

Figure 2.6: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 1
(number of responses=447)
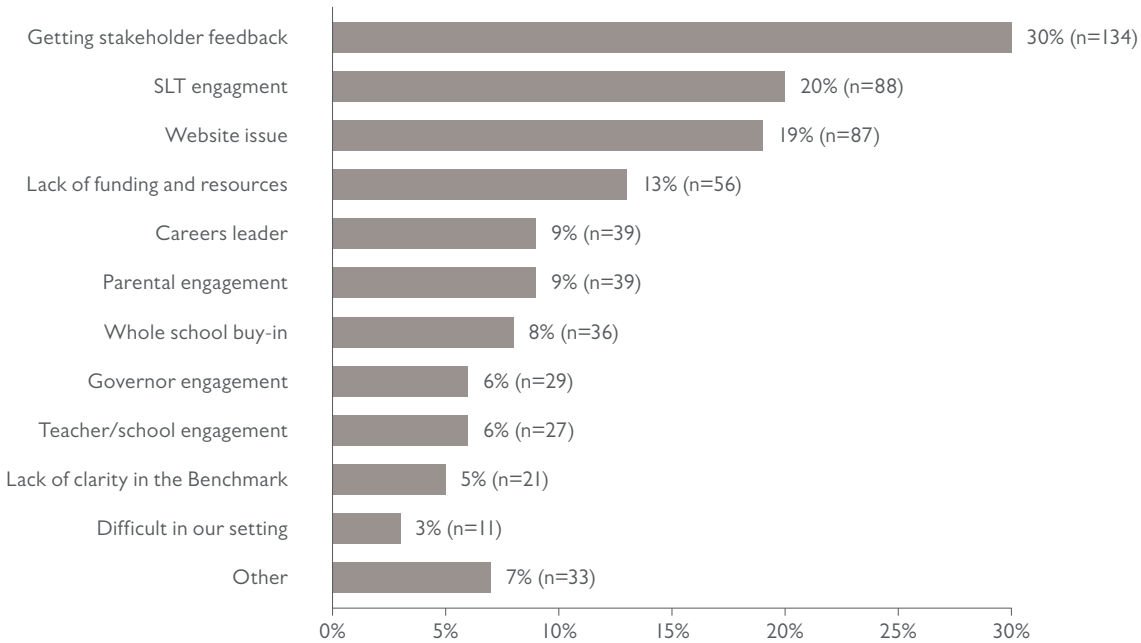
On a practical level, 19% (87 respondents) of the 447 who answered this question mentioned finding publishing the careers programme on the school's or college's website challenging. This included having technical problems, trouble accessing the website and having difficulties making straightforward updates.

Lack of funding and resources was a challenge highlighted by 13% (56 respondents).

Comparing the results across all settings showed no significant difference in the challenges of implementing Benchmark 1 (see Figure 2.7). Around half the respondents in all settings reported finding some aspects of Benchmark 1 challenging to implement.

Figure 2.7: Have you found any aspect of the Benchmark 1 challenging to implement?
(by setting)
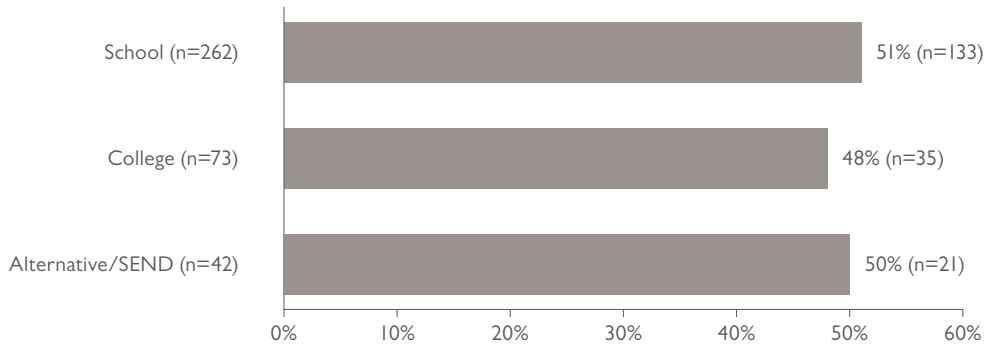
Of the 133 respondents in schools and the 35 in colleges who said they found an aspect of Benchmark 1 challenging to implement, the most frequently highlighted challenge was getting feedback: 38% (51 respondents) in schools and 49% (17 respondents) in colleges. The 21 respondents from special schools and alternative provision settings were most likely (27%, 6 respondents) to report website issues as the biggest challenge.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Around a third of respondents (36%) provided feedback about what would help them overcome some of the challenges they had faced, and what support would help them implement Benchmark 1 (see Figure 2.8). Suggestions included refinements (modifications or additions) but also additional guidance, wrap-around support and changes to policy.

Of those who highlighted the need to modify or support Benchmark 1, respondents suggested adding sub-benchmarks or amending the existing ones. Suggestions were wide ranging but the most significant themes were the need to clarify what a structured careers programme is (made by 25%, 67 of 266 respondents) and the evaluation requirements (25%, 66 respondents).

Of the 67 respondents who wanted greater clarity on what a structured careers programme is, 52% (35 respondents) emphasised the need for this to include training requirements, details about all of the roles included in running a careers programme, time allocation and the seniority of careers leaders. Twenty-four per cent (16 respondents) focused on the need for the structured careers programme to specify what content should be included.

Of the 66 respondents who said that the evaluation element needed to be refined, 59% (39 respondents) highlighted the need for clearer guidance on evaluation criteria and/or the provision of standardised feedback forms and schedules.

Figure 2.8: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 1? (number of responses=266)

Clarification on structured careers programme	25% (n=67)
Evaluation	25% (n=66)
Programme on website	12% (n=31)
The need for more details on how to evidence and implement the Benchmark's minimum requirements	11% (n=29)
External factors	11% (n=29)
More details on reporting expectation and the specific resources required to meet the Benchmark	5% (n=13)
More explicit inclusion of family/parents in this Benchmark	4% (n=10)
Greater differentiation between policy requirements and programme delivery	3% (n=8)
Other	18% (n=49)

Figure 2.9: Do you believe that there is a need to make any refinements to Benchmark 1 or any of its sub-benchmarks? (by setting)

School (n=248)	24% (n=60)
College (n=73)	21% (n=15)
Alternative/SEND (n=44)	18% (n=8)
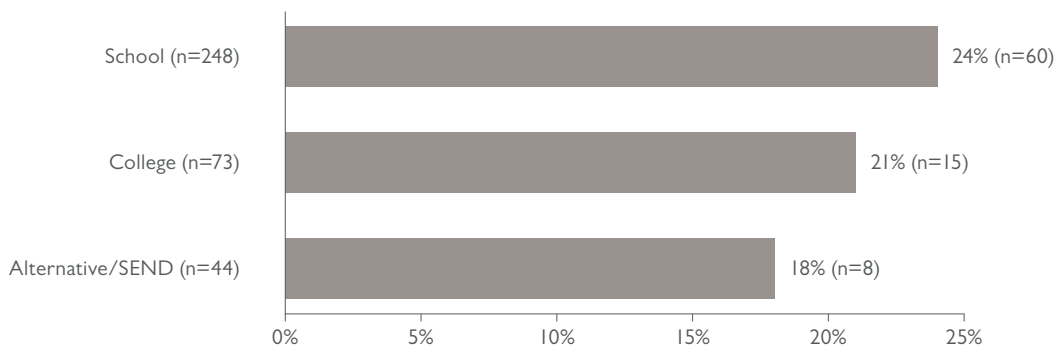
The setting the respondent came from made no significant difference to the answer they gave about the need to refine Benchmark 1. In each setting, between around one-fifth and one-quarter of respondents agreed refinements were needed (see Figure 2.9).

BENCHMARK 2: LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

For schools:

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.

- By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options.

- Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children.

For colleges:

Every learner, and their parents (where appropriate), 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.

- During their study programme, all learners should access and use information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options.

- Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to the learners in their care.

SUMMARY

Responses to the survey suggested that Benchmark 2 has had a significant impact on the use and understanding of labour market information (LMI) in a variety of settings. Users of Benchmark 2 widely reported that LMI has helped students make informed decisions about their careers and has provided key careers information to parents. The benchmark has also helped users consider local labour market demand, enabling them to provide relevant careers opportunities and information to young people.

Respondents reported that, at times, they found implementing Benchmark 2 challenging. The benchmark requires users to provide students with good-quality LMI, and this was the highest ranked challenge among the respondents across all settings. Despite this, the majority of respondents did not think Benchmark 2 needed to be changed. This validates the inclusion of Benchmark 2 and confirms that it is having an impact, but it also suggests more could be done to support users to implement the benchmark's existing requirements.

SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES

All responses

Of the 250 respondents from school settings, 96% (240 respondents) said that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of these, 204 respondents also provided specific information about what it is they value about Benchmark 2. Forty-seven per cent (95 respondents) said they valued the support it gave students to help them make informed decisions, 21% (43 respondents) appreciated the fact that the benchmark provided information to parents, and 8% (17 respondents) valued how it helped users keep informed about the local labour market demand.

Benchmark 2 proved challenging for some, with 173 respondents (69%) out of 249 respondents who answered this question reporting that they had found some aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement. One hundred and seventy-two respondents provided further commentary on what they had found difficult. Thirty-six per cent (62 respondents) said the most challenging aspect was finding quality LMI. This was followed by engaging parents (28%, 49 respondents) and using LMI effectively (26%, 45 respondents).

Despite finding implementation challenging, only 28% (66 respondents) of those from schools agreed that Benchmark 2 needed to be refined or changed, compared to 72% (169 respondents) who disagreed. Of the 69 respondents who gave qualitative responses on what they would change about this benchmark, 35% (24 respondents) highlighted challenges with providing pupils access to LMI. Twenty-three per cent (16 respondents) felt the requirement for parental access to LMI needed to be clarified and that this could be done by providing more ideas about what constitutes quality engagement with parents. Nineteen per cent (13 respondents) suggested that detailed definitions were needed, such as defining the meaning of LMI.

Careers leaders

Of the 185 careers leaders in school settings who responded, 96% (178 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Of the 152 respondents who gave qualitative responses about the aspects of Benchmark 2 that they valued, the most highly valued aspect was the impact that helping students make informed decisions had: 47% (71 respondents). Twenty-four per cent (36 respondents) said providing information to parents was an important aspect. Ten per cent (15 respondents) said they valued that Benchmark 2 provided young people with information about demand in the local labour market.

Of the 185 careers leaders in school settings who responded to the question about whether they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement, 66% (123 respondents) said they did. Of the 122 respondents who gave qualitative answers about what they found challenging, 40% (49 respondents) said finding quality LMI was challenging, and 27% (33 respondents) said using LMI effectively was difficult. Twenty-six per cent (32 respondents) found engaging parents challenging. The following quotes illustrate the challenges careers leaders faced:

> **Getting good-quality LMI resources that are relatable to the students.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about finding quality LMI and using LMI effectively

Engaging parents with LMI is a challenge – examples of how other schools are doing this most effectively and what the gold standard in this looks like would be helpful.
Careers leader in a school speaking about engaging parents

Despite these challenges, of the 174 careers leaders who answered the question, only 25% (43 respondents) said elements of Benchmark 2 needed to be reconsidered, whereas 75% (131 respondents) said it did not. Of the 46 who gave qualitative responses, 37% (17 respondents) suggested pupils being given access to LMI, followed by 24% (11 respondents) who suggested potentially adding a benchmark. Twenty-two per cent (10 respondents) suggested rethinking what parent access to LMI looks like. Some of these considerations are presented below:

Clarify what is good LMI for students to receive at each key stage and give worked up, real, subject specific and generic/whole-school examples.
Careers leader in a school speaking about pupil access to LMI

Needs to be more attention on parental involvement.
Careers leader in a school speaking about parent access to LMI

Senior leadership teams

Of the 63 senior leadership team (SLT) members in school settings who responded, 94% (59 respondents) stated that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the 42 respondents who provided qualitative responses about what they valued most, 50% (21 respondents) reported that they valued Benchmark 2 guiding students to make informed decisions about their careers. Thirty-one per cent valued the benchmark providing information to parents. Seven per cent (3 respondents) said informing stakeholders and 7% also said connecting with other benchmarks were important aspects.

Of the 62 SLT members who responded to the question about whether they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement, 74% (46 respondents) said they did. All 46 gave qualitative responses about what they found challenging. Thirty-seven per cent (17 respondents) said that finding quality LMI was the most challenging aspect, followed by 30% (14 respondents) who found it difficult to engage parents with the benchmark. Twenty-eight per cent (13 respondents) said they found using LMI effectively a challenge. The quotes below highlight the specific challenges that were experienced:

Really difficult to access labour market information [LMI] locally which is accurate and up to date. Difficult to adapt it for SEND and to get parents to engage with it.
SLT member in a school speaking about finding quality LMI and engaging with parents

Sharing LMI in a palatable and meaningful way to students that isn't just to tick a box. Engaging parents in a meaningful way.
SLT member in a school speaking about using LMI effectively

Of the 60 SLT members in school settings who responded to the question about whether elements of Benchmark 2 need to be reconsidered, 23% (14 respondents) said they did. They made suggestions about how this benchmark could be refined. Twenty-nine per cent (4 respondents) suggested pupil access to LMI and another 29% (4 respondents) suggested parent access to LMI.

Careers advisers

Of the 93 careers advisers in school settings that responded, 97% (90 respondents) said Benchmark 2 was a significant aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the 80 respondents who gave qualitative responses about what they value about this benchmark, 50% (40 respondents) valued the benchmark helping students make informed decisions about their future careers. Twenty-one per cent (17 respondents) said they valued providing information to parents. For 10% (8 respondents) the value was that it informs young people about local labour market demand.

Of the 93 careers advisers who responded, 68% (63 respondents) said they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement. This group explained what aspects of the benchmark they found challenging. Thirty per cent (19 respondents) said engaging parents, 27% (17 respondents) finding quality LMI and 24% (15 respondents) said using LMI effectively. The quotes below illustrate some of the challenges:

> **Having one place for LMI information in regions. Being in a rural area.
> We are always endeavouring to challenge stereo type and encouraging
> students and parents to explore many opportunities.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about finding quality LMI

> **Involving parents and accessing user-friendly LMI.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about finding quality LMI

Of the 91 careers advisers who answered the question about whether elements of Benchmark 2 need to be reconsidered, 32% (29 respondents) said they did. Twenty-eight of them made suggestions about how the benchmark could be refined. Fifty per cent (14 respondents) suggested revisions to the way that pupil access to LMI is articulated, and 29% (8 respondents) suggested revisions to the requirement for parental access to LMI.

COLLEGES

All responses

Of the 68 respondents from college settings, 99% (67 respondents) said that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of this group, 96% (64 respondents) gave details about what they specifically valued. Fifty-two per cent (33 respondents) said they valued that this benchmark enables young people to make informed decisions. Seventeen per cent (11 respondents) valued the provision of information to parents. Nine per cent (6 respondents) valued the way Benchmark 2 connects with the other benchmarks.

Of the 68 respondents who responded to the question about whether they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement, 66% (45 respondents) said they did. Of the 44 respondents who gave qualitative responses, 43% (19 respondents) said finding quality LMI was the most challenging aspect of this benchmark. Twenty-seven per cent (12 respondents) said the need for more usable resources, and 22% (10 respondents) said engaging parents.

Of the 64 respondents from college settings who responded to the question about whether elements of Benchmark 2 need to be refined, 33% (21 respondents) said they should, but 67% (43 respondents) said they should not. All 21 respondents who said they should be reconsidered made suggestions. Three of the 21 respondents (14%) suggested developing learning outcomes for LMI to show what is required and what effective delivery looks like.

Careers leaders

All 42 careers leaders in colleges settings agreed that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the benchmarks, and 95% (40 respondents) gave more detail about what they thought were the benchmarks most valuable aspects. Fifty-five per cent (22 respondents) valued the impact the benchmark had on young people making informed decisions, and 23% (9 respondents) valued the provision of information to parents. Fifteen per cent (6 of the 40 respondents) valued its connection with the other benchmarks.

Of the 43 careers leaders who answered the question about whether they found aspects of Benchmark 3 challenging to implement, 67% (29 respondents) said they did. Of the 28 respondents who gave qualitative answers about what they found challenging, 43% (12 respondents) said finding quality LMI was challenging and 29% (8 respondents) said engaging parents. Twenty-one per cent (6 respondents) said finding more usable LMI resources. The following quotes illustrate the challenges that were shared:

> **LMI can be statistical and therefore not as accessible to all as it could and should be.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about finding usable LMI resources

> **Sourcing relevant up to date and accessible LMI relevant for all subject areas/sectors.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about finding quality LMI

Although implementing Benchmark 2 was challenging, of the 39 college careers leaders who answered this question, only 26% (10 respondents) agreed there was a need to reconsider the benchmark, whereas 74% (29 respondents) disagreed. Fewer careers leaders provided suggestion on Benchmark 2.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses

Of the 39 respondents from special schools and alternative provision settings, 95% (37 respondents) said that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Thirty-one respondents gave qualitative responses about the elements of the benchmark they valued most. Fifty-two per cent (16 respondents) valued how it supported young people to make informed decisions about their future careers, and 23% (7 respondents) valued the provision of information to parents. Of the 31 respondents, 2 said providing young people with information about the local labour market demand was an important element.

Of the 39 respondents who answered the question about whether they had found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement, 74% (29 respondents) said they had. All 29 also gave qualitative responses about what they found challenging. Twenty-one per cent (6 respondents) said finding quality LMI and engaging parents were equally challenging. Seventeen per cent (5 respondents) said the need for more usable resources made achieving Benchmark 2 challenging.

Despite the challenges, of the 38 respondents who answered the question about whether Benchmark 2 should be refined, only 39% (15 respondents) believed Benchmark 2 should be reconsidered, in comparison to 61% (23 respondents) who did not. Of the 15 respondents who provided suggestions for future considerations, 5 respondents said rethinking pupil access to LMI, 4 respondents said rethinking parent access to LMI. Three respondents) suggested revising or defining the benchmark wording, such as defining the meaning of LMI.

Careers leaders

The majority of the careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered the question said that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the whole framework: 97% (31 respondents) of 32. Of the 25 respondents who explained what they valued in more detail, 56% (14 respondents) said guiding students to make informed decisions, 28% (7 respondents) said providing information to parents and 8% (2 respondents) valued the benchmark providing young people with information about local labour market demand.

Seventy-eight per cent (25 respondents) of the 32 careers leaders reported challenges in implementing Benchmark 2, and 96% (24 respondents) of them gave further commentary about the specific elements they found challenging. Forty-two per cent (10 respondents) said finding LMI that was appropriate for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) students was difficult. Twenty-one per cent (5 out of the 24) said finding quality LMI and 21% also said engaging parents. Examples of respondents challenges can be seen in the following quotes:

> **Giving info to parents and engaging with them. Relevant info for SEND students.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about finding appropriate LMI and engaging with parents

> **Finding labour market information [LMI] that is relevant and meaningful and accessible for my students with SEND.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about finding appropriate LMI and finding quality LMI

Of the 31 careers leaders who answered this question, 39% (12 respondents) believed that Benchmark 2 should be refined, whereas 61% (19 respondents) did not. This group of 12 provided suggestions. Four of the 12 suggested revising pupil access to LMI, 3 of the 12 suggested revising parent access to LMI, and 2 respondents said the wording of the benchmark should be revised. The quotes below highlight the suggestions:

> **It would be useful (when delivering to pupils with SEND) if the elements of Benchmark 2 could be broader in content to enable to be adapted to suit the needs of the learners.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about revising pupil access to LMI

> **Remove age restrictions of meeting benchmarks by a specific age.**
> **SEND pupils do not follow a 'typical' developmental progression path.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about revising pupil access to LMI

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators

Of the 80 enterprise coordinators who answered the question, 98% (78 respondents) said Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the Gatsby framework. Of the 70 respondents gave details about which aspects they valued, 50% (35 respondents) said the support provided to young people to make informed decisions, 24% (17 respondents) said the information provided to parents and 19% (13 respondents) said young people being informed about local labour market demand.

Of the 79 enterprise coordinators who responded, 61% (48 respondents) said they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement. Of the 48 respondents who explained the aspects they found most challenging, 31% (15 respondents) said finding quality LMI, 25% (12 respondents) said engaging parents and 19% (9 respondents) said understanding how to use LMI effectively.

Despite the challenges with implementing the benchmark, of the 77 who answered this question, only 44% (34 respondents) felt that elements of the benchmark should be refined, and 56% (43 respondents) did not. All 34 enterprise coordinators who felt it should be refined made suggestions about what should be reconsidered. Thirty-eight per cent (13 respondents) suggested the need to rethink pupil access to LMI and another 38% felt parent access to LMI should be reconsidered.

Careers hub leads

Of the 33 careers hub leads who answered the question, 100% (33 respondents) said Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. 85% (28 respondents) provided further detail about the elements they valued. Half (14 respondents) valued the support it gave young people to make informed decisions about the next steps in their careers, 9 of the 28 respondents said providing information to parents, and 7 said informing users about local labour market demand.

Twenty-two (67%) careers hub leads of the 33 who answered, said that they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement. Of the 22 respondents gave details explaining why, 48% (10 respondents) said engaging parents and 29% (6 respondents) said using LMI effectively.

Seventeen careers hub leads believed that elements of Benchmark 2 should be refined, and 15 did not. Of this 17, 6 respondents suggested the wording should be reviewed.

Enterprise advisers

Of the 26 enterprise advisers who answered, 96% (25 respondents) said that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Ninety-six per cent (24 respondents) shared the aspects they valued. Forty-six per cent (11 respondents) valued the support it gave young people to make informed decisions, 6 of the 24 respondents said providing information to parents, and 3 respondents said informing users about local labour market demand.

Nineteen of the 26 enterprise advisers (73%) reported that they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement. Of this group, 19 gave details about what they had found most challenging. Six of the 19 said engaging with parents, and 5 said finding quality LMI.

Despite the benchmark's challenges, only 42% (11 respondents) of the 26 enterprise advisers who answered this question, agreed that Benchmark 2 needed to be refined, and 58% (15 respondents) disagreed. All 11 who agreed made suggestions for these refinements. Five suggested rethinking parent access to LMI.

Employers

All nine employers that responded agreed that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Seven provided further commentary about what they valued. Four valued the support it provided to young people to make informed decisions about their careers.

Seven of the employers who answered this question, found Benchmark 2 challenging to implement. All 7 provided details about what they found most challenging. Two said finding quality LMI and two said using LMI effectively were the most challenging aspects of Benchmark 2.

Seven employers agreed that elements of Benchmark 2 should be refined, and 1 employer disagreed. The 7 made suggestions, of which the most frequent (made by 3 respondents) was to revise parent access to LMI.

Independent training providers

One independent training provider (ITP) completed the survey. They agreed that Benchmark 2 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks, and they most valued that it informs users of local labour market demand. The ITP found engaging parents a challenge and suggested that pupil access to LMI and parent access to LMI should be refined.

ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Ninety-six per cent (634 respondents) of the 657 who answered, considered Benchmark 2 to be an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of that group, 88% (560 respondents) provided qualitative responses about what they valued (see Figure 3.1). Almost half (48%, 267 respondents) valued the benchmark helping students make informed decisions about the next steps in their careers, and 21% (117 respondents) appreciated that it provided information to parents. Eleven per cent (62 respondents) said they valued Benchmark 2 for informing young people about local labour market demand.

Figure 3.1: Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 2
(number of responses=560)
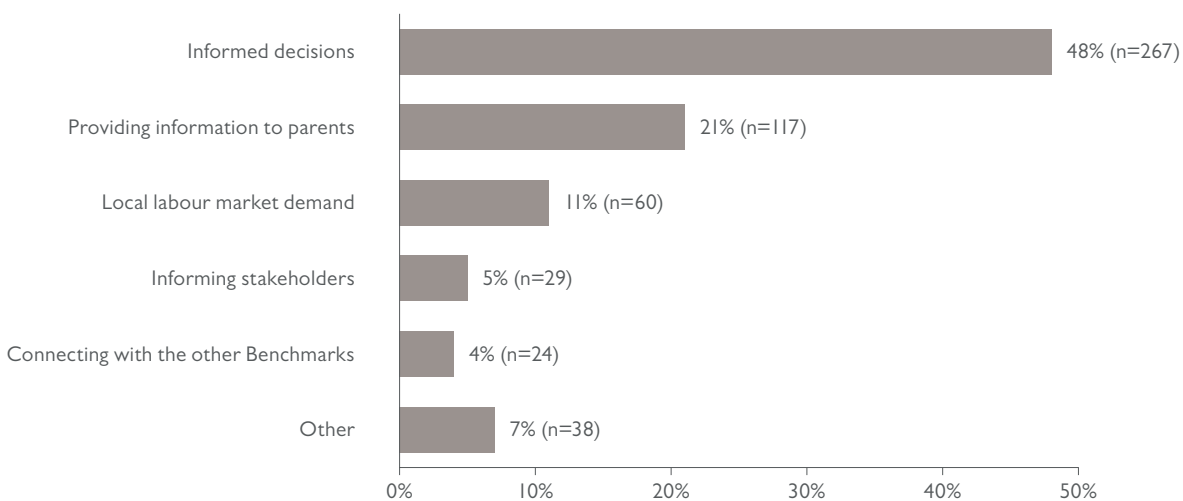
Challenges

Of the 652 who answered the question about whether they found aspects of Benchmark 2 challenging to implement, 72% (468 respondents) said they had. Of the 477 who gave qualitative responses, finding quality LMI was a significant challenge for 31% (147 respondents). Of that 147, 71% (104 respondents) said there was a lack of access to appropriate LMI, 26% (38 respondents) said there was a lack of desired resources, and 21% (31 respondents) said issues with staff resources.

Another challenge reported by 28% (132 respondents) was engaging parents. Of that 132, 27% (35 respondents) said lack of appropriate resources/provision was a challenge, 18% (24 respondents) said issues with the parents' understanding/knowledge, and 14% (19 respondents) said lack of interest/appreciation of value by parents.

The third most frequently reported challenge was using LMI effectively, which 21% (102 respondents) highlighted (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 2
(number of responses=477)

Finding quality LMI — 31% (n=147)
Engaging parents — 28% (n=132)
Using LMI effectively — 21% (n=102)
More usable resources — 16% (n=75)
Embedding LMI effectively — 12% (n=56)
Finding local LMI — 9% (n=45)
Finding LMI appropiate for SEND students — 4% (n=20)
Concerns that Key Stage 3 is too early — 3% (n=16)
Other — 12% (n=56)
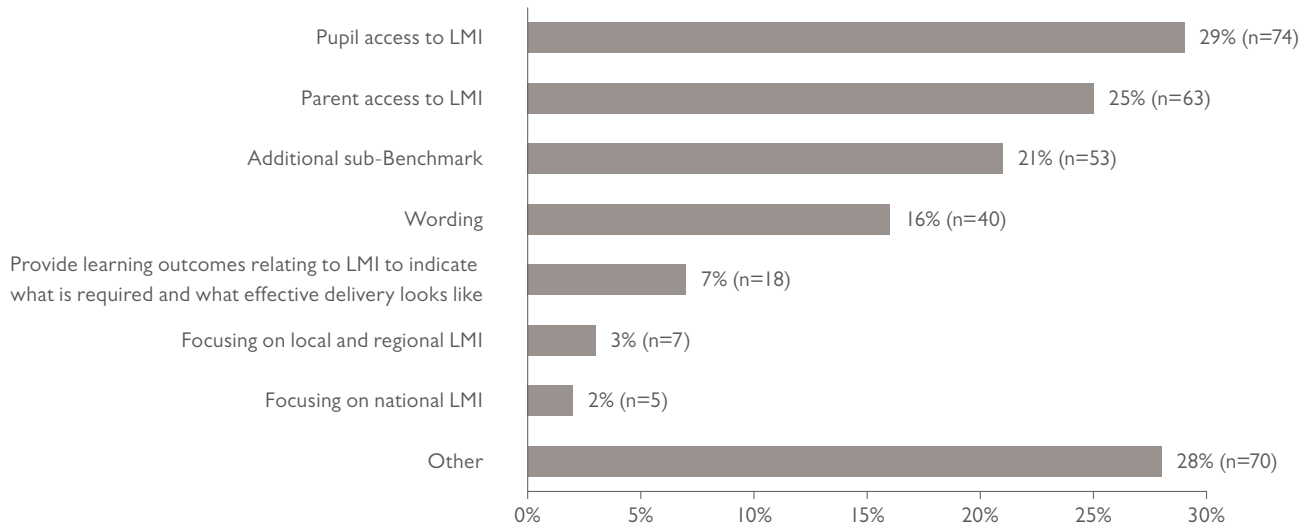Irrelevant feedback — 3% (n=14)
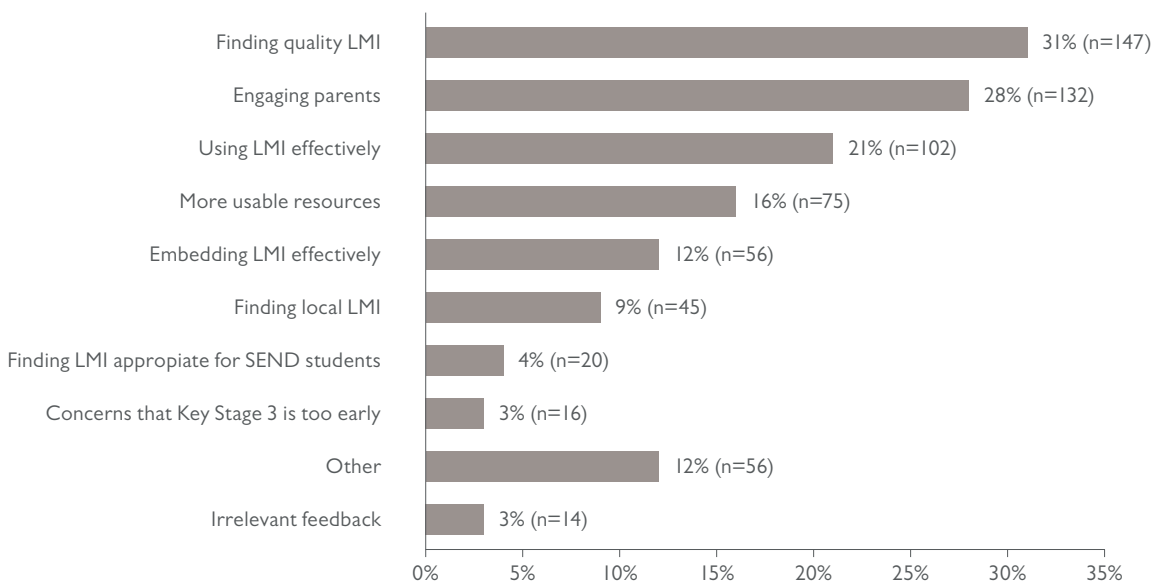
CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Despite these challenges, only 40% (250 respondents) of the 627 who answered this question said that Benchmark 2 or any of its sub-benchmarks should be refined. Two hundred and fifty-two respondents suggested changes (see Figure 3.3). Twenty-nine per cent (74 respondents) said revising pupil access to LMI. To achieve this, of the 74 respondents, 41% (30 respondents) suggested revisiting the age restriction either by raising it or lowering it, or by identifying LMI learning outcomes/examples for each key stage; 23% (17 respondents) said the benchmark should encourage more critical thinking about LMI; and 14% (19 respondents) said there was a need for more appropriate LMI resources for students.

Of the 252 who answered this question, 25% (63 respondents) suggested rethinking parental access to LMI. Of this group, 33% (21 respondents) suggested this could be achieved by the provision of further ideas for quality engagement with parents and by defining what the benchmark's wording "parents should be encouraged to access and use information" means.

Figure 3.3: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 2? (number of responses=252)

Category	Value
Pupil access to LMI	29% (n=74)
Parent access to LMI	25% (n=63)
Additional sub-Benchmark	21% (n=53)
Wording	16% (n=40)
Provide learning outcomes relating to LMI to indicate what is required and what effective delivery looks like	7% (n=18)
Focusing on local and regional LMI	3% (n=7)
Focusing on national LMI	2% (n=5)
Other	28% (n=70)

BENCHMARK 3: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT

For schools:

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.

- A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.

- Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil, and subsequent agreed decisions. All pupils should have access to these records to support their career development.

- Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training, or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave school.

For colleges:

Learners have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each learner. A college's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.

- A college's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.

- Colleges should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each learner, and subsequent agreed decisions.

- The records of advice given should be integrated with those given at the previous stage of the learner's education (including their secondary school) where these are made available. Records should begin to be kept from the first point of contact or from the point of transition.

- All learners should have access to these records to support their career development. Colleges should collect and maintain accurate data for each learner on their education, training or employment destinations.

SUMMARY

Almost all respondents acknowledged the critical role of Benchmark 3 in the benchmarks. This opinion was shared across the different educational institutions: schools, colleges, and special schools and alternative provision.

Respondents shared what they most valued about Benchmark 3 including its focus on addressing the individual needs of the students, challenging of stereotypes and emphasising the importance of record-keeping. However, respondents also mentioned several challenges that impacted the full implementation of the benchmark.

Two-thirds of the respondents highlighted difficulties in tracking and recording destination data for three years. This challenge was compounded by constraints in capacity, resources and obtaining necessary permissions. The challenge of data collection efforts overlapping with that for local education authorities and the inability to share data collected by other institutions were among the other noted challenges. Limited resources and time were another significant obstacle, as well as encompassing restrictions in staffing, finances and role-based time constraints.

Respondents suggested various refinements that would alleviate these challenges. A significant proportion asked for the three-year requirement for tracking destination data to be reconsidered. They emphasised the need for support in data gathering through collaborative efforts with local and national bodies, and for promoting data sharing across different institutions. Regarding the record-keeping, respondents recommended a unified platform to showcase exemplary record-keeping strategies, and to facilitate sharing career development records between schools. A fraction urged empowering students and giving them more control over the process.

In addition to the recommended changes for tracking and record-keeping, some participants also suggested that the sub-benchmark addressing stereotypes should be broadened for a more inclusive approach to equality and diversity, which would include various protected characteristics such as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and mental health concerns.

SCHOOLS

All responses

In the school setting, of the 252 respondents, an overwhelming majority, 96% (243 respondents) said Benchmark 3 was a significant part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 203 respondents in a school setting who provided qualitative feedback on the aspects of the benchmark they most valued, 30% (61 respondents) said its challenging of stereotypes, 19% (38 respondents) said that it addresses the individual needs of pupils, and 12% (25 respondents) said the emphasis on the importance of record-keeping.

Of the 252 respondents in the school setting, 88% (222 respondents) found some aspects of Benchmark 3 challenging to implement, but 12% (30 respondents) did not encounter any difficulties with its implementation.

The main challenge in schools, cited by 75% (169 respondents), was collecting and tracking destination data over a three-year span. This included limitations in capacity and resources for tracking and data recording, GDPR restrictions, duplication of effort by local authorities and schools in collecting destination data, and difficulties contacting students and their parents as the main areas of concern for respondents.

In the school setting, of the 249 who answered the question about whether Benchmark 3 needed refining, 71% (177 respondents) said more support for implementing the benchmark and its associated sub-benchmarks was needed. Twenty-nine per cent (72 respondents) said no changes were necessary.

Ninety-nine per cent (176 respondents) of those in schools who said the benchmark needed refining provided qualitative feedback. Eighty per cent (140 respondents) said the requirement for destinations data needs to be refined. The main suggestions for this included removing the three-year requirement, recording immediate destinations or a shorter duration, and increased support via data sharing with local authorities, universities and national databases. Some examples of these suggestions are included here to illustrate this point.

> **Destinations is incredibly challenging in that it asks for 3 years. As an 11–16 school we can track destinations of students leaving us after Year 11 to go to college, sixth form or an apprenticeship. However, for most 3 years after leaving us will be after they leave their post-16 institution and even the end of their first year of university. We do not get information from colleges/sixth forms about what students do after they leave them. We have lost touch with most of our students by then. As an 11–16 school, I have no idea how I am supposed to track destinations for 230 students, 3 years after they leave us.**
> Careers adviser in a school setting, speaking about challenges with destinations data

Careers leaders

Of the 193 careers leaders in schools who responded to the question about Benchmark 3, 97% (187 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Eighty-one per cent (156 respondents) of careers leaders in schools gave details about the aspects of this benchmark they valued the most. Thirty-three per cent (51 respondents) said its challenging of stereotypes, 19% (30 respondents) said addressing the individual needs of students and 10% (16 respondents) said its emphasis on the importance of record-keeping. Some examples are given below:

> **It specifies a tailored approach, meeting the needs of individuals and not just cohorts. I also value the challenge of stereotypes to create a more tolerant, diverse future workforce in many industries, and like that this shows different needs at different age phases.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about addressing individual student needs

> **Each student needs a personalised career programme to ensure they are able to make an informed choice. Also that the needs of the student are identified and taken into account for their post-16 and career pathway.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about addressing individual student needs

Among careers leaders in a school setting, 88% (169 respondents) found an aspect of Benchmark 3 challenging to implement, while 12% (24 respondents) did not find implementation challenging.

A significant 78% (132 respondents) identified collecting and tracking destination data for three years as a challenge. Twenty-seven per cent (46 respondents) said limited time and resources, 23% (39 respondents) said concerns about data sharing in light of GDPR, 14% (24 respondents) said time restraints in their role, 12% (21 respondents) cited staffing and resource constraints, and 5% (9 respondents) stressed that the financial restraints they faced made implementation challenging.

> **"Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school" Like many schools this can prove challenging in some situations and though significant progress has been made to allow the collections and sharing of data, it can still prove difficult with a number of students.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about the challenge of data sharing

Senior leadership teams

Of the 58 members of the senior leadership team (SLT) in a school setting that answered, almost all (97%, 56 respondents) said Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Thirty-eight of these respondents gave qualitative responses about what they valued most about Benchmark 3. Fifteen respondents said its challenging of stereotypes, 7 respondents said addressing the individual needs of students and 5 said its emphasis on the importance of record-keeping.

The overwhelming majority (86%, 50 respondents) of the 58 from an SLT in a school setting who answered, found some aspect of the Benchmark 3 challenging to implement. All 50 from this group provided qualitative responses about what they found most challenging. Seventy-two per cent (36 respondents) said tracking destination data for three years and data recording, 10 of the 50 (20%) said limited time and resources and 7 of the 50 (14%) said data sharing and GDPR concerns.

Seventy per cent of the 57 SLT members in school settings who answered, said refinements to, or further support with, Benchmark 3 or its sub-benchmarks were needed. Of the 38 respondents who gave qualitative responses about the area they would most like to be supported with or be refined, 87% (33 respondents) said destinations data.

Careers advisers

Of the 101 careers advisers who answered this question in a school setting, 96% (97 respondents) said Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Eighty-nine per cent (86 respondents) of this group gave qualitative responses about what they valued most about Benchmark 3. Twenty-eight per cent (24 respondents) said its challenging of stereotypes, 24% (21 respondents) said that it addresses the individual needs of students and 14% (12 respondents) said its emphasis on the importance of record-keeping.

The overwhelming majority (90%, 88 respondents) of the 98 careers advisers in school settings who answered this question, found some aspects of the Benchmark 3 challenging to implement. Ninety-one respondents gave qualitative responses about what aspects they found most challenging. Seventy-six per cent (69 respondents) said tracking destination data for three years and data recording, 31% (28 respondents) said having limited time and resources and 22% (20 respondents) said data sharing and GDPR concerns.

Of the 99 careers advisers in school settings that gave an answer to whether there was a need for further support or refinement of Benchmark 3, 70% (69 respondents) said they would like to see refinements. Of the 69 respondents who gave qualitative responses, 77% (53 respondents) said destination data.

COLLEGES

All responses
In college settings, 97% (61 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Fifty-two respondents in college settings provided qualitative feedback about the aspects of the benchmark they most valued. Thirty-three per cent (17 respondents) said addressing the individual needs of pupils, 27% (14 respondents) said its emphasis on the importance of record-keeping and 23% (12 respondents) said its challenging of stereotypes.

Of the 64 respondents in college settings who answered the question about whether they found an aspect of Benchmark 3 challenging to implement, 77% (49 respondents) said they had. Of this group, 45% (22 respondents) said the main challenges were related to keeping systematic records and 33% (67 respondents) said collecting destination data.

Of the 62 respondents who answered the question of whether more support should be provided to implement Benchmark 3 or if it should be refined, 52% (32 respondents) said there was a need for more support for, or refinement of, Benchmark 3 and its associated sub-benchmarks. Forty-eight per cent (30 respondents) said no changes were necessary.

All 32 of those saying they wanted refinements to be made gave qualitative feedback. Forty-four per cent (14 respondents) said they wanted further support with record-keeping.

Careers leaders
Of the 41 careers leaders in college settings who responded to this survey, all answered this question and 98% (40 respondents) said that Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the 31 respondents who gave qualitative responses about the aspects they most valued, 32% (10 respondents) said its emphasis on the importance of record-keeping, 29% (9 respondents) said addressing the individual needs of students and 26% (8 respondents) said its challenging of stereotypes.

Eighty per cent (33 respondents) of the 41 careers leaders found some aspects of Benchmark 3 challenging to implement. Forty-eight per cent (16 respondents) said systematic record-keeping, 39% (13 respondents) said tracking destination data and 18% (6 respondents) said data sharing.

Fifty-eight per cent (23 respondents) of the 40 careers leaders in college settings said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 3 and its sub-benchmarks. Respondents highlighted record-keeping (12 respondents) and destination data (2 respondents) as aspects to be refined.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses
Of the 36 respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered this question, 97% (35 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the 31 who gave qualitative responses, 32% (10 respondents) said the most important aspect was the focus on addressing the individual needs of students.

Fifty-eight per cent (21 respondents) of the 36 respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings found an aspect of Benchmark 3 challenging to implement.

Twenty-one respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings gave qualitative responses about the main challenges they found in implementing Benchmark 3. Thirteen of the 21 respondents said collecting destination data, 4 said limitations to time resources and 2 said GDPR concerns.

Of the 36 respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings who said whether more support with, or refinements to, Benchmark 3 were needed, 47% (17 respondents) said more support was needed for the implementation of this benchmark. Fifty-three per cent (19 respondents) said no changes were necessary.

All 17 of the respondents who said refinements were needed provided qualitative feedback. Eight out of the 17 said further support with collecting destination data was needed.

Careers leaders
Out of 28 careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings who responded to this survey, 96% (27 respondents) said Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the 24 respondents who gave qualitative responses about what aspects were most important to them, 8 respondents) said addressing the individual needs of students, 6 said its challenging of stereotypes and 3 said its emphasis on the importance of record-keeping.

Half (14 respondents) found some aspects of Benchmark 3 challenging to implement. Of this group, 9 respondents found tracking destination data the most challenging aspect:

> **As a county SEN school whose students leave to go to a wide number and range of post16 and FE provisions, tracking destinations is very difficult. The DFE/govt know where all students are, so why don't they provide the information rather than every individual school having to track at the cost of 1000s of work hours.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about the challenge of tracking destination data

Twelve careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 3 or its sub-benchmarks, particularly to the collection of destination data.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators
Of the 75 enterprise coordinators who said that Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby framework and gave qualitative responses, 37% (28 respondents) said they most valued its challenging of stereotypes. Of the 83 who gave qualitative responses about the challenges they faced implanting the benchmark, 81% (67 respondents) said the collection and tracking of destination data over a three-year period. Of the 70 who gave qualitative responses about refinements they would like made 73% (51 respondents) wanted clarification on destination data.

Careers hub leads
Of the 28 careers hub leads who said that Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the Gatsby framework and gave qualitative responses, 39% (11 respondents) said they most valued that it addresses the individual needs of students. Of the 31 that gave qualitative responses about the aspect of Benchmark 3 they found the most challenging to implement, all 31 respondents said collecting and tracking destination data for three years. Of the 30 respondents that said refinements needed to be made and who suggested amendments, 83% (25 respondents) wanted clarifications on destinations data.

Enterprise advisers
Of the 24 enterprise advisers who valued Benchmark 3 as an important aspect of the benchmarks and who gave qualitative responses, 7 of the 24 most valued its challenging of stereotypes, and 5 said addressing the individual needs of students. Of the 21 enterprise advisers that gave qualitative responses about what challenges they encountered while implementing Benchmark 3, 48% (10 respondents) said limited time and resources. This was followed closely (43%, 9 respondents) by collecting and tracking destination data for three years. Of the 13 enterprise advisers who gave qualitative responses about the refinements they would like introduced to Benchmark 3, 7 respondents said more detail about destination data was needed.

Employers
Of the 4 employers who gave qualitative answers about what they most valued about Benchmark 3, 2 said the emphasis on the importance of record-keeping. Of the 4 employers that gave responses a bout what they found most challenging when implementing the benchmark, 2 said collecting and tracking destination data for three years, and 2 also said having limited time and resources. Four employers gave qualitative responses about what refinements they would like to see made, 2 said refinement and clarification of destination data.

Independent training providers
The one respondent from an independent training provider (ITP), most valued that Benchmark 3 addressed the individual needs of students.
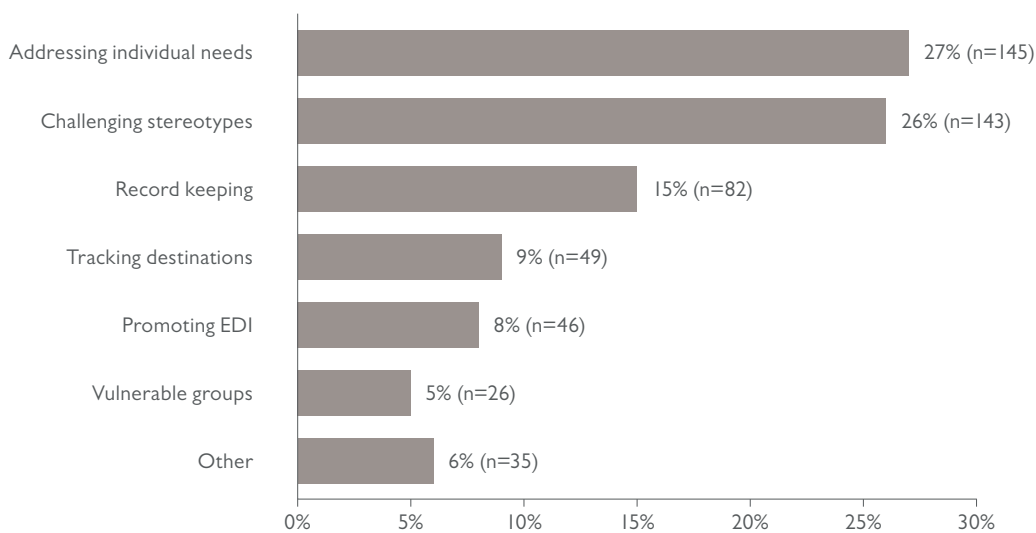
ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Of the 654 of all respondents who answered this question, 98% (639 respondents) said Benchmark 3 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. This includes 96% (243 of 252 respondents) of those from school settings, 97% (61 of 63 respondents) from colleges, and 97% (35 of 36 respondents) from special schools or alternative provision settings.

Of the 542 respondents who gave qualitative responses about what they most valued about Benchmark 3, 27% (145 respondents) said addressing the individual needs of pupils, 26% (143 respondents) said its challenging of stereotypes, and 15% (82 respondents) said its emphasis on the importance of record-keeping.

Figure 4.1 Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 3 (number of responses=542)


Challenges

Of the 557 respondents who have qualitative responses about the elements of the benchmark they found most challenging to implement, 67% (374 respondents) said collecting and tracking destination data for three years. Reasons for this included capacity and resources for tracking or data recording (26%, 144 respondents), lack of data sharing or duplication effort (18%, 103 respondents) and lack of permission or contact from students or parents (13%, 107 respondents).

Twenty-seven per cent (150 respondents) said limited time and resources made tracking and data recording challenging. Reasons for this included time restraints within respondent's roles (15%, 82 respondents), staffing and resource restraints (15%, 82 respondents) and financial restraints (6%, 31 respondents).

Additional qualitative responses about elements of the benchmark the respondents found most challenging to implement included barriers preventing data, collected by institutions from being shared with schools creating an overlap of effort by schools and local education authorities in data collection (18%, 103 respondents). Fourteen per cent (78 respondents) said systematic record-keeping and 4% (21 respondents) said challenging stereotypical thinking and raising aspirations.

Figure 4.2: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 3 (number of responses=557)
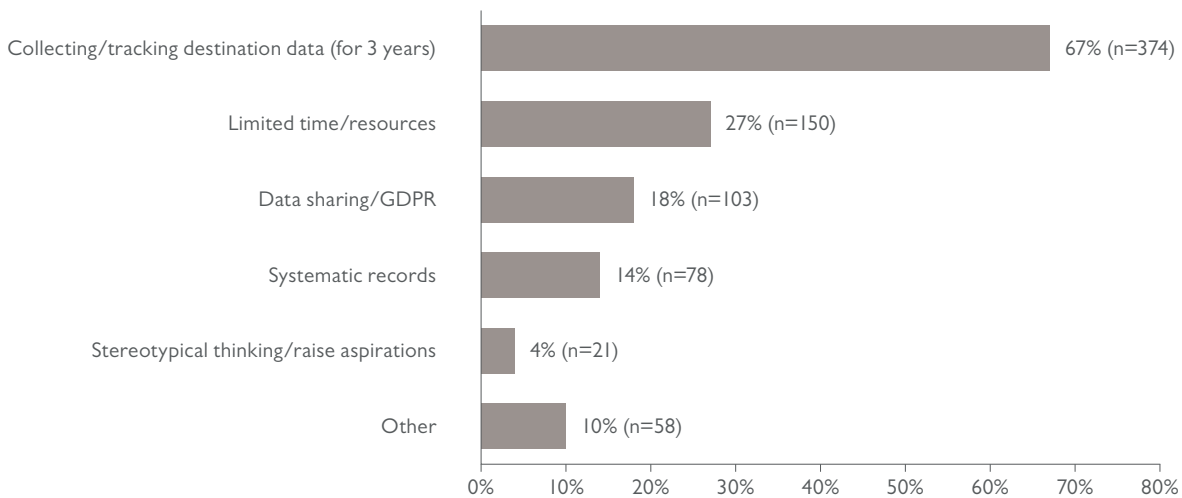
### Considerations for the future

Of the 639 respondents who answered the questions about whether Benchmark 3 needed refining, 68% (435 respondents) said it did, while 32% (204 respondents) said there was no need for refinements.

All 435 respondents made suggestions of refinements that could be made to Benchmark 3 that would help them implement the benchmarks. A substantial 64% (279 respondents) made suggestions about destination data. Fifty-six per cent (157 respondents) of this group recommended removing the three-year requirement, and instead proposed documenting immediate destinations or shortening the three-year requirement. Twenty-five per cent (70 respondents) of this group suggested more support was needed to achieve the destination data requirements, especially through data sharing mechanisms with local authorities, universities and national databases.

Of the 435 respondents, a minority (12%, 54 respondents) made suggestions about record-keeping. Thirty-nine per cent (21 respondents) of this group wanted examples of record-keeping, including clear outcomes – potentially to be shared through a universal platform – to help with consistency. Twenty per cent (11 respondents) advocated for a system where careers development records could be shared between institutions, and 15% (8 respondents) suggested greater autonomy for students in the process.

Of the 435 respondents, 9% (39 respondents) made suggestions about addressing stereotypes and raising aspirations. Forty-four per cent (17 respondents) of this group said examples should go beyond gender stereotypes and include other aspects such as protected characteristics, SEND and mental health. They also emphasised the need for more inclusive phrasing of the sub-benchmark.

Figure 4.3: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 3? (number of responses=435)
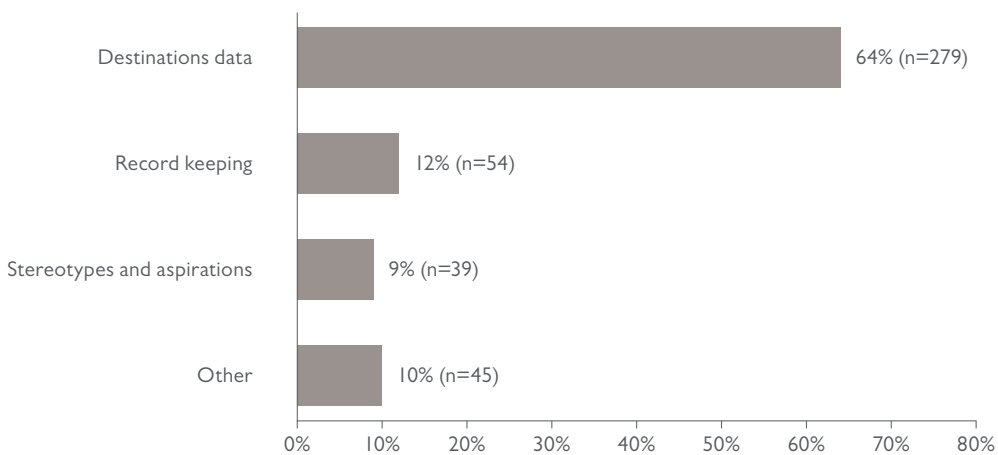
BENCHMARK 4: LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS

For schools:
All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.

- By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.

For colleges:
All subject staff should link curriculum learning with careers, even on courses which are not specifically occupation led. For example, STEM subject staff should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths. Study programmes should also reflect the importance of maths and English as a key expectation from employers.

- Throughout their programme of study (and by the end of their course) every learner should have had the opportunity to experience how their subjects help people gain entry to (and be more effective workers within) a wide range of occupations.

SUMMARY

A large majority of respondents acknowledged the significance of Benchmark 4 in the Gatsby Benchmarks. Those that shared what they most valued particularly appreciated its role in linking curriculum learning with careers and engaging teachers and staff in embedding careers across school settings. Despite its value, a proportion of respondents found Benchmark 4 challenging to implement. This was mainly due to difficulties engaging teachers, and to having time-constrained staff who were unclear about their role in the initiative.

The primary challenges identified were the lack of time to incorporate careers into the curriculum due to other teaching commitments. Another factor was the lack of adequate training for teachers about how to integrate the curriculum with career pathways, which affected their confidence. For effective future implementations, respondents advocated for an expansion beyond STEM subjects to include all disciplines. They noted this would require additional resources and would need to be reflected in the Compass tool.[7] Other suggestions were for guidelines to be made clearer and to include activity examples, and to introduce metrics for evaluating progress and achievements in integrating the curriculum with career pathways.

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[7] Compass is the careers benchmark tool for schools and colleges that helps users evaluate their practice against the Gatsby Benchmarks. (The Careers & Enterprise Company, n.db.).

The feedback varied depending on the type of institution, with only a quarter of respondents from colleges saying Benchmark 4 needed refining, as opposed to higher percentages from schools and special schools and alternative provision settings.

SCHOOLS

All responses

Of 224 respondents in the school setting, an overwhelming majority, 97% (217 respondents) said Benchmark 4 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks

Of the 174 respondents in a school setting who provided qualitative feedback about the aspects of Benchmark 4 they most valued, 81% (141 respondents) valued its linking of careers with the curriculum, saying it facilitated a concrete connection between educational content and future professional paths. Forty-four per cent (76 respondents) valued it for engaging teachers and staff in embedding careers across schools settings, fostering a more integrated approach to careers education. Eight per cent (14 respondents) a smaller, but still notable, number of respondents, most valued the benchmark for helping young people imagine future careers, as it builds on students understanding of what is entailed in specific careers and allows them to see themselves in certain careers.

Among the 224 respondents in the school setting, a substantial 75% (167 respondents) found an aspect of Benchmark 4 challenging to implement, but the remaining 25% (57 respondents) did not.

Of the 167 who found challenges implementing Benchmark 4, 47% (79 respondents) said teacher and staff engagement or buy-in was the biggest challenge. Thirty-three per cent (55 respondents) said the lack of time in the curriculum, and 13% (21 respondents) said monitoring and tracking activity.

Of the 214 respondents that answered the question of whether Benchmark 4 needed refining, 46% (99 respondents) said there was a need for more support, while 54% (115 respondents) said that no changes were necessary.

Of the 97 respondents in schools who provided qualitative feedback on what refinements should be made to Benchmark 4, 62% (60 respondents) said broadening the benchmark from STEM to a comprehensive approach to careers guidance across all subject areas.

> **I think more emphasis needs to be made to ensure ALL subjects include careers related learning within their subjects not just STEM as specified in the wording of the compass evaluation.**
> Careers leader in a school setting, speaking about broadening from STEM

Eleven per cent of the 97 respondents (11 respondents) said greater clarity was needed, including clear examples of how to link curriculum learning with careers to successfully implement the benchmark with a straightforward approach. Another 11% (11 respondents) suggested an accountability and measurement framework should be introduced that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of implementing Benchmark 4.

Careers leaders

Of the 169 careers leaders in schools who responded, 97% (164 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 4 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

One hundred and thirty-five careers leaders in schools gave details about the aspects of the benchmark they valued the most. Eighty-two per cent (111 respondents) valued its linking of careers with the curriculum. Forty-two per cent (57 respondents) said engaging teachers and staff in embedding careers across schools, while 7% (9 respondents) said helping young people envisage future careers, as the benchmark builds on students understanding of what is entailed in specific careers and allows them to see themselves in certain careers.

Of the 170 careers leaders in the school setting who answered this question, 74% (126 respondents) found an aspect of Benchmark 4 challenging to implement, while 26% (44 respondents) did not find its implementation challenging.

Of the group who found aspects challenging, 48% (61 respondents) said teacher and staff engagement and buy-in was the main challenge. Thirty-one per cent (40 respondents) said the lack of time in the curriculum, and 13% (16 respondents) said monitoring and tracking activity. The examples below show some of the main challenges mentioned by careers leaders in schools.

> **Trying to get the buy-in from the teachers to implement lesson starters is highly challenging. Teachers have so much to deliver as it is and asking them to include careers education, even for 10 minutes, is not always possible.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about teacher and staff engagement and buy-in and lack of curriculum time

> **The most challenging thing is not necessarily implementing because many teachers are embedding careers learning within their curricula and indeed many exam board specifications have careers-based skills in them. However, the challenge is in monitoring and being able to say that careers learning is successfully embedded in the curriculum. I am developing some INSET training entitled "Everyone's a Careers teacher!" to try and help address this.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about monitoring and tracking activit)

Of the 161 careers leaders in the school setting who answered, 44% (71 respondents) believed that refinements were needed to support the implementation of Benchmark 4 or its associated sub-benchmarks. Fifty-six per cent (90 respondents) said that no changes were necessary.

Of the 70 careers leaders in schools who provided qualitative feedback about what the refinements should be, 56% (39 respondents) said broadening the scope from STEM to cover all subjects. Fourteen per cent (10 of the 70 respondents) said more clarity, clear links and tangible examples were needed to make implementation easier and to make clear how criteria could be met effectively. Nine of the 70 respondents (13%) suggested an accountability and measurement framework be introduced that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Benchmark 4.

I do my best by making visual prompts available to all subject leads in the form of careers-related posters for each and every subject area that I'm able to find posters for their curriculum areas. Other than that, other suggestions of how to tackle this, over and above those noted before, it would be helpful to have clarity on what best practice in this area looks like. Even if there are suggestions already out there, does anyone have the time to find these / read up on these?
Careers leader in a school speaking about more clarity, clear links and tangible examples

Senior leadership teams

Of the 53 senior leadership team (SLT) members in school settings who responded to the questions about Benchmark 4, 94% (50 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 4 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

From SLTs in a school setting, 43% (22 out of 51 respondents) said they needed more support to implement Benchmark 4 or its associated sub-benchmarks, whereas 57% (29 respondents) said no changes were necessary.

Of the 20 respondents from SLTs in the school setting who answered this question, 14 (70%) wanted Benchmark 4 to be broadened from its STEM-centric focus to include all subjects, to provide a comprehensive approach to careers guidance. Four of the 20 (20%) mentioned the importance of providing clear links and examples to make implementation simpler and more effective. One respondent wanted to see the introduction of careers education as a distinct subject within the curriculum.

Careers advisers

Of the 85 careers advisers in schools who responded, 96% (82 respondents) said that Benchmark 4 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 81 careers advisers in schools who answered this question, 46% (37 respondents) said adjustments needed to be made to Benchmark 4 or its sub-benchmarks to make it more effective. But 54% (44 respondents) did not see any need for amendments.

Of the 37 careers advisers in schools who responded, 57% (21 respondents) said they wanted Benchmark 4 broadened beyond its STEM-focus to include a wider range of subjects and nurture skills development beyond specific subject areas.

Addition of all subject areas that are taught at school not just STEM as there is an opportunity here to showcase a wider range of subjects and the links to more careers.
Careers adviser in a school speaking about broadening from STEM

Nineteen per cent (7 respondents) of the 37 careers advisers in school settings who answered said there was a need for an accountability and measurement framework that would make the benchmark more efficient. Additional feedback given by 11% (4 respondents) included a call for greater clarity and illustrative examples to show how to successfully implement the benchmark.

COLLEGES

All responses

In college settings, all 63 respondents answered unanimously and agreed on the significance of Benchmark 4 as part of the Gatsby Benchmarks. This agreement from every respondent shows universal acknowledgement of Benchmark 4's critical role in the college setting.

Of the 58 college respondents who gave feedback, 74% said they most valued that Benchmark 4 connected careers and curriculum. Forty-five per cent (26 respondents) valued that it engaged teachers and staff in embedding careers throughout the college.

In college settings, respondents were almost evenly split about whether they found aspects of Benchmark 4 challenging to implement. Of the 63 respondents, 51% (32 respondents) said they found certain aspects of Benchmark 4 challenging to implement, and 49% (31 respondents) did not.

Of the 32 from college settings that said there were challenges in implementation, 38% (12 respondents) found teacher and staff engagement or buy-in the most challenging aspect. Lack of curriculum time was the biggest challenge for 19% (6 out of 33 respondents), and 6 respondents also said they found monitoring and tracking activity the most challenging aspect.

Of the 60 from college settings that answered the question of whether Benchmark 4 or its sub-benchmarks needed refining, 25% (15 respondents) said it did and 75% said that no changes were needed.

Of the 16 respondents in colleges who provided qualitative feedback on what refinements should be made to Benchmark 4, 38% (6 of the 16 respondents) wanted more clarity, including concrete examples and clear guidance on how to effectively meet the requirements of the benchmark and 31% (5 of the 16 respondents) said broadening the benchmark from STEM to potentially include all subjects.

> **Specific examples for each subject.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about more clarity, clear links and examples of how to achieve

Careers leaders

Of the 41 careers leaders in colleges who responded, all said Benchmark 4 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Thirty-six careers leaders in colleges gave further detail about the aspects they valued the most. Eighty-one per cent (29 respondents) said they most valued that it links careers with the curriculum. Forty-seven per cent (17 respondents) said engaging teachers and staff in embedding careers across the school, and 6% (2 of the 36 respondents) said they most valued that it helped young people envisage future careers, as the benchmark builds on students understanding of what is entailed in specific careers and broadens their aspirations.

Of the 41 respondents, 51% (21 respondents) of careers leaders in colleges found aspects of Benchmark 4 challenging to implement. Forty-nine per cent (20 respondents) did not experience any challenges.

Of this group, 6 (27% of the 21 respondents) said the most challenging aspect was teacher and staff engagement and 23% (5 of the 21 respondents) said linking some subjects to careers.

Of the 40 careers leaders in colleges who answered the question about whether Benchmark 4 or any of its sub-benchmarks needed refining, only 28% (11 respondents) said that refinements were needed, but a majority of 73% (29 respondents) said no changes were necessary.

Of the 11 careers leaders in college settings that provided qualitative answers about what refinements they would like made to Benchmark 4, four recommended expanding the scope beyond STEM to incorporate all subjects, highlighting the importance of skills development that transcend specific subject areas.

> **Remove the STEM reference. There is no need to be sector specific here. It just seems a nod to the current emphasis on STEM subjects. What we need to be teaching is aspects such as teamwork, leadership, creativity, enterprise, problem solving, critical thinking etc. In addition, we need to be informing and educating about important related issues such as sustainability and citizenship.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about broadening from STEM

Four of the 12 respondents wanted more clarity, including concrete examples of how to link curriculum learning with careers to successfully implement Benchmark 4. Two of the 12 respondents wanted an accountability and measurement framework to be introduced that would improve adherence and would help the college implement the actions needed for Benchmark 4.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses

In special schools and alternative provision settings, of the 33 respondents, a significant majority of 91% (30 respondents) said Benchmark 4 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 27 respondents from special schools and alternative provision settings who provided qualitative feedback about the aspects of Benchmark 4 they most valued, the majority, 85% (23 respondents) said its linking of careers with the curriculum. Twenty-six per cent (7 of the 27 respondents) said they valued that it engaged teachers and staff in embedding careers across the school.

Of the 34 from the special schools and alternative provision settings who answered, 59% (20 respondents) said implementing some parts of Benchmark 4 had been challenging. However, 41% (14 respondents) said they had had no issues with its implementation.

Of the 20 respondents who gave qualitative answers, 5 respondents (24%) said the biggest challenge to implementation was teacher and staff engagement or buy-in. One respondent said the lack of curriculum time and the lack of suitable resources, events or opportunities was the biggest challenge. Another participant said they found linking some subjects to a career challenging.

In response to whether Benchmark 4 or its related sub-benchmarks needed refining, 50% (16 respondents) of the 32 responses said it did and the other 50% said it did not.

Of the 16 respondents from special schools and alternative provision settings who provided qualitative feedback on the refinements they wanted made to Benchmark 4, 25% (4 respondents) said its scope should be broadened from STEM to include a diverse range of subjects.

Careers leaders

Of the 26 careers leaders from special schools and alternative provision settings, 88% (23 respondents) said Benchmark 4 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Twenty careers leaders said what they most valued about Benchmark 4. A considerable majority, 85% (17 respondents), most valued the benchmark for linking careers with the curriculum. Five respondents (25%) valued its emphasis on embedding careers education across the school environment, which encourages engagement between teachers and staff. Two of the 20 respondents (10%) said helping young people envisage potential future careers, as the benchmark builds on students understanding of what is entailed in specific careers and broadens their aspirations.

Of 26 respondents, 65% (17 respondents) said they found an aspect of Benchmark 4 challenging to implement, while 35% (9 respondents) did not find its implementation challenging.

Seventeen careers leaders from special schools and alternative provision settings, gave qualitative answers about what they had found most challenging while implementing Benchmark 4. For 5 of the 17 respondents (29%), the main challenge was getting teacher and staff engagement or buy-in. The following challenges were mentioned by one respondent only: the lack of curriculum time; the lack of suitable resources, events and opportunities; and some subjects being difficult to link with careers.

Of the 24 careers leaders who responded, 54% (13 respondents) believed that refinements were needed to support the implementation of Benchmark 4 or its associated sub-benchmarks, while 46% (11 respondents) said that no changes were necessary.

Thirteen careers leaders from special schools and alternative provision settings, gave qualitative feedback on what refinements they would like made to Benchmark 4. Five of the 13 respondents (38%) said considerations for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) need to be incorporated more explicitly in the benchmark. Three respondents (23%) highlighted the need to broaden the scope from its focus on STEM to include all subjects. Two of the 13 respondents (15%) wanted greater clarity with clear examples of how to link curriculum learning with careers and examples of how to achieve the goals set in the benchmark. Two respondents also suggested integrating careers education in the curriculum or as a separate subject, for more focused learning.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators

Of the 76 enterprise coordinators who responded, 78% (59 respondents) found most value in Benchmark 4 (linking careers with the curriculum). Of the 57 who gave qualitative responses about the biggest challenge they had experienced when implementing Benchmark 4, 53% (30 respondents) said teacher and staff engagement and buy-in. Of the 51 that gave suggestions for refinements that could be made to Benchmark 4, 59% (30 respondents) proposed broadening the scope from STEM.

Careers hub leads

Of the 27 careers hub leads who answered, 89% (24 respondents) said they most valued Benchmark 4 for linking careers with the curriculum. Of the 17 who gave qualitative responses about the aspect of Benchmark 4 they found most challenging, 53% (9 respondents) said getting teacher and staff engagement and buy-in. Of the 24 careers hub leads who recommended refinements that could be made to Benchmark 4, 75% (18 respondents) said broadening the benchmark's focus from STEM.

Enterprise advisers

Of the 24 enterprise advisers who valued Benchmark 4 as an important aspect of the benchmarks and who gave qualitative responses, 75% (18 respondents) said they most valued it for linking careers with the curriculum. Of this 24, 17% (4 respondents) said the biggest challenge was getting teacher and staff engagement and buy-in. Six respondents (25%) said teacher training/confidence, and 5 of the 24 (21%) said the lack of suitable resources. Of the 16 enterprise advisers who gave qualitative responses about the refinements they would like introduced to Benchmark 4, 3 respondents (19%) said broadening the focus from STEM.

Employers

Of the 12 employers who valued Benchmark 4 as an important aspect of the benchmarks and who gave qualitative responses, 67% (8 respondents) said they most valued the benchmark for linking careers with the curriculum. Of the 11 employers that said they had found the implementation of Benchmark 4 challenging, 55% (6 respondents) marked "other" as the biggest challenge. This suggests a diversity of unspecified issues being faced by employers. Of the 5 that gave suggestions of refinements that could be made to the benchmark, 1 respondent said to broaden the scope from STEM.

Independent training providers

The single respondent from the independent training provider (ITP) group valued Benchmark 4 for its role in linking careers with the curriculum.
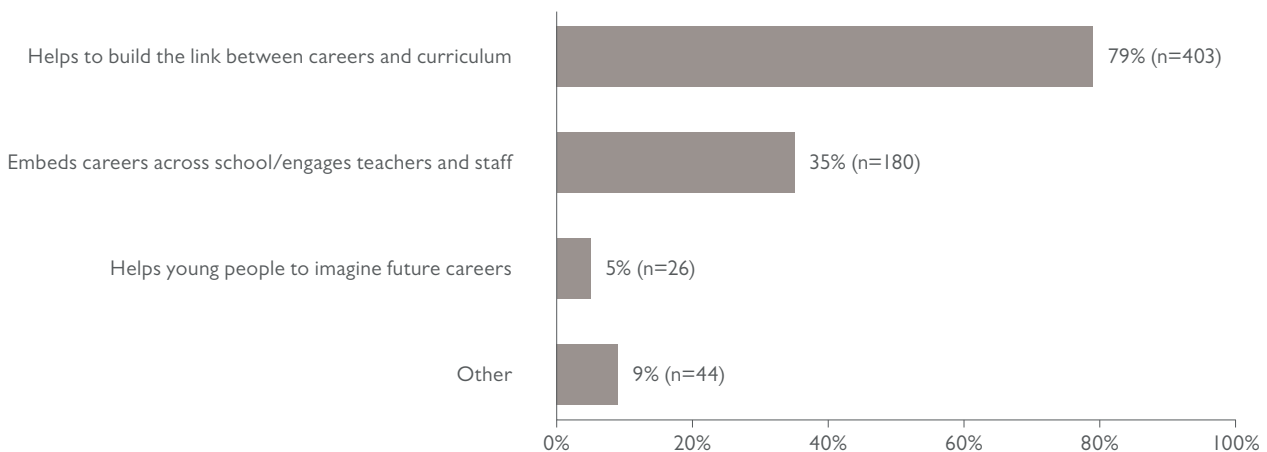
ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Of the 612 respondents who answered this question, 97% (593 respondents) said that Benchmark 4 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. This includes 97% (217 respondents) of the 224 respondents from schools, all the respondents (63 respondents) from colleges and 91% (30 respondents) of the 33 respondents from special schools and alternative provision settings.

A variety of reasons were given by the 509 that gave qualitative responses about what they most valued about Benchmark 4 (see Figure 5.1). A key aspect of Benchmark 4 is that users link curriculum learning with careers, and 79% (403 respondents) said this was the aspect they found most valuable. Thirty-five per cent (180 respondents) said the most valuable aspect was that it engaged teachers and staff in embedding careers across school settings. Five per cent (26 respondents) stated that this benchmark also helps young people to imagine future careers.

Figure 5.1: Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 4
(number of responses=509)

Challenges

Of the 608 respondents who answered this question, 70% (426) said Benchmark 4 was challenging to implement. Of the 430 respondents that provided qualitative comments about what they found most challenging (see Figure 5.2), 40% (174 respondents) said getting teachers and staff to engage with the benchmark. There were several reasons for this, including teachers and staff not having the time to engage with Benchmark 4 because of competing priorities (39%, 68 respondents) and not understanding or seeing their role in linking the curriculum to careers (30%, 53 respondents). Seventeen per cent (30 respondents) said there being no additional support (eg from SLT) to help teachers and staff to successfully incorporate careers into the curriculum was another reason for why engaging teachers and staff was difficult.

Twenty-one per cent (90 respondents) of the 430 who gave further details, said lack of time in the curriculum was their biggest challenge and they struggled to include careers in the curriculum because of other teaching commitments and time constraints. Of those that said this was a challenge, the reasons included not having careers as part of the core syllabus (42%, 38 respondents), there being no time in lessons (22%, 20 respondents) and there being no time for planning or developing an implementation plan for Benchmark 4 (10%, 9 respondents).

The lack of adequate teacher training in how to embed careers in the curriculum also impacted teachers confidence and this was given as the most challenging aspect of implementing Benchmark 4 by 15% (66 respondents) of those who responded.

Figure 5.2: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 4
(number of responses=430)
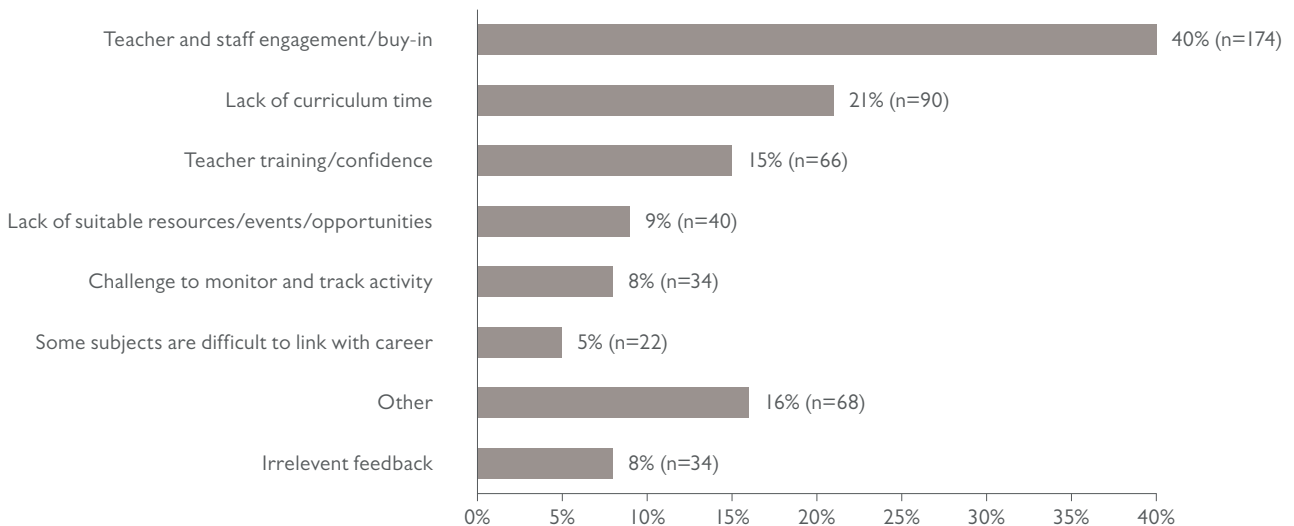
Comparisons across all settings show that schools found implementing Benchmark 4 notably more difficult than did colleges or special schools and alternative provision settings (see Figure 5.3). And all settings found engaging teachers and staff the most difficult element of trying to implement Benchmark 4.

Figure 5.3: Have you found any aspect of Benchmark 4 challenging to implement? (by setting)
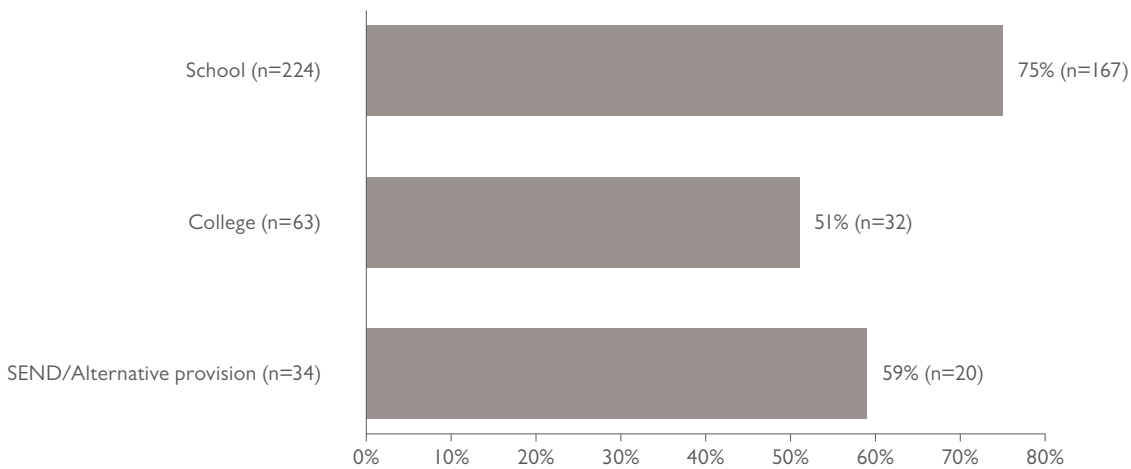
Considerations for the future

Of the 587 respondents who answered this question, 53% (314 respondents) said that refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 4 and 309 respondents provided more detail about what changes they would like made (see Figure 5.4). The initial creation of the Gatsby Benchmark advocated linking STEM careers in STEM subjects, to boost student engagement in these areas. However, 55% (169 respondents) said they wanted this benchmark to be broadened beyond STEM subjects. Among this group, 161 respondents wanted this benchmark to be broadened to all subjects. Eight respondents (3%) want to see this reflected in the Compass tool.

Twelve per cent (36 respondents) of the 309 respondents wanted more clarity and clear examples of how to link curriculum learning with careers to achieve the benchmark. Twenty-four respondents suggested making available examples of activities and the type of evidence needed to meet the benchmark, including minimum criteria. Four respondents wanted the benchmark to focus more on the development of transferable skills and showing how they apply to the world of work.

Ten per cent (31 respondents) of the 309 respondents wanted Benchmark 4 to include an accountability and measurement framework to track users achievements and progress in linking curriculum to careers.

Figure 5.4: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 4? (number of responses=309)
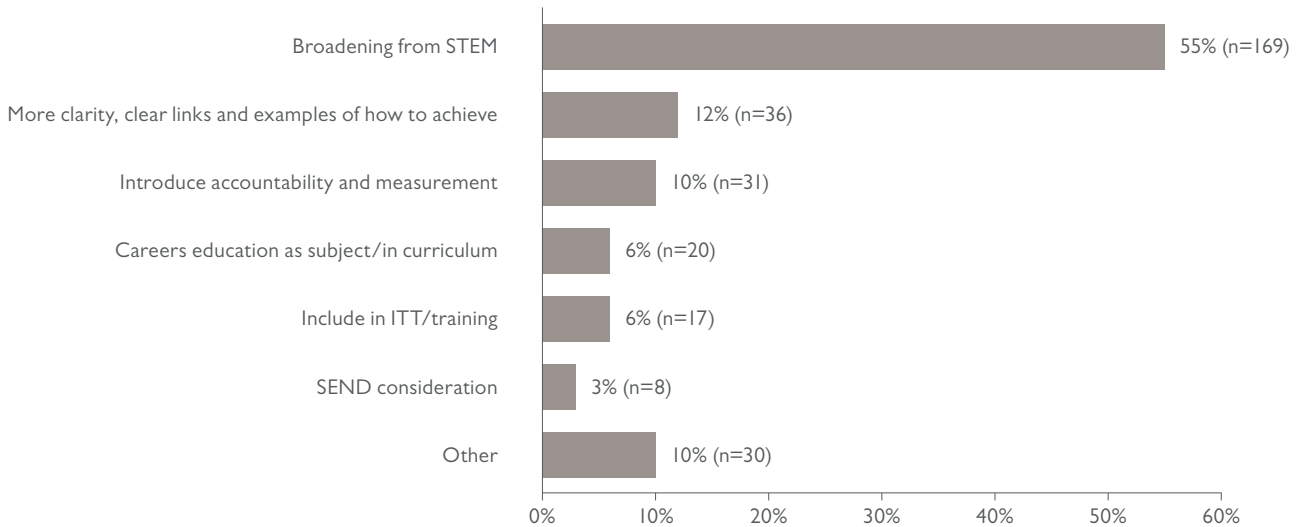
Breaking down the responses by setting, only 25% (15 respondents) from colleges said that Benchmark 4 needed to be refined, compared to 46% (99 respondents) from schools and 50% (16 respondents) from special schools and alternative provision settings agreed (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Do you believe that there is a need to make any refinements to Benchmark 4 or any of its sub-benchmarks? (by setting)
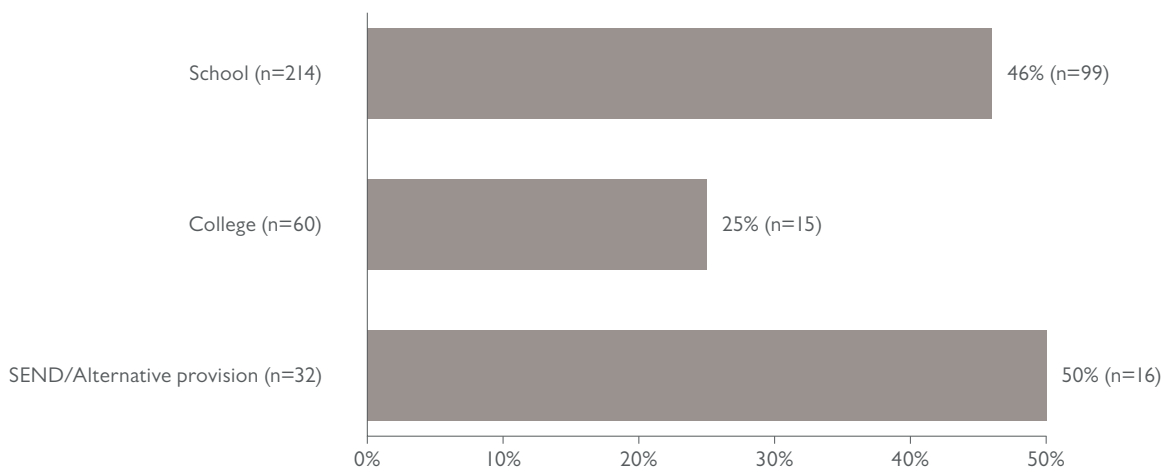
BENCHMARK 5: ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

For schools:

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.

- Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter* with an employer.

*A 'meaningful' encounter is one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.

For colleges:

Every learner 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, and should include learners' own part-time employment where it exists.

- Every year, alongside their study programme, learners should participate in at least two meaningful encounters* with an employer. At least one encounter should be delivered through their curriculum area.

- Colleges should record and take account of learners' own part-time employment and the influence this has had on their development.

*A 'meaningful' encounter is one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.

SUMMARY

Benchmark 5 has had an impact on the way young people encounter and experience the world of work. Respondents from all settings and roles appreciated that this benchmark enabled young people to gain real-world work experience, and that this experience broadens their knowledge and understanding of their career options and what they can aspire too. But this success has not come without its challenges and the respondents said they found it challenging to engage the employers who are committed to providing high-quality encounters, meeting the needs of a large cohort of students. That schools and employers have conflicting time schedules also made it difficult for respondents to organise encounters.

Despite these challenges, fewer respondents said that Benchmark 5 needed to be refined than said it did not need to be changed. Suggestions of changes that could be made were to review the wording of the benchmark, and to establish the number, or the range of encounters that are required to achieve the benchmark. This suggests that although respondents would like some minor adjustments to be made to the benchmark, the essence of what the benchmark is trying to achieve should not undergo significant changes.

SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES

All responses

Of 237 respondents in the school setting, 99.6% (236 respondents) said that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby framework. Of the 193 that provided further details about what they valued about this benchmark, 64% (124 respondents) said they most valued that Benchmark 5 enabled students to learn from first-hand, real-world experience of working for an employer and being an employee. Eighteen per cent (35 respondents) valued how it supported broader career exploration/ thinking, and 16% (30 respondents) said the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people.

Benchmark 5 had proved challenging for some. Of the 235 who responded to this question, 69% (161 respondents) said they had found aspects difficult to implement. Forty-three per cent (71 respondents) said they found employer engagement most challenging, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities. Sixteen per cent (27 respondents) said trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers made it difficult to implement. Sixteen per cent (15 respondents) also found giving priority to Benchmark 5 in the curriculum challenging.

Of the 224 respondents in the school setting who answered, 31% (70 respondents) said Benchmark 5 needed refining, and 69% (154 respondents) said it did not. Sixty-seven respondents gave further details about what changes they would suggest. Firstly, 37% (25 respondents) wanted a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Thirty per cent (20 respondents) suggested that what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained. Thirteen per cent (9 respondents) said they wanted clear examples of useful encounters and suggested that having a template of encounters would help schools understand what meaningful looked like.

Careers leaders

Of the 171 careers leaders in schools who answered, 99% (170 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the 138 respondents that expanded on what they most valued about this benchmark, 66% (91 respondents) said providing young people with the opportunity to learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Eighteen per cent (25 respondents) said how it supported broader career exploration/thinking for students and 13% (18 respondents) valued that students were given valuable work experience opportunities.

Of the 171 careers leaders who answered, 65% (112 respondents) said they found Benchmark 5 challenging to implement. Of the 112 respondents who gave qualitative responses, 47% (53 respondents) said that employer engagement was most challenging, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities. Nineteen per cent (21 respondents) said trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers was challenging. Eighteen per cent (20 respondents) said not being able to give priority to Benchmark 5 in the curriculum made it difficult for careers leaders to successfully implement the benchmark. Some of the challenges are explained by respondents:

> **It's hard to get a wide range of employers in to speak to students (many of those with time to do this are at the latter end of their careers, or retired, and their pathways can be very similar; [but] they are often not representative of the school community either) Getting all students to have a 'meaningful' encounter, even when we have employers in can be challenging as not all students will participate in an active way.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about employer engagement

> **Time to network and build meaningful relationships. Businesses can be busy as are schools. Since lockdown and the state of the economy it has become harder to engage with business and create the flow we once had. Employers are reluctant to let employees out of work to attend school events. Staffing in school can also be tight therefore staff m[a]y not be able to be released to attend meetings.**
> (Careers leader in a school speaking about employer engagement and time schedules)

Of the 162 careers leaders in school who answered, only 30% (49 respondents) said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 5 or any of its sub-benchmarks, and 70% (113 respondents) said none were needed. Forty-seven careers leaders made suggestions about what changes they would like to see made to the benchmark. Thirty-eight per cent (18 respondents) wanted a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Thirty-four per cent (16 respondents) suggested that what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained. Eight of the 47 respondents (17%) said they wanted clear examples of what useful encounters looked like. Some of the suggestions made are included in the following quotes:

> **Clarification as to what is involved [in encounters with employers and employees].**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about clear examples

> **More ideas of what this means eg, going on a school trip – a museum is a workplace, does this count?!**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about 'meaningfulness' and breadth of encounters

Senior leadership teams

Of the 52 senior leadership team (SLT) members who gave answers, all agreed that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby framework. Forty respondents gave further details of what they most valued about the benchmark. Fifty-five per cent (22 respondents) most valued the fact that young people could learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Six respondents (15%) said how it supported broader career exploration/thinking and a further 6 respondents said the work experience opportunities it provided for young people.

Of the 51 SLT members who answered this question, 73% (37 respondents) said they found aspects of Benchmark 5 challenging. Thirty-six respondents provided further details about the specific aspects they found challenging. Forty-two per cent (15 respondents) said they found employer engagement most challenging, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities. Eight respondents (22%) said it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. Seven (19%) said that trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers made it difficult to implement Benchmark 5. The following quotes illustrate the challenges that respondents experienced:

> **In a school of 1,800+ students, this can be a massive challenge to organise and achieve for every student, every year! It's only really achievable through assemblies, but I question how 'meaningful' this is.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about trying to make it beneficial and meaningful for everyone and time schedule between schools and employers

> **Availability of 'meaningful' encounters in areas of local deprivation. We want to raise aspirations in the most challenging schools, but these tend to be in areas where career prospects are very limited.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about making it beneficial and meaningful for everyone

Of the 51 SLT members who answered this question, 27% (14 respondents) said Benchmark 5 or any of its sub-benchmarks needed to be refined, and 73% (37 respondents) said it did not. Twelve respondents gave more detailed suggestions about the refinements they would like to see. Five respondents (42%) wanted a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Three respondents (25%) suggested clarifying what is meant by 'meaningful' and said the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained. One respondent asked for clear examples of how to achieve Benchmark 5. Suggestions of potential refinements are illustrated in the following quotes:

> **An acknowledgement of different types of employment.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about breadth of encounters

> **I think it is worth considering whether [school] assemblies could be included in this.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about reviewing terminology and definition

Careers advisers

Of the 95 careers advisers in a school setting who answered this question, 99% (94 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. 77 respondents provided further detail about what they most valued about the benchmark. Sixty-eight per cent (52 respondents) said students being able to learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Twenty-five per cent (19 respondents) said they most valued how the benchmark supported broader career exploration/thinking. Seventeen per cent (13 respondents) said the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people.

Of the 92 careers advisers who answered, 67% (62 respondents) said they found Benchmark 5 challenging to implement. Employer engagement, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities, was a significant challenge for 44% (29 respondents) of careers advisers in school settings. Eighteen per cent (12 respondents) said it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. Fourteen per cent (9 respondents) said trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers made the benchmark difficult to implement. Some of these challenges are described by respondents in the following quotes:

> **Providing sufficient and quality opportunities for the number of students in school ie, large scale events like careers fairs might provide opportunities, but how meaningful they are is debatable for the desired learning outcome. Whereas harder to facilitate opportunities such as mentoring/work experience would be much higher quality but harder to arrange/fund etc.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about making it beneficial and meaningful for everyone

> **For each year to have an encounter is challenging and can feel like a 'shoehorn' rather than meaningful.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about making it beneficial and meaningful for everyone

Of the 87 careers advisers who answered, 32% (28 respondents) said that Benchmark 5 needed to be refined, and 68% (59 respondents) said it did not. 26 respondents gave suggestions for the refinements they would like to see. Eight of the 26 (31%) suggested a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Six respondents (23%) said that what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained. Six respondents suggested allocating curriculum time and funding. Five respondents (19%) suggested the benchmark needed legislation and an accountability framework to measure what had been achieved with the benchmark. Some of the respondents' suggestions are presented below:

> **Definition of 'meaningful'.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about better explaining what is meant by 'meaningful' and bread of encounters

> **It needs to be more flexible around the idea of one encounter per year. Maybe 2 in KS3, 3 in KS4 would be easier for schools with limited 'off-curriculum' time for Year 11.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about what is meant by 'meaningful' and breadth of encounters

COLLEGE PERSPECTIVES

All responses

Of the 58 respondents in colleges who answered, 95% (55 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Further details of what they most valued about this benchmark was provided by 51 respondents. Fifty-three per cent (27 respondents) said they most valued the opportunity for students to learn from first-hand, real-world experiences of the workplace. Twenty-two per cent (11 respondents) said they most valued the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people. Twenty per cent (10 respondents) valued how the benchmark supported broader career exploration/thinking.

Of the 60 respondents who answered the question about whether they found Benchmark 5 difficult to implement, 63% (38 respondents) said they had found it challenging. Forty-one per cent (16 respondents) of this group found employer engagement most challenging, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities. Thirty-eight per cent (14 respondents) said that monitoring data and measuring encounters against benchmark criteria was the most challenging aspect. Ten of the 38 respondents (26%) said it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone.

Of the 60 respondents in colleges who said whether Benchmark 5 or any of its sub-benchmarks needed to be refined, 38% (23 respondents) said it needed changes. However, 62% (37 respondents) disagreed. Twenty-two respondents provided details about the refinements they would like to see made. Fifty-nine per cent (13 respondents) wanted a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Three respondents (14%) suggested that what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained. Two respondents (9%) wanted clear examples of how to implement this benchmark to be provided.

Careers leaders

Of the 38 careers leaders from college settings who answered, 95% (36 respondents) agreed that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Thirty-one careers leaders provided further details about what they most valued about this benchmark. Fifty-two per cent (16 respondents) said they most valued that young people could learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Seven of the 31 careers leaders (23%) said they valued how the benchmark supported broader career exploration/thinking. Five careers leaders (16%) said the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people was what they most valued.

Of the 38 careers leaders who responded, 66% (25 respondents) said they had found it challenging to implement Benchmark 5. Of the 25 careers leaders, 50% (13 respondents) said that monitoring data and measuring encounters against benchmark criteria was the most challenging aspect of Benchmark 5. Nine careers leaders (35%) said that employer engagement, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities, was challenging. Six respondents (23%) said it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. The quotes below illustrate some of the challenges faced by respondents:

> **The most difficult part of this is to ensure that the engagements are high quality and have measurable impact for students and business alike.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about making it beneficial and meaningful for everyone

> **Meaningful is so subjective – are we referring to a talk from an employer? Or does it have to be a trip? Latter is so hard to implement when you have big student numbers (4,700+) like we do! Muddying of the water with part-time work – a lot of students have part-time work which is a meaningful encounter with employers. Does work experience come under this? It is a separate benchmark but still an encounter.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about challenges to achieving 'meaningfully' and benefit all

Of the 38 that gave an answer, 45% (17 respondents) said Benchmark 5 needed to be refined and 55% (21 respondents) said it did not. Seventeen respondents suggested what those refinements should be. Sixty-five per cent (11 respondents) suggested a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Two careers leaders (12%) suggested that what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained. Another two careers leaders (12%) wanted clear examples of how to implement this benchmark to be provided. The following quotes illustrate some of the suggestions made:

> **Clarification of meaningful.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about what is meant by 'meaningful'

> **The benchmark only references employers. There is also value to be had from entrepreneurs, freelancers, and other self-employed industry professionals. With the need to address the bigger picture, there is also a need for encounters with specialists in wider skills development, wellbeing, citizenship, sustainability, financial management etc.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about reviewing terminology and definition

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses

Of the 37 respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered, 97% (36 respondents) said Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Thirty-two respondents provided further details about what they most valued about the benchmark. Fifty-three per cent (17 respondents) said they most valued students being able to learn from first-hand, real-world experience of working for an employer and being an employee. Seven of the 32 respondents (22%) valued how the benchmark supported broader career exploration/thinking. Three respondents (9%) said they most valued the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people.

Of the 38 respondents who answered, 50% (19 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 5 challenging to implement, and 50% had not. Fifty-three per cent (10 respondents) of this group said they found employer engagement most challenging, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities. Five respondents (26%) said it was most challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. Two respondents (10%) said trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers was challenging.

Of the 36 respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered, only seven (19%) said Benchmark 5 needed refining, and 31 (86%) said it did not. All 7 respondents who said the benchmark needed changes made suggestions about what they would like to see. Four of the 7 (57%) suggested reviewing the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups, and two (29%) wanted stronger legislation and an accountability framework to use when implementing and measuring progress with this benchmark. One respondent (14%) said that what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained.

Careers leaders

Of the 29 careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered, 97% (28 respondents) said that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Twenty-five respondents provided specific examples of what they most valued about this benchmark. Fifty-two per cent (13 respondents) most valued students being able to learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Six respondents (24%) said how the benchmark supported broader career exploration/thinking. Three respondents (12%) said the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people was what they most valued.

Of the 30 careers leaders that answered, 47% (14 respondents) said they found Benchmark 5 challenging to implement. Nine respondents said the most challenging aspect was employer engagement, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities. Four respondents said it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. One respondent said trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers made the benchmark difficult to implement. The following quotes illustrate some of the ways careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings found Benchmark 5 difficult to implement:

Getting employers to come through the door of a special school is a particular challenge. Since Covid it has been harder to access employers as some workplaces have been shut down or closed to the public/visits. Employers are also more strained and working with smaller workforces/additional pressures which has limited their involvement in schools.
Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about employer engagement

It's not clear what requirements are for students in a specialist FE setting as it talks about number of encounters in lower years. We typically get students for two, maybe three years. Start at 19 and finish maybe 21, we sometimes see an 18- or 17-year-old.
Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about making the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone

Of 30 careers leaders who gave an answer, 6 respondents (20%) said Benchmark 5 needed to be refined, and 24 respondents (80%) said it did not. All six respondents suggested what refinements they would like made. Four of the 6 (67%) said a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups was needed. Other suggestions were each made by one respondent: including further explanation of what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included; and introducing legislation and an accountability framework to measure what had been achieved with the benchmark and the number of encounters. The following quotes illustrate the respondents' suggestions:

More clarification on what constitutes a work encounter. What exactly ticks the box to achieve this is what needs to be included?
Careers leader in a special school setting speaking about reviewing terminology, definition and target year groups

I think there needs to be some flexibility for students with SEND. Our current Year 7 cohort is struggling with the effects of the pandemic. They are not mature enough to participate in employer activities and events.
Careers leader in a special school setting speaking about reviewing terminology, definition and target year groups

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators

Of the 80 respondents who are enterprise coordinators, 99% (79 respondents) said Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Seventy-one enterprise coordinators shared what they particularly valued about the benchmark. Fifty-five per cent (39 respondents) said they most valued that the benchmark gave students the opportunity to learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Thirty-four per cent (24 respondents) valued that it supported broader career exploration/thinking. Thirteen per cent (9 respondents) valued that the encounters linked the curriculum to careers.

Of the 81 enterprise coordinators who gave an answer, 59% (48 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 5 challenging to implement. All 48 explained what they find challenging in more detail. Forty-eight per cent (23 respondents) said employer engagement, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities was the most challenging aspect. A quarter (12 respondents) said that it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. Eight of the 48 (17%) said it was challenging to get adequate funding to implement the benchmark – although this is arguably outside the control of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Despite these implementation challenges, only 38% (31 respondents) of the 82 enterprise coordinators who answered said that Benchmark 5 should be refined and 62% (51 respondents) said it did not. Twenty-eight respondents suggested refinements they would like made. Eight of the 28 respondents (29%) said they wanted a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Eight (29%) suggested that what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included should be better explained. Seven of the 28 enterprise coordinators suggested introducing legislation and an accountability framework to make sure that users of the benchmarks were held accountable for what they had or had not achieved.

Careers hub leads

All of the 35 careers hub leads that responded said that Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Twenty-four provided further details about the aspects they valued most. Forty-six per cent (11 respondents) said they most valued how the benchmark supported broader career exploration/thinking. Nine of the 24 careers hub leads (38%) said they valued students being able to learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Four respondents (17%) said linking the curriculum to careers was what they most valued.

Of the 32 careers hub leads that answered, 47% (15 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 5 challenging to implement. Fifteen provided qualitative responses explaining what they had found most challenging. Six respondents (38%) said employer engagement, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities, was the most challenging aspect. Four said it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. Four careers hub leads also said trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers made the benchmark difficult to implement.

Of the 35 careers hub leads that gave an answer, 46% (16 respondents) said elements of Benchmark 5 needed to be refined, and 54% (19 respondents) said it did not. Sixteen respondents made specific suggestions about the refinements they would like to see. Seven of the 16 respondents (44%) suggested a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Six career hub leads (38%) said they wanted clarification on what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included. Three respondents (19%) suggested that the approach to the legislation and accountability of Benchmark 5 should be reconsidered.

Enterprise advisers

Of the 41 enterprise advisers that gave an answer, all said Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Thirty-nine respondents provided further details of what they most valued about the benchmark. Forty-one per cent (16 respondents) most valued that students could learn from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Twenty-eight per cent (11 respondents) valued that it supported broader career exploration/thinking. Three enterprise advisers (8%) said they most valued the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people.

Of 41 enterprise advisers, 73% (30 respondents) said elements of Benchmark 5 had been challenging to implement. All 30 gave specific details about what they had found most challenging. Thirty-seven per cent (11 respondents) said employer engagement, particularly the quality commitment and breadth of these engagements was the most challenging aspect. Ten of the 30 enterprise advisers (33%) said organising encounters, due to conflicting time schedules between schools and employers was a challenge. Nine respondents (30%) said making the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone was most challenging.

Although enterprise advisers found Benchmark 5 challenging, only 39% (16 respondents) said it needed to be refined, and 61% (25 respondents) said it did not. Fifteen respondents made specific suggestions about the refinements they would like to see. Six enterprise advisers (40%) suggested a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Four of the 15 (27%) wanted clarification on what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included. Three enterprise advisers (20%) wanted to see more support for employer–school engagement.

Employers

All 17 employers that gave an answer said Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the benchmarks framework. All 17 also provided details about what aspects they most valued. Seven employers (41%) said they most valued young people learning from first-hand, real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Fifteen out of the 18 (88%) employers had found aspects of the benchmark difficult to implement, and all 15 gave details about those challenges. Eight employers (53%) said the most challenging aspect was establishing employer engagement, particularly the quality, commitment and breadth. This is because employers struggle with having the staff capacity to engage with large numbers of students and it is difficult to organise due to conflicting schedules between schools, colleges and employers. Six employers (40%) said it was most challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. Seven employers out of the 18 who answered (39%) said Benchmark 5 needed to be refined, and 11 (61%) said it did not.
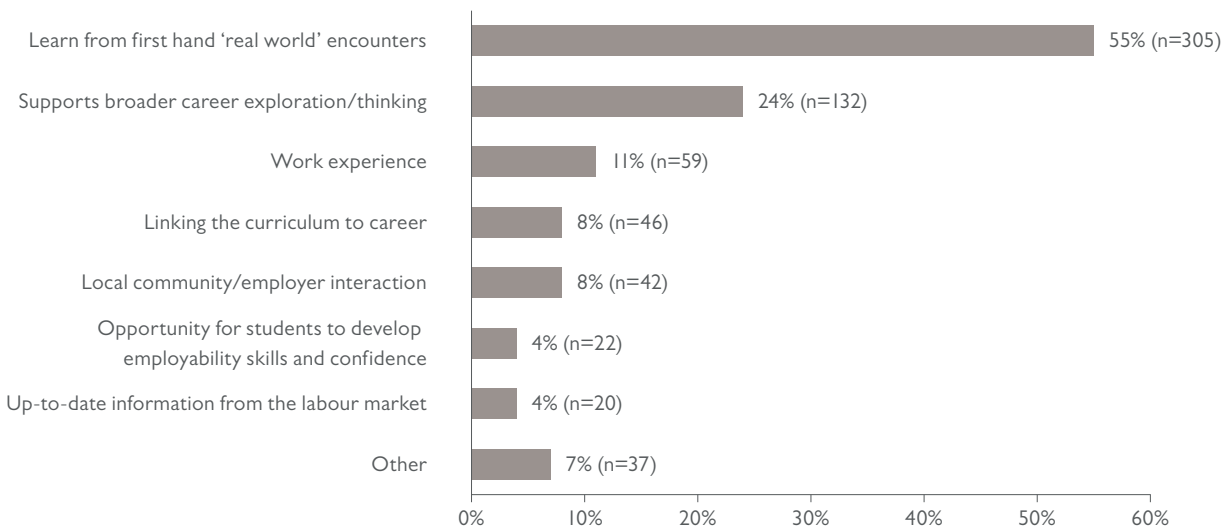
Independent training providers

Only one independent training provider (ITP) completed the survey. They said Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks but did not provide feedback about what they valued. The ITP found having sufficient funding a challenge. They wanted clarification on what is meant by 'meaningful' and the range of encounters that can be included.

ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Of the 647 respondents who answered this question, 99% (638 respondents) said Benchmark 5 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of the 551 respondents that provided further details about the specific aspects they most valued (see Figure 6.1), 55% (305 respondents) said they most valued that young people could learn from first-hand real-world encounters of working for an employer and being an employee. Twenty-four per cent (132 respondents) said how it supported broader career exploration/ thinking. Eleven per cent (59 respondents) most valued the work experience opportunities the benchmark provided for young people.

Figure 6.1: Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 5
(number of responses=551)

| Category	Value
Learn from first hand 'real world' encounters	55% (n=305)
Supports broader career exploration/thinking	24% (n=132)
Work experience	11% (n=59)
Linking the curriculum to career	8% (n=46)
Local community/employer interaction	8% (n=42)
Opportunity for students to develop employability skills and confidence	4% (n=22)
Up-to-date information from the labour market	4% (n=20)
Other	7% (n=37)

Challenges

Of the 642 respondents who answered this question, 66% (423 respondents) said they had found Benchmark 5 challenging to implement. Four hundred and thirty-two respondents provided qualitative responses about the challenges they had experienced (see Figure 6.2). Forty-five per cent (194 respondents) said employer engagement, particularly finding employers that were committed and finding a range of good-quality opportunities was the most challenging aspect. Of these responses 53% (102 respondents) said this was because of a lack of employer commitment or the volunteers in the employers' workforce not being available. Seventy per cent (36 respondents) of those who had said employer engagement was challenging said they had difficulty finding contacts, networking and managing relationships with employers.

Of the 432 who answered, 24% (105 respondents) said it was challenging to make the benchmark meaningful and beneficial for everyone. Forty-eight per cent (50 respondents) of those who said this was a challenge said it was difficult to arrange good-quality and relevant encounters. Twenty-four (23%) of this group said trying to organise meaningful encounters for large groups of student was challenging.

Of the 432 who gave an answer, 17% (75 respondents) said that trying to organise encounters that worked with the time schedules of both schools and employers was challenging.

Figure 6.2: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 5
(number of responses=432)
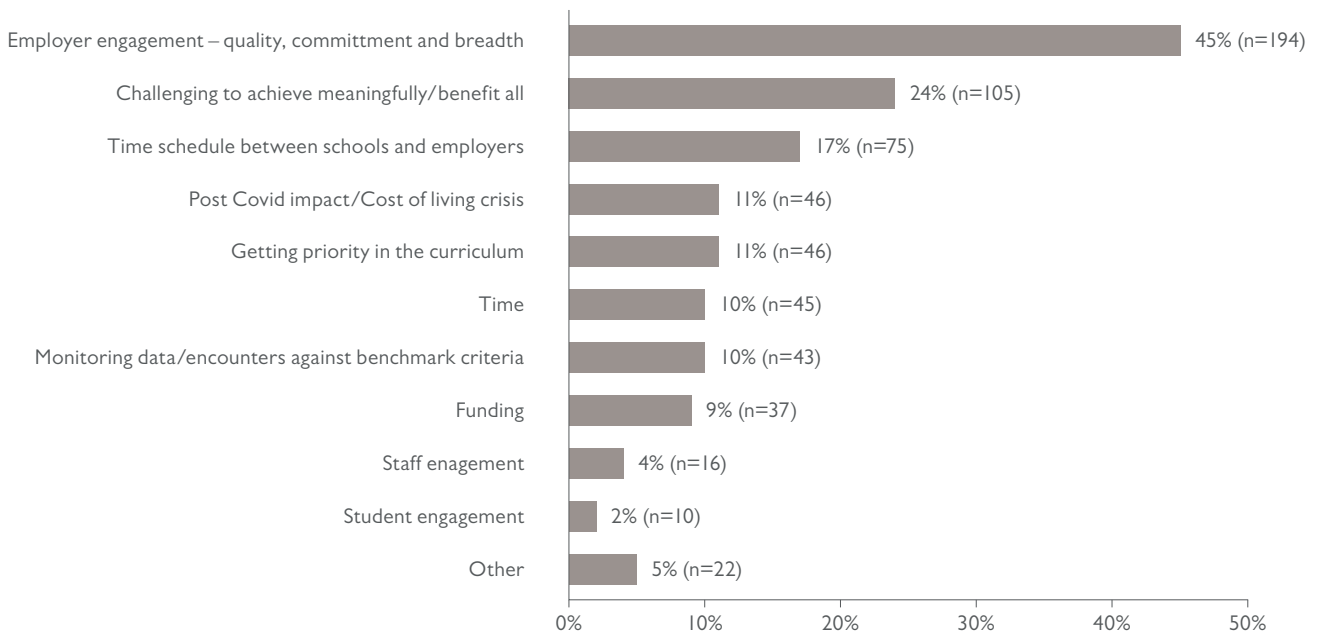
Considerations for the future

Of the 630 who gave an answer, only 39% (244 respondents) said Benchmark 5 needed refining and 61% (386 respondents) said it did not. Two hundred and thirty-two respondents suggested what those refinements should be (see Figure 6.3). Forty-one per cent (95 respondents) suggested a review of the benchmark's terminology, definition and its target year groups. Forty-one per cent of the 95 (39 respondents) wanted clarification on the criteria for a 'meaningful encounter'. Thirteen of the 95 respondents (14%) wanted clarification on both what counts as an encounter and what needs to be monitored eg, part-time work, voluntary work, self-employment opportunities or virtual experiences.

Twenty-six per cent (61 respondents) wanted clarification on what is meant by 'meaningful' and on the range of encounters that can be included. Forty-nine per cent of this group (30 respondents) said they wanted a definition of, or a criterion for, a meaningful encounter.

Of the 232 who suggested refinements, 13% (31 respondents) wanted legislation and an accountability framework for Benchmark 5, which would include a system that measures what counts as a meaningful encounter. Eleven respondents (35%) wanted the accountability framework to hold schools accountable for what they had or had not achieved with this benchmark.

Figure 6.3: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 5? (number of responses=232)
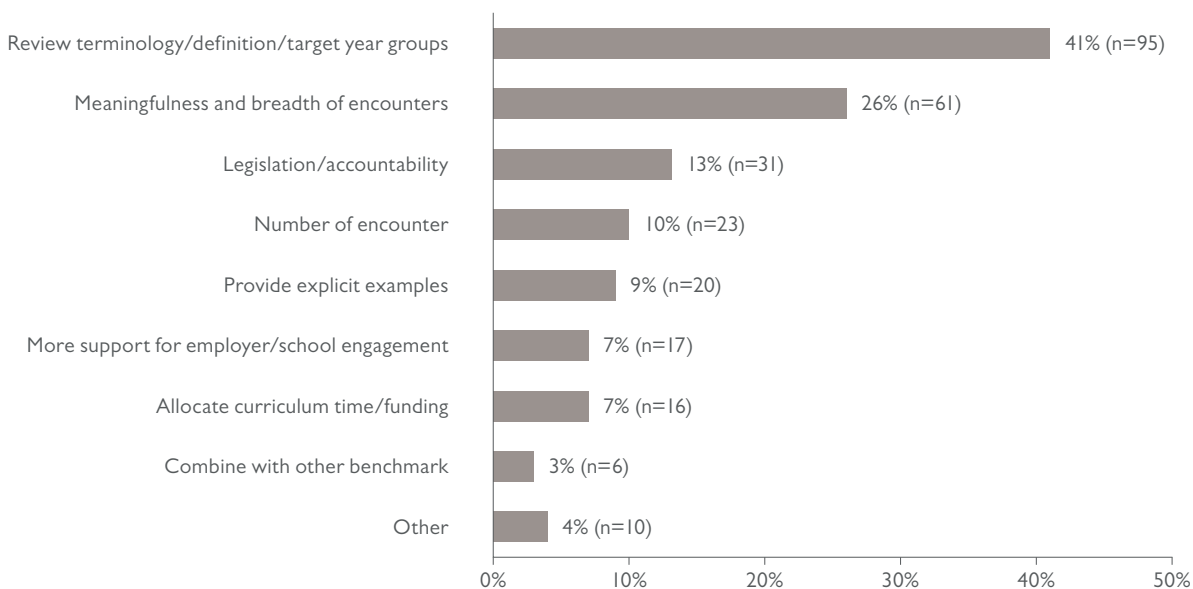
BENCHMARK 6: EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES

For schools:
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.

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.

- By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.

For colleges:
Every learner 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.

- By the end of their study programme, every learner should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have.

SUMMARY

A considerable majority of the respondents agree that Benchmark 6 played a critical role in the Gatsby Benchmarks. The feedback highlighted the role Benchmark 6 plays in preparing students for real workplaces, supporting the development of essential skills and behaviours, and making informed decisions about future careers.

Despite its value being recognised, challenges in implementing Benchmark 6 were reported by respondents. The main challenges were poor employer engagement and a lack of available placements caused both by reluctant employers and competition with other educational bodies. There was also substantial concern about costs, funding and resources. The concerns included issues with staffing, resource outsourcing and logistical matters, such as transportation and workplace safety.

Looking forward, respondents said they would like to see refinements to Benchmark 6. The need for more clarity was a key theme, with respondents wanting clear definitions of terms used, examples showing exactly what can be included as an experience of a workplace, and clear outlines of the nature and duration of meaningful work experiences.

There was significant recognition of the value of remote, virtual and online experiences. However, to ensure these experiences had meaning, respondents wanted criteria included in the benchmark. Other suggestions included integrating part-time work and volunteering experiences in Benchmark 6 – this was seen as something that would enrich the benchmark. Overall, the feedback advocated for a more structured, comprehensive and inclusive Benchmark 6 that would include a broader range of learning and developmental opportunities for students, aligning with the changing dynamics of work experiences in the current landscape.

SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES

All responses
Of the 241 respondents from school settings that answered the question, 96% (231 respondents) said Benchmark 6 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 193 that provided further details about what they valued about this benchmark, 26% (51 respondents) said preparing pupils for real workplaces. Thirteen per cent (26 respondents) said they most valued the benchmark for developing skills, behaviours and confidence in young people. Eight per cent (16 respondents) said helping young people make informed decisions about their future career and transitions.

Of 242 respondents in a school setting, 90% (218 respondents) said they had experienced challenges implementing certain aspects of Benchmark 6. Two hundred and twenty-three respondents provided qualitative answers to this question. Forty-six per cent (102respondents) said the biggest challenge was employer engagement and a lack of available placements. Twenty-two per cent (49respondents) said the negative impacts of Covid-19 and working from home arrangements had been challenging. Sixteen per cent (35 respondents) said making sure the experiences of workplaces were high-quality and were relevant to all was challenging.

Of the 231 respondents in a school setting who gave an answer about the need for Benchmark 6 or any of its sub-benchmarks to be refined, 58% (133 respondents) said changes needed to be made and 42% (98 respondents) said they did not.

Of the 131 respondents from schools who provided qualitative responses about what refinements they would like to see made, 31% (41 respondents) said they wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included. Respondents said they wanted clarity about the nature and duration of meaningful work experiences and criteria for determining their impact on students. Respondents wanted to understand whether part-time work, volunteering, and other non-traditional work formats could be counted as work experience and also wanted virtual and hybrid experiences to be classed as valid ways to fulfil the benchmark's requirements.

Careers leaders

Of the 179 careers leaders in a school setting that responded, 97% (173 respondents) said Benchmark 6 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 145 careers leaders in schools that gave an answer, 26% (38 respondents) said they most valued the benchmark for preparing young people for, and giving them insight into, real workplaces. Fourteen per cent valued the benchmark for supporting the development of skills, behaviours and confidence. Ten per cent (15 respondents) said the creation of opportunities and networks. Eight per cent (12 respondents) said inspiring and motivating young people. Six per cent (9 respondents) said supporting young people to make informed decisions about their future careers and transitions.

> **Experiencing the workplace first hand is invaluable for understanding business behaviours and expectations and just gaining inspiration about the world of work. No experience is wasted – you always learn something. And equally I have seen students return from work experience totally inspired or having learned a lot about themselves in terms of self-confidence and skills.**
> Careers leader in a school setting speaking about inspiring and motivating young people

Of the 181 careers leaders in schools that responded, 89% (161 respondents) said they had experienced challenges during the implementation of Benchmark 6, and 11% (20 respondents) said they had not experienced any challenges.

Of the 164 careers leaders in schools who provided qualitative responses about those challenges, 48% (78 respondents) said the most challenging aspect of implementing Benchmark 6 was employer engagement. Twenty-three per cent (38 respondents) said costs, funding and resources was challenging. Twenty-three per cent (38 respondents) said the impact of Covid-19:

> **Clearly the pandemic had a huge impact on this benchmark as our whole work experience programme was stopped in March 2020. However, it did lead us to develop a new focus through virtual experiences which we have continued to develop. Since COVID many employers have been unable to fully support some of the programmes in their pre pandemic forms so it has needed to evolve.**
> Careers leader in a school setting speaking about the impact of Covid-19

Of the 173 careers leaders that answered, 60% (104 respondents) said Benchmark 6 needed to be refined and 40% (69 respondents) did not see the need for changes.

Ninety-eight careers leaders in the school setting gave suggestions for the refinements they would like to see made to Benchmark 6. Thirty-three per cent (32 respondents) wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included to illustrate what needs to be done to achieve the benchmark. Twenty-two per cent (22 respondents) also wanted clarification of the value of remote and virtual experiences. Fourteen per cent (14 respondents) wanted part-time work and volunteering to be counted as work experience by the benchmark.

Senior leadership teams

Of the 54 senior leadership team (SLT) members in the school setting that gave an answer, 94% (51 respondents) said Benchmark 6 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 34 respondents that gave qualitative feedback of what they valued about Benchmark 6 and how they had worked towards its effective implementation 9 respondents (26%) said they valued that it prepared young people for, and gave them insight into, real workplaces. Six SLT members (18%) said the benchmark played a crucial role in "developing skills, behaviours and confidence". Four respondents (12%) valued the benchmark for creating opportunities and networks. Four also said supporting young people to make decisions about future career pathways. The quote below illustrates one of the aspects respondents value about Benchmark 6:

> **Important that students can visit a workplace and gain experience of the expectations / workplace behaviours. We always link these back to our school expectations / behaviours – enable students to make clear links between school and their future. Work experience in year 10. Workplace visit opportunities.**
> Member of SLT in a school speaking about preparing young people for and insights into the 'real' workplace and making decisions about future careers

The responses of the 55 SLT members in schools that answered questions about challenges implementing the benchmark, closely mirrored those of the careers leaders. Eighty-nine per cent (49 respondents) had experienced challenges and 11% (6 respondents) had not.

For the 49 SLT members that gave further details about those challenges, employer engagement was again the most frequently cited challenge, noted by 43% (21 respondents). Twenty-four per cent (12 respondents) said the biggest challenges were related to costs, funding and resources. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was a significant challenge for 22% (11 respondents) of the group.

> **Costs of H&S [health and safety] checks, less employers willing to support – schools are now in competition to place students with colleges and apprenticeship providers placing students in new T levels. More working from home post covid is also an issue.**
> Member of SLT in a school speaking about the challenges of costs, funding and resources, employer engagement and the impact of Covid-19

Fifty-three SLT members answered the question about the need for revisiting and refining Benchmark 6 and its sub-benchmarks. Opinion was almost evenly split: 49% (26 respondents) said the benchmark needed some refinements, while 51% (27 respondents) did not see a need for any changes.

Twenty-three members of the SLT in schools gave further details about what refinements they would like made to Benchmark 6. Seven of the 23 respondents (30%) wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included to illustrate what needs to be done to achieve the benchmark. Four of the 23 (17%) said the value of remote and virtual experiences also needed to be clarified, and urged the authorities to create criteria for ensuring these experiences were 'meaningful'. Three respondents (13%) wanted government intervention to address social inequality and promote equal opportunity.

Careers advisers

Among the 90 careers advisers in a school setting who answered, a substantial majority of 97% (87 respondents) said Benchmark 6 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 77 careers advisers in schools who gave qualitative responses, 30% (23 respondents) valued that it prepared young people for, and gave them insights into, the workplace. Ten respondents (13%) valued the benchmark's role in inspiring and motivating young people. Eight (10%) careers advisers valued that the benchmark helped young people develop skills, behaviours and confidence. Seven of the 77 (9%) valued that the benchmark created opportunities and networks. Seven (9%) also said supporting young people to make decisions about future career transitions.

The responses to the question of whether they had experienced challenges implementing Benchmark 6 gave an identical pattern to that seen with the senior leadership team and the careers leaders. Of the 90 careers advisers in schools who answered, 89% (80 respondents) said they had experienced challenges and 11% (10 respondents) said they had not.

Among the 84 careers advisers who provided qualitative comments, 43% (36 respondents) said the main challenge was employer engagement. Twenty-seven per cent (23 respondents) said challenges related to costs, funding and resources. Twenty-one per cent (18 respondents) said the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, including higher levels of employees working from home was the main challenge.

Of the 89 careers advisers who answered the question about whether Benchmark 6 needed refining, 61% (54 respondents) said it did and 39% (35 respondents) said it did not need any changes.

Fifty-five of the careers advisers in schools suggested the refinements they would like made to Benchmark 6. Thirty-one per cent (17 respondents) wanted definitions of the terms used in the benchmark. Ten of the 55 respondents (18%) wanted a detailed review of the value of remote and virtual experiences. Seven careers advisers (13%) wanted part-time work and volunteering to be counted as work experience by the benchmark.

COLLEGE PERSPECTIVES

All responses

Within the college setting, there was consensus about the significance of Benchmark 6 in the Gatsby Benchmarks, with 97% (56 respondents) saying it was important.

Responses from colleges about what they valued, mirrored those from schools. Of the 49 responses received, 24% (12 respondents) said they valued Benchmark 6 for its role in preparing students for real workplaces. Six of the 49 respondents (12%) said they most valued the benchmark for developing skills, behaviours and confidence in young people. Four of the 49 (8%) said helping young people make informed decisions about their future career pathways.

> **All young people require employability skills to enable them to begin their successful careers. Experiences of work places provide some of the necessary experiences.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about developing skills, behaviours and confidence and preparing for, and insights into, the 'real' workplace

The benchmark was also valued by 4 respondents (8%) for helping students contextualise their learning and studies in a work environment. Another 4 (8%) said it was valuable for showing potential challenges in the career landscape.

> **Experience of the workplace is important. We organise visits as well as work experience and work placements. Work placements are now a compulsory part of the curriculum for T Level students. We also offer virtual work experience projects with employers and organisations, including an end of year charity project.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about helping contextualise students' learning in a work environment

Of the 59 respondents in the college setting that answered, 85% (50 respondents) said they had experienced challenges while implementing Benchmark 6. Nine respondents (15%) reported no issues.

Of 51 respondents, 41% (21 respondents) said the main challenges were employer engagement and a lack of available placements due to competition. Twenty-five per cent (13 respondents) said a lack of capacity. Ten of the 51 respondents (20%) said making sure the experiences of the workplace were high-quality and relevant for all students to avoid reinforcing social divisions. The comments below illustrate some of the main points made in college settings:

> **We are not (at the moment) equipped to be a provider of work experience as we do not have assigned workplace coordinators. We also may not have the capacity to support all of our students (cohort of around 2,400 students) with a meaningful work experience opportunity. We also, currently have time constraints due to the curriculum content taking a lot of the academic year to get through. Some curriculum areas struggle to interpret an approach for their own students eg Religious Studies arranging a workplace visit.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about making experiences high quality and relevant for all to avoid reinforcing the social divide

With many employers reluctant to take learners, OR converting their business to an online setting post-covid, this has become more difficult to achieve – it also means that all schools and colleges are competing for the same workplaces. The Liability aspect and regulations around parental consent and the paperwork for going on work experience is extreme (especially in schools) and unless you can afford to pay a company to do this for you, many providers do not have the resources to do this and have stopped doing it. Hence when those young people transition to college they may have never been in the workplace – despite the benchmarks.
Careers leader in a college speaking about employer engagement

The 57 responses about refinements received from colleges again mirrored those from schools, with 58% (33 respondents) wanting further support and refinements to be made to Benchmark 6 or its sub-benchmarks, and 42% (24 respondents) saying no changes were necessary.

Of the 35 respondents from college that gave details of the refinements they would like to see made, 40% (14 respondents) said they wanted definitions of the terms used and illustrative examples to be included to illustrate what needs to be done to achieve Benchmark 6. Seven respondents wanted detailed guidelines about what counts as a valid work experience and what needs to be included for such experiences to be deemed meaningful. Five of 35 respondents (14%) said the value of remote and virtual experiences needed to be clarified and safety measures introduced to ensure the protection of students during these experiences.

Careers leaders
Among the 38 careers leaders in the college setting that answered, 97% (37 respondents) said Benchmark 6 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Of the 31 careers leaders in colleges who gave details about what they valued in Benchmark 6, 7 respondents (23%) valued that it prepared young people for, and gave them insights into, the workplace. This shows that many careers leaders see Benchmark 6 helping students understand and get ready for what they will encounter when they enter the workforce. Three of the 31 (10%) said that it helped young people make informed decisions about their future career and transitions. Two of the respondents (6%) valued the benchmark for developing skills, behaviours and confidence in young people.

This is an absolutely vital part of a study programme, to allow learners to see first-hand how the industries they are hoping to join work on a daily basis. We aim to ensure all learners gain work experience at least once per year during their studies.
Careers leader in a college speaking about young people being prepared and given insight into the workplace

Of 39 careers leaders in colleges, 85% (33 respondents) said they had experienced challenges while working to meet the standards set by Benchmark 6.

Thirty-four careers leaders gave details about those challenges. The main challenges were employer engagement and finding available placements, which was cited by 13 respondents (38%). Nine respondents (26%) said the negative impacts of Covid-19, including those related to working from home. Eight respondents (24%) said the lack of capacity, including not having capacity to support all their students and not having enough time.

Of 36 respondents, 58% (21 respondents) said there needed to be further support or refinements made to Benchmark 6. Forty-two per cent (15 respondents) said there was no need for changes.

Twenty-three careers leaders in colleges provided qualitative feedback about the refinements they would like to see made to the benchmark. Nine of the 23 (39%) wanted definitions of the terms used in the benchmark. They wanted clear examples and guidelines about what qualifies as work experience including how long these experiences should last. Four of these 9 respondents wanted virtual and hybrid work experiences to be included in the benchmark. Of these, 3 careers leaders highlighted the need to make sure that virtual experiences were meaningful and safe for students.

Another suggestion made by four respondents (17%) was to include part-time work and volunteering as recognised work experiences in the benchmark.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses
All 34 respondents in special schools and alternative provision settings said Benchmark 6 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Thirty-two respondents gave qualitative answers explaining what they valued about the benchmark. Four respondents (13%) valued it for preparing young people for, and giving them insight into, real workplaces. Three respondents (9%) valued the benchmark for supporting the development of skills, behaviours and confidence. Another three respondents (9%) said its capacity to highlight potential challenges young people might encounter in the workplace.

In special schools and alternative provision settings, of the 35 respondents who answered, 69% (24 respondents) said they had experienced challenges when they were implementing aspects of Benchmark 6. The remaining 31% (11 respondents) did not find it challenging.

Of the 27 qualitative responses received from special schools and alternative provision settings about the main challenges experienced when implementing Benchmark 6, 48% (13 respondents) said employer engagement and there being fewer available placements. Ten of the 27 respondents (37%) said accommodating students with additional needs. Four respondents (15%) said the main challenges were related to costs, funding and resources.

Thirty-four responses were received on whether there was a need for refinements to be made to Benchmark 6 or its sub-benchmarks. Forty-one per cent (14 respondents) said refinements were needed, but 59% (20 respondents) said they were not.

Sixteen respondents from a special schools and alternative provision settings provided qualitative feedback about what refinements they would like to see. Six of the 16 (38%) said they wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included in the benchmark. Similar to the feedback from other educational settings, 5 of the 6 wanted clear guidelines about what counts as work experience. One of the 16 wanted part-time work and volunteering to be counted as work experience. One of the 16 said they wanted virtual and hybrid experiences to be recognised in the benchmark as valid forms of work experiences.

Careers leaders

Careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings were asked whether they felt that Benchmark 6 was an important part of the Gatsby Benchmarks. The feedback was unanimous – 100% of the 27 respondents said Benchmark 6 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

When asked to share what they valued about Benchmark 6 and how they had been effectively implementing it, 26 careers leaders responded. Four of the 15 (15%) said they valued how Benchmark 6 prepared students for, and gave them insights into, real workplaces. Two (8%) said they valued it for fostering the development of skills, behaviours and confidence. Two (8%) also said they valued its role in supporting students to make informed decisions about their future careers and transitions.

Out of 28 careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings, 68% (19 respondents) said they had experienced some challenges when implementing various aspects of Benchmark 6. Nine respondents (32%) said they had not.

Twenty careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings gave details of the specific challenges they had encountered while implementing Benchmark 6. Half of the respondents (10 respondents) said employer engagement and the lack of available placements was challenging. Forty-five per cent (9 respondents) said accommodating students with additional needs was a major challenge. Three of the 20 careers leaders (15%) said they found organising and engaging in events challenging.

Of 27 responses, 41% (11 respondents) said Benchmark 6 needed refining and 59% (16 respondents) said it did not.

Eleven respondents shared what refinements they would make to Benchmark 6 or its sub-benchmarks. Five of the 11 wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included. Four highlighted the need for support that was specifically designed for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) environments to support inclusive and understanding settings for students with different needs.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators

Of the 79 enterprise coordinators who answered, all of them said Benchmark 6 was a valued part of the benchmarks. Of the 65 that gave qualitative responses, 42% (27 respondents) valued it for preparing young people for, and giving them insights into, real workplaces. The development of skills, behaviours and confidence was most valued by 23% (15 respondents). Supporting young people to make informed decisions about their future careers and transitions was highlighted by 18% (12 respondents).

Of the 78 enterprise coordinators who answered, 91% (71 respondents) said they had experienced challenges implementing Benchmark 6. Thirty-two per cent (24 respondents) found employer engagement and the lack of available placements because of competition with other schools and with T levels for placements the most challenging. 27% (20 respondents) said the negative impacts of Covid-19 and 23% (17 respondents) said resource constraints were significant challenges.

Of the 49 enterprise coordinators who made suggestions for refinements they would like made to Benchmark 6, 41% (20 respondents) wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included. Twenty-nine per cent (14 respondents) said the value of remote and virtual experiences needed to be reviewed.

Careers hub leads

Of the 27 careers hub leads who gave details of what they valued about Benchmark 6, 44% (12 respondents) said giving students insights into real workplaces. Of the 28 who gave details of what they found challenging, 37% (10 respondents) said employer engagement. or the lack of available placements was their primary challenge. Thirty-seven per cent (10 respondents) said they found costs, funding and resource constraints challenging. Of the 23 careers hub leads who gave suggestions for improvements they wanted made, 48% (11 respondents) said they wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included. Five respondents (22%) wanted part-time work and volunteering experiences to be included in the benchmark as work experiences.

Enterprise advisers

Of the 32 enterprise advisers who gave details of what they valued about Benchmark 6, 50% (16 respondents) valued it for offering insights into the working environment. Of the 35 who gave details of what they found challenging, 29% (10 respondents) said the lack of available placements, which was due to competition with other schools and T level placements. Of the 20 who gave suggestions for improvements they wanted made to the benchmark, 6 respondents (30%) wanted work experiences to be made compulsory and thought schools should be accountable for this. Four respondents (20%) wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included.

Employers

Of the 14 employers who gave details of what they valued about Benchmark 6, 7 (50%) said preparing young people for, and giving them insight into, real workplaces. Seven (50%) also said supporting the development of skills, behaviours and confidence. Of the 14 who gave details of what they found challenging, 36% (5 respondents) said the competition for placements. Of the 8 who gave suggestions for improvements they wanted made to the benchmark, they wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples to be included. A further two employers (25%) wanted the value of virtual and hybrid work experiences to be reviewed. Qualitative responses show that these two employers would like virtual and hybrid work experiences to be included as valid work experience.

Independent training providers

The only response from an independent training provider (ITP) valued the Benchmark 6 for its role in preparing young people for, and giving them insight into, real workplaces. They found the most challenging aspect to be the costs, funding and resources involved in its implementation.

ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Out of 633 respondents, 97% (615 respondents), said Benchmark 6 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

534 respondents gave details of what they valued about Benchmark 6 (see Figure 7.1). Thirty-three per cent (176 respondents) valued Benchmark 6 for preparing students for, and giving insights into, real workplaces. Sixteen per cent (84 respondents) valued it for supporting the development of skills, behaviours and confidence. Fifteen per cent (79 respondents) valued that it supported students to make informed decisions about their future careers and transitions.

Figure 7.1: Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 6
(number of responses=534)
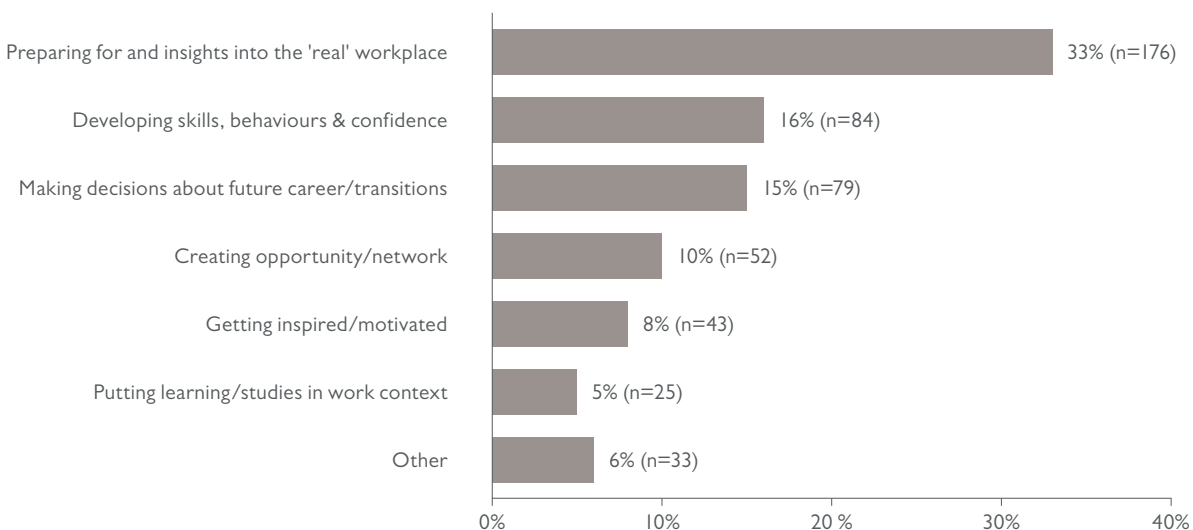
Challenges

Of the 640 respondents who answered this question, 89% (568 respondents) said they had found Benchmark 6 challenging to implement. Eleven per cent (72 respondents) said they had encountered no challenges.

Of the 575 respondents that provided qualitative feedback on the challenges they had faced while implementing Benchmark 6 (see Figure 7.2), 36% (209 respondents) said employer engagement and the lack of available placements, highlighting issues such as reluctant employers, a lack of placements because of competition with other schools and with T levels, and the overarching burden of organisation and engagement. Twenty-one per cent (120 respondents) said costs, funding and resources were a challenge, with respondents highlighting staffing issues, the outsourcing of resources (72 respondents) and logistics, such as transportation (22 respondents) and workplace safety checks (19 respondents). Seventeen per cent (98 respondents) said the negative impacts of Covid-19 were challenging, including the changes to workplaces introduced by work-from-home arrangements and the broader challenges of navigating educational benchmarks in a remote learning environment.

Figure 7.2: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 6 (number of responses=575)
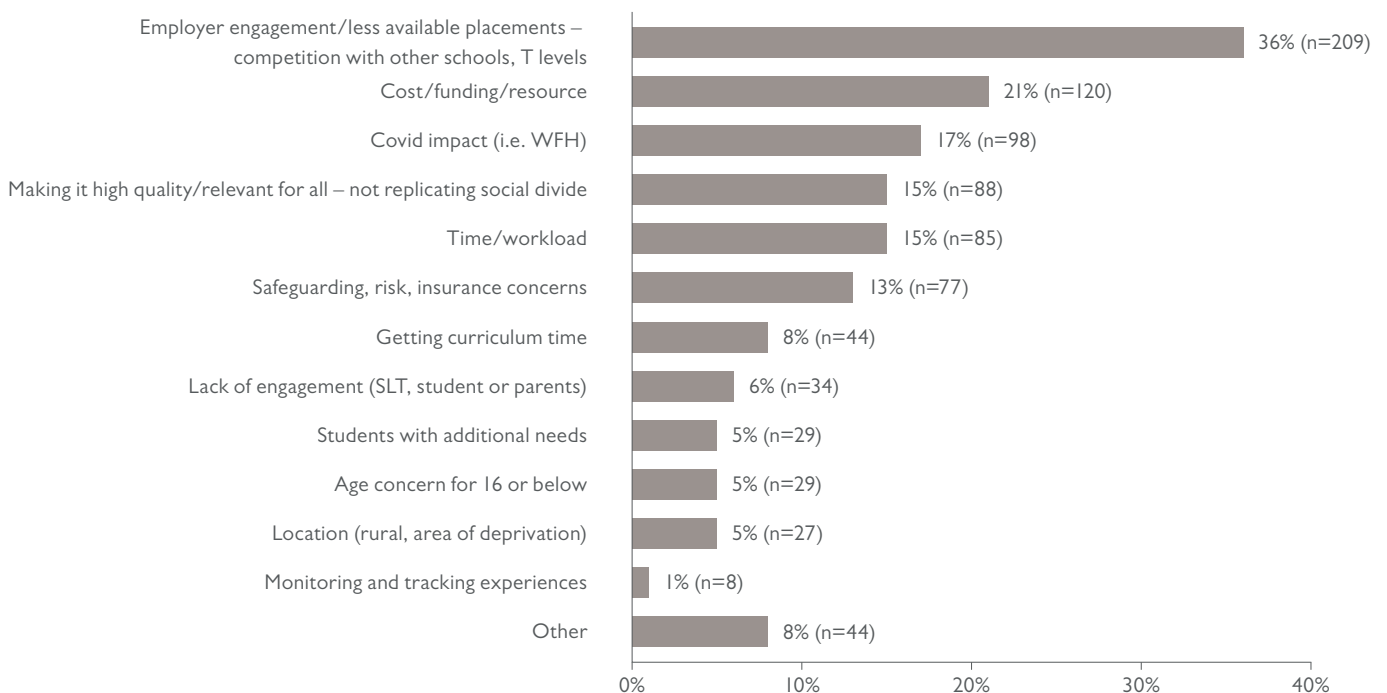
Considerations for the future

Of the 618 respondents who answered this question, 61% (374 respondents) said Benchmark 6 and its sub-benchmarks needed refining and 39% (244 respondents) said it did not.

In total, 377 respondents provided details of what clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals they would like to see in Benchmark 6 (see Figure 7.3). Thirty-six per cent (136 respondents) said they wanted definitions of the terms used and qualifying examples that include specifics such as the nature and duration of work experiences that can be counted. Sixteen per cent (60 respondents) wanted the value of remote, virtual and online experiences to be recognised in the benchmark, and for criteria to be introduced to ensure these experiences were high-quality and meaningful. However, 5 respondents were apprehensive about replacing in-person experiences with virtual ones. Fifteen per cent (55 respondents) wanted part-time work and volunteering experiences to be recognised in the benchmark.

It is evident from this feedback that there is a desire for a more structured, comprehensive and inclusive approach to defining and implementing Benchmark 6 – one that addresses the evolving nature of work experiences and accommodates a wider range of learning and developmental opportunities for students.

Figure 7.3: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 6? (number of responses=377)
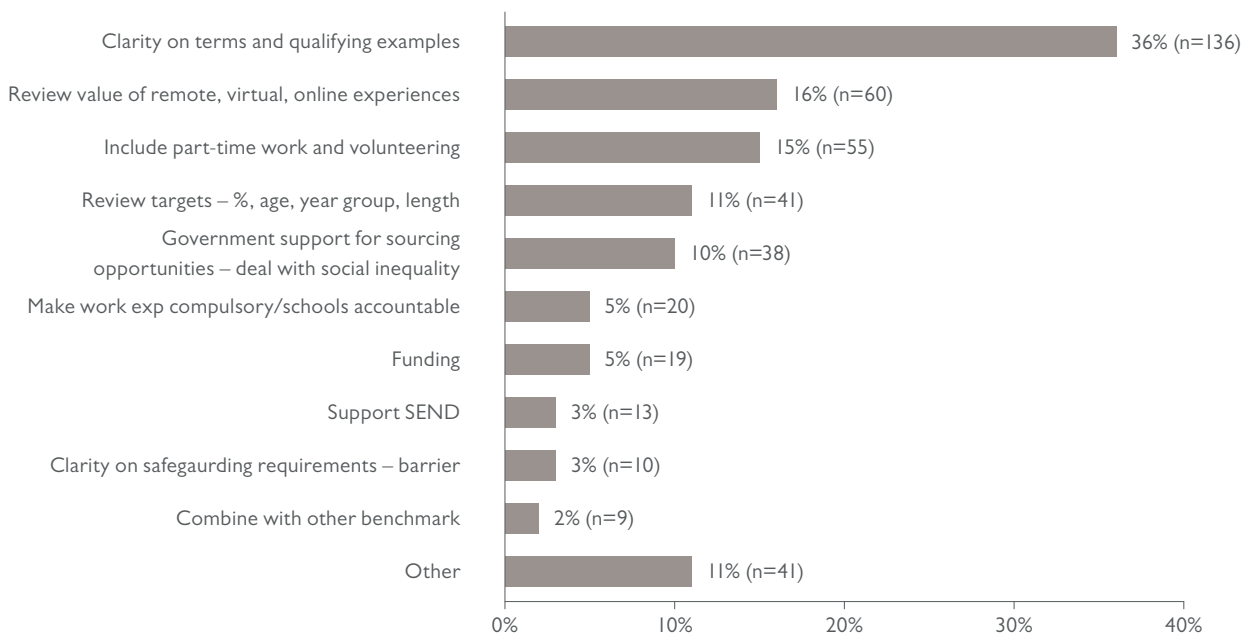
BENCHMARK 7: ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

All pupils/learners should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and technical and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.

For schools:

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter* with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and pupils.

- By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and pupils.

*A 'meaningful' encounter is one in which the student has an opportunity to explore what it's like to learn in that environment.

For colleges:

- By the end of their programme of study, every learner should have had a meaningful encounter* with a range of providers of learning and training that may form the next stage of their career. This should include, as appropriate, further education colleges, higher education and apprenticeship and training providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and learners.

*A 'meaningful' encounter is one in which the student has an opportunity to explore what it's like to learn in that environment.

SUMMARY

There is overwhelming support for Benchmark 7 as respondents agreed that it is an important part of the benchmarks. The majority said they valued its role in showing students the range of learning and education options available to them as their next step.

The implementation of Benchmark 7 is marked by challenges. The most significant challenge was access to providers, and this was especially true for the school settings. The respondents also said they had difficulty sourcing suitable or available providers, as well as experiencing providers being reluctant to engage. Other notable challenges included ensuring the activities were relevant and meaningful, that a range of experiences were available, especially in local areas and the costs associated with implementing the benchmark.

Approximately half of the participants said that Benchmark 7 needed refining. Respondents wanted to see greater inclusion of different schools and age groups of students, and wanted changes to, or improved clarity on, the requirements to visit a provider, and on the balance of different provisions.

SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES

All responses
Of the 211 responses from a school setting, 99% (209 respondents) said Benchmark 7 was an important aspect of the framework. Of the 172 respondents who provided qualitative answers about the most important aspects of Benchmark 7, 28% (49 respondents) said the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their available options. Nineteen per cent (32 respondents) said supporting young people to make informed decisions. Thirteen per cent (23 respondents) said raising young people's aspirations.

Of the 212 responses from a school setting, 61% (129 respondents) had experienced challenges implementing certain aspects of Benchmark 7. The main challenge in schools, cited by 38% (51 respondents), was provider access. Thirty-one per cent (42 respondents) said transport costs. Twenty-two per cent (30 respondents) said being able to include all students in the benchmark.

Forty-one per cent (82 respondents) said refinements needed to be made to this benchmark. A total of 78 respondents from schools provided qualitative answers about what refinements they would like made. Twenty-six per cent (20 respondents) wanted clarification of, or changes made to, the requirement to visit a provider. Eighteen per cent (14 respondents) said they wanted greater balance of, and clarification of, the different provision available. Nine of the 78 (12%) said they wanted the benchmark to be more inclusive of different schools and ages of pupil.

Careers leaders
Of the 158 careers leaders in school settings that answered, 99% (156 respondents) said Benchmark 7 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Qualitative responses about what they most valued in Benchmark 7 were received from 122 careers leaders. Twenty-five per cent (31 respondents) said the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their available options. Sixteen per cent (20 respondents) said supporting young people to make informed decisions. Fifteen per cent (18 respondents) said raising young peoples' aspirations.

Of the 159 careers leaders in school settings that answered, 64% (102 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 7 challenging to implement. All 102 gave further details and 41% (42 respondents) said getting access to providers was most challenging. Thirty per cent (31 respondents) said transport costs and 23% (23respondents) reported including 'all' students in the benchmark is challenging. The following quote illustrates the challenges careers leaders faced with provider access:

> **I feel it is difficult to get different providers to come to assemblies especially now that we have to have different encounters to meet the Provider Access Provision.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about provider access

Forty-three per cent (66 respondents) of the 153 careers leaders said Benchmark 7 needed to be refined. A total of 62 careers leaders in schools provided qualitative responses about what refinements they would like to see made. Twenty-nine per cent (18 respondents) said changing or clarifying the requirement to visit a provider. Ten respondents (16%) said greater balance of, and clarification of, the different provision available. Eight careers leaders (13%) said greater inclusion of different schools and age groups of students. Another eight careers leaders (13%) would appreciate more responsibility being taken by providers of provider access, as the careers leaders suggested that they do not always deliver high-quality encounters. This point refers to 'provider responsibility' and is represented by the response quoted below:

> **As with employers, providers need to get better equipped with staff to be able to engage and deliver these meaningful encounters, not simply provide a presentation which students find hard to process.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about provider access

Senior leadership team

Of the 47 senior leadership team (SLT) members in schools that answered, all said Benchmark 7 was an important aspect of the framework. Thirty-four SLT members gave qualitative answers and 10 (29%) said the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their available options was the most important aspect of Benchmark 7.

Of the 46 SLT members that gave an answer, 59% (27 respondents) said they had experienced challenges when implementing certain aspects of Benchmark 7. Of the 26 that gave details, 31% (8 respondents) said access to providers and another 31% (8 respondents) said it was challenging providing appropriate and meaningful encounters, as the following quotes show:

> **Getting training providers into schools is very difficult. There is no central system and staff have no idea about training providers.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about provider access

> **Hard to enforce/require visits and impractical to organise them for whole year groups.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about the difficulty of providing an appropriate and meaningful encounter

Of the 43 SLT members in schools that answered, 42% (18 respondents) said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 7. Eighteen provided qualitative answers, and four respondents (22%) said that they would appreciate more responsibility being taken by providers of provider access, as the careers leaders suggested that they do not always deliver high-quality encounters. This refinement refers to 'provider responsibility'.

Careers advisers

Ninety-nine per cent (80 respondents) of careers advisers in schools said Benchmark 7 was an important part of the benchmarks. Of the 70 careers advisers who provided qualitative responses about what they valued in Benchmark 7, 27% (19 respondents) said supporting young people to make informed decisions, 20% (14 respondents) said the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their available options, and 9 careers advisers (13%) said raising young people's aspirations.

Of the 81 careers advisers in schools that answered, 58% (47 respondents) said they had experienced challenges when implementing aspects of Benchmark 7. Thirty-eight per cent (18 respondents) said transport costs were challenging, 34% (16 respondents) said provider access and 30% (14 respondents) said time and staffing restrictions. The following quote illustrates the challenges of transport costs:

> **The Experience Days require large amounts of administration and budget to cover transport costs.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about transport costs

Of the 80 careers advisers in schools that answered, 38% (30 respondents) said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 7. Twenty-seven careers advisers in schools provided qualitative responses about what changes they wanted to see made to the benchmark. Seven of the 27 (26%) wanted changes to be made to, or clarification to be given, on the requirement to visit a provider. Six respondents (22%) wanted greater balance of, and clarification of, the different provision available. Three (11%) careers advisers in schools wanted greater inclusion of different schools and age groups of students. Another three careers leaders (11%) said that they would appreciate more responsibility being taken by providers of provider access, as the careers leaders suggested that they do not always deliver high-quality encounters. This refinement refers to 'provider responsibility'. Refinements suggested by a careers adviser are illustrated below:

> **Perhaps change the expectation that all students are able to visit educational providers but instead have the expectation that they can meet with staff and students in either their own school or the educational site.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about clarification to be given on the requirement to visit a provider

COLLEGE PERSPECTIVES

All responses

All 58 of the respondents from colleges said Benchmark 7 was an important part of the benchmarks. Forty-six respondents provided qualitative answers on the aspects they most valued. Thirty-nine per cent (18 respondents) said the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their' available options, seven of the 46 (15%) said supporting young people to make informed decisions and four respondents (9%) said raising young people's aspirations.

Of the 58 responses from a college setting, 47% (27 respondents) said they had experienced challenges when implementing certain aspects of Benchmark 7. Thirty respondents gave further details about what they had found most challenging. Of the 30, 47% (14 respondents) said competition between providers and the college having to remain impartial is challenging. Ten respondents (33%) said being able to provide an appropriate and meaningful encounter. Six respondents (20%) said being able to find a range of different experiences, especially in the local area.

Thirty-nine per cent (22 respondents) of the 57 said refinements needed to be made to this benchmark to support implementation. Of the 22, 45% (10 respondents) wanted the benchmark to be more inclusive of different schools and ages of pupil.

Careers leaders

Of the 28 careers leaders from colleges that gave an answer, ten (36%) said they most valued the benchmark because it provides young people with understanding of all their available options. Five respondents (18%) said supporting young people to make informed decisions. Both are included in the response quoted below:

> **For those in School up to year 11 it is really important to know about ALL the options open to them not just the ones at their school or in the partnership group of their school. To have an understanding of Higher Education and the range of options to train and study within it can help young people make the decisions needed at crucial times for them.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking providing young people with an understanding of all available options and about supporting them to make informed decisions

Of the 38 responses from careers leaders in colleges, 55% (21 respondents) said they had experienced challenges implementing aspects of Benchmark 7. Of those that gave details of what they had found most challenging, 55% (12 respondents) said competition between providers and the college having to remain impartial. Thirty-six per cent (8 respondents) said providing an appropriate and meaningful encounter and 23% (5 respondents) said provider access.

Forty-seven per cent (18 respondents) of the 38 careers leaders that gave an answer said they needed more support to implement this benchmark. All of them (18 respondents) gave further details about what refinements they would like made to the benchmark. Thirty-nine per cent (7 respondents) said they wanted the inclusion of different schools and age groups of students.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses

Of the 31 responses from special schools and alternative provision settings that answered, 84% (26 respondents) said Benchmark 7 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Twenty-six respondents provided qualitative answers on the aspects they most valued. Eight respondents (31%) said they value the way in which the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their' available options, two (8%) said supporting young people to make informed decisions and another two (8%) said raising young people's aspirations.

Sixty-three per cent (19 respondents) of the 30 respondents from special schools and alternative provision settings said they had experienced challenges when implementing aspects of Benchmark 7. Eighteen respondents provided qualitative responses about those challenges. Sixty-one per cent (11 respondents) said being able to provide appropriate and meaningful encounters was challenging. Three of the 18 respondents (17%) said provider access, two (11%) said time and staffing constraints, another two (11%) said being able to find a range of different experiences, especially in the local area and two (11%) again said managing individual visits.

Of the 30 responses received, 57% (17 respondents) in this setting said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 7. Of the 17 who gave further details, 59% (10 respondents) wanted the benchmark to be more inclusive of different schools and ages of pupil.

Careers leaders

Of the 22 responses from careers leaders in special school and alternative provision settings, 82% (18 respondents) said Benchmark 7 was an important part of the benchmarks. Seven of 18 respondents said the way in which the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their available options, is the aspect they value the most. Careers leaders in schools and in colleges also valued this aspect most highly.

Sixty-seven per cent (14 respondents) of the 21 careers leaders that answered, said they had experienced challenges implementing aspects of Benchmark 7. Of the 13 that gave further details, 69% (9 respondents) said providing appropriate and meaningful encounters was most challenging. The most challenging aspect identified by careers leaders from special school and alternative provision settings was different to those highlighted by careers leaders in schools (provider access) and colleges (competition between providers and the college having to remain impartial).

Of the 21 careers leaders in special school and alternative provision settings that answered, 52% (11 respondents) wanted more support to be provided, or for refinements to be made to this benchmark. Eight of the 11 that gave further details said they wanted greater inclusion of different schools and age groups of students.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators

Seventy-three per cent (45 respondents) of the 62 enterprise coordinators that answered most valued the fact that the benchmark provides young people with an understanding of all their' available options. Of the 63 that said they experienced challenges implementing Benchmark 7, 43% (27 respondents) said the predominant challenge had been finding a range of different experiences, especially in the local area. Forty-eight respondents gave details about refinements they would like made to the benchmark. Of these, 40% (19 respondents) wanted greater balance of, and clarification of, the different provision available.

Careers hub leads

Of the 27 careers hub leads that answered, 63% (17 respondents) most valued Benchmark 7 for providing young people with an understanding of all their available options. Of the 28 that gave details of what aspects they had found most challenging to implement, 43% (12 respondents) said being able to find a range of different experiences, especially in a local area. Of the 19 that suggested amendments they would like to be introduced, 6 respondents (32%) said linking the benchmark to other legislation and tools.

Enterprise advisers

Of the 14 enterprise advisers that answered, 64% (9 respondents) most valued Benchmark 7 for providing young people with an understanding of all their available options. Three of the careers advisers (25%) that gave details said time and staffing constraints were the most challenging aspects.

Employers

Of the 4 employers that responded, 2 respondents (50%) most valued Benchmark 7 for providing young people with an understanding of all their available options. Of those that gave details about the challenges they had experienced, 2 employers (67%) said competition between providers and the college having to remain impartial.

Independent training providers

The one independent training provider (ITP) that responded, wanted greater balance of, and clarification of, the different provision available.

ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Of the 552 respondents who answered this question, 98% (542 respondents) said Benchmark 7 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Of the 455 respondents that gave details about the aspect they most valued, 46% (209 respondents) said its role in supporting users to inform students about the full range of learning and work opportunities available to them post-16 and post-18. Nineteen per cent (86 respondents) said supporting young people to make informed decision and 11% (52 respondents) said raising young people's aspirations (see Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 7
(number of responses=455)
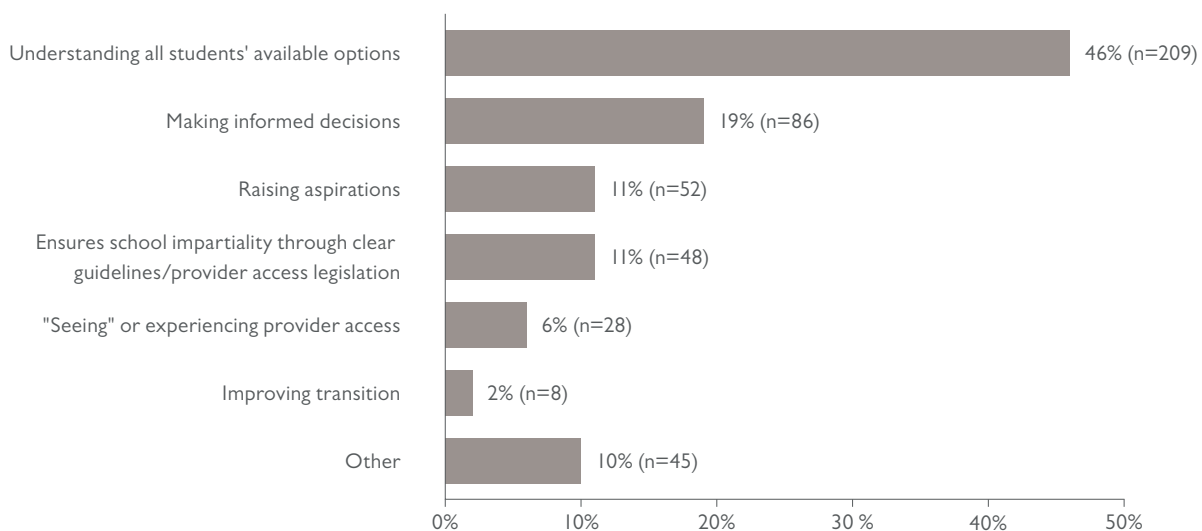
Challenges

Of the 548 respondents who answered this question, 65% (357 respondents) said they had found Benchmark 7 challenging to implement. Figure 8.2 shows the qualitative responses received from 367 respondents about the challenges they experienced. Twenty-four per cent (89 respondents) said they found provider access most challenging. Of this group of 89, 64% (57 respondents) specified the challenge of sourcing suitable and available providers and activities. Forty-three per cent (38 respondents) said they were most challenged by the provider being reluctant to engage or the cohort not being targeted by the benchmark. Thirty-four per cent (30 respondents) said their challenges with provider access were with logistics, time and costs.

The second most frequently cited challenge, highlighted by 22% (80 respondents) of the 367 who answered this question, was providing appropriate and meaningful encounters. Of these 80 respondents, 45% (36 respondents) specified a lack of relevance for certain students and cohorts, 38% (30 respondents) said the challenge was with the value and quality of encounters, and 28% (22 respondents) said the need for bespoke/specific requirements was challenging.

The third most frequently cited challenge, highlighted by 21% (77 respondents) was finding a range of different experiences, especially in a local area.

Figure 8.2: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 7 (number of responses=367)
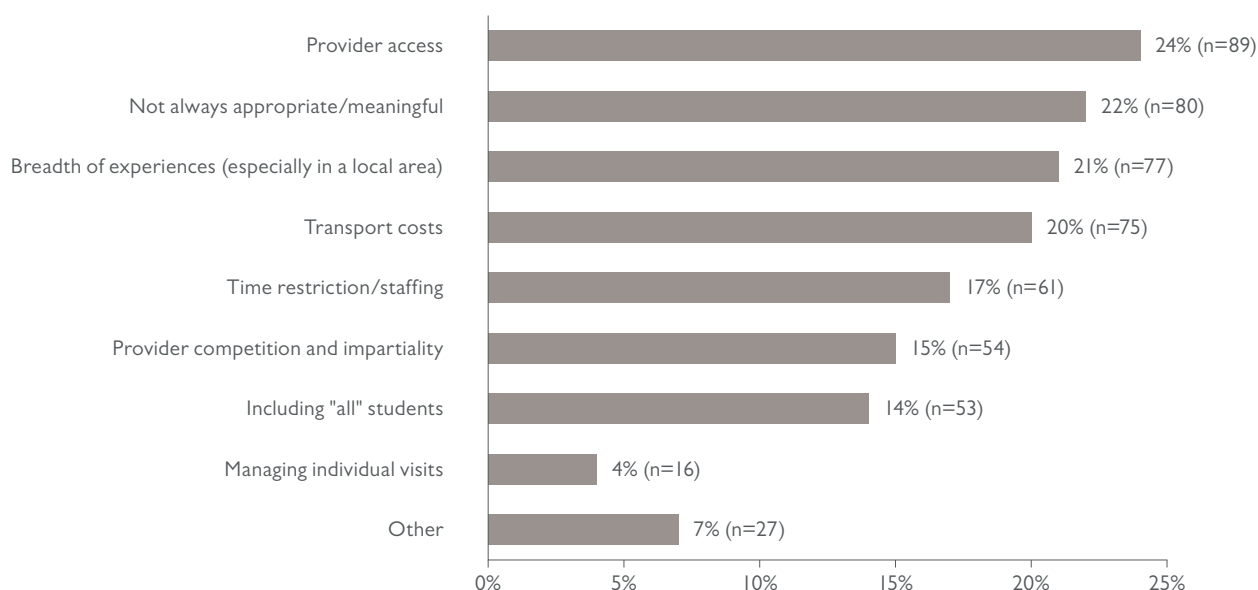
Considerations for the future

Of the 538 that gave an answer, 49% (261 respondents) said Benchmark 7 needed refining. Figure 8.3 shows the answers given by the 260 respondents who provided qualitative responses on the support they wanted. Twenty-seven per cent (70 respondents) wanted greater balance of, and clarification of, the different provision available. Of the 70 responses, 41% (29 respondents) specified they wanted more focus on, and support for, routes outside the traditional higher education (HE) route, for instance on apprenticeships (including degree apprenticeship), technical routes, ITPs and traineeships etc. Thirty-four per cent (24 respondents) said they wanted the terminology of "FE [further education] and HE" revised to include all the different types of providers and they wanted specific criteria for each to meet the benchmark. Twenty per cent (14 respondents) said that the encounters should reflect the needs of the individual and must take into account any specific challenges in the geographic location.

The second most frequently mentioned refinement, highlighted by 23% (61 respondents), was the greater inclusion of different schools and age groups of students. Of the 61 respondents, 38% (23 respondents) specified that special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) pupils and schools need clarification on how to deliver provider access legislation and how Benchmark 7 can be met. Twenty per cent (12 respondents) said the wording of the benchmark should include "as appropriate" to account for different school sizes, geographical locations and lack of providers etc.

The third most frequently mentioned refinement, highlighted by 14% (36 respondents) was for changes to be made to, or clarification to be given, on the requirement to 'visit' a provider.

Figure 8.3: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 7? (number of responses=260)
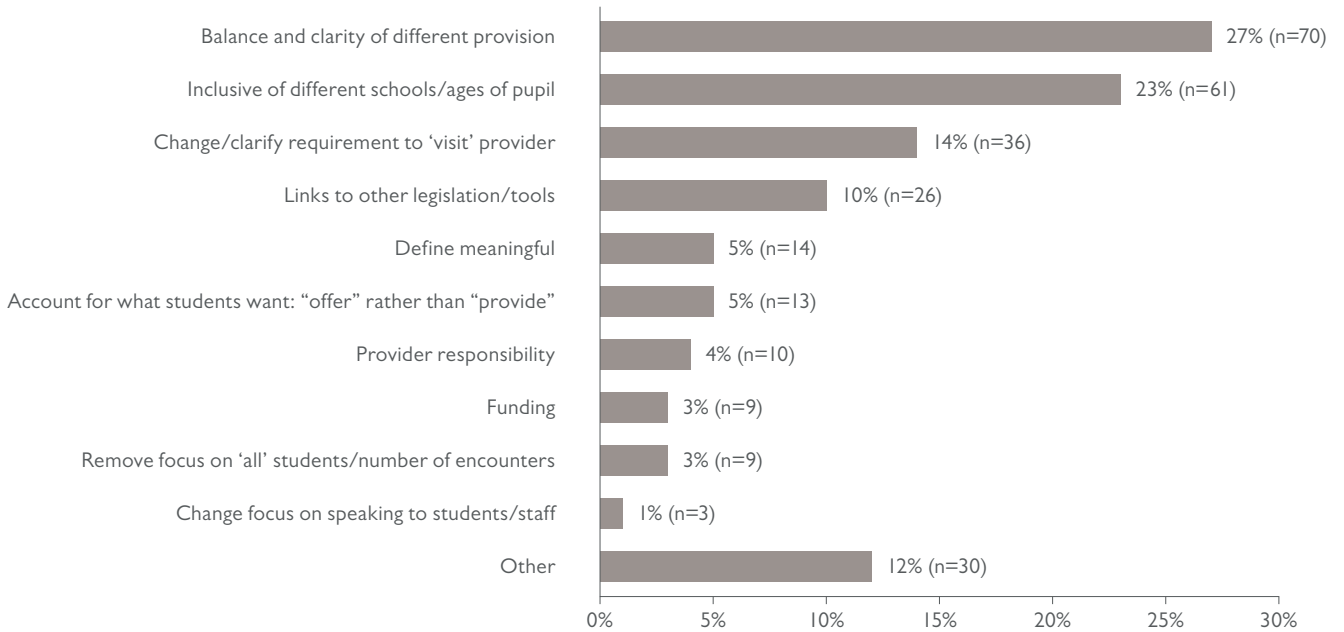
BENCHMARK 8: PERSONAL GUIDANCE

For schools:

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 but should be timed to meet their individual needs.

- Every pupil should have at least one such interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18.

For colleges:

Every learner should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a careers adviser, who could be internal (a member of college staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level.* These should be available for all learners whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all learners but should be timed to meet individual needs.

- Every learner should have at least one such interview by the end of their study programme.

*The college should ensure that access to a level 6 adviser is available when needed.

SUMMARY

The responses from the survey show that Benchmark 8 is a valued aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Aspects the respondents value include the tailored guidance each young person receives from a qualified careers professional, which helps them make informed decisions about their future careers. Although Benchmark 8 has proved successful, it is clear respondents had experienced challenges when implementing it. The high-capacity levels of staff needed to provide one-to-one support in settings where time was limited was a significant challenge, as well as the lack of sufficient funding, however this is arguably out of the Gatsby Benchmark's control. Careers professionals are clearly valued, although not having enough careers professionals made it difficult to achieve Benchmark 8. Despite these challenges, respondents said Benchmark 8 did not need significant changes. Suggestions of refinements were made, including revising the nature of the one-to-one interviews with a careers adviser, whether these interviews should be mandatory and establishing what qualifications a careers professional needs to be appropriately qualified to provide careers guidance to young people.

SCHOOL PERSPECTIVES

All responses

All 255 respondents from school settings said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. One hundred and eighty-nine explained in further detail the specific aspects they valued. Thirty per cent (57 respondents) said that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Twenty-five per cent (47 respondents) said the support provided to students to make key decisions about their careers. Twenty-four per cent (46 respondents) said the professional guidance provided by qualified advisers.

Of the 224 that gave an answer, 59% (133 respondents) had found aspects of implementing Benchmark 8 challenging. One hundred and thirty-three provided further detail about what they found most challenging. Forty-eight per cent (64 respondents) said that school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Thirty-seven per cent (49 respondents) said the lack of adequate funding and 26% (34 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging.

Of the 211 respondents in schools that answered this question, 41% (86 respondents) said Benchmark 8 needed to be refined and 59% (125 respondents) said it did not. Of the 86 that provided qualitative responses, 33% (28 respondents) suggested the length, number and style of interviews should be revised. Twenty-six per cent (22 respondents) wanted resources to be provided that could be used to help them implement Benchmark 8. Twenty-four per cent (21 respondents) wanted the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself being mandatory for students to attend.

Careers leaders

All 168 careers leaders in school settings that gave an answer said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Qualitative responses about what they most valued were received from 137 careers leaders. Thirty-one per cent (42 respondents) valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Twenty-three per cent (32 respondents) said the support provided to students to make key decisions about their careers. Twenty-three per cent (32 respondents) also said the professional guidance provided by qualified advisers was valuable.

Of the 168 careers leaders that gave an answer, 62% (104 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Of the 104 that gave further details, 50% (52 respondents) said school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Forty-three per cent (45 respondents) said a lack of funding made it challenging to implement effectively. Twenty-seven per cent (28 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing this benchmark challenging. The quotes below illustrate the challenges careers leaders experienced:

> **With a large cohort of pupils, funding students for personal guidance interviews is challenging. Budgets are reducing year on year. The recommended 45 mins per interview means that only 6 or 7 students can be seen in a day, taking account of writing action plans etc. Some students also need to be seen more than once.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students and the lack of funding

> **Lack of qualified people. Lots of time effort and energy is being put into training careers leaders, but we have a shortage of careers advisers, who can give that high-quality guidance that young people need.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about the lack of qualified advisers

Of 161 that gave an answer, only 42% (67 respondents) said refinements needed to be made to Benchmark 8, and 57% (94 respondents) said they did not. All 67 of these careers leaders provided suggestions for the changes they would like introduced. Thirty-one per cent (21 respondents) suggested revising the length, number and style of interviews. Thirty per cent (20 respondents) want resources to support implementation to be provided or specified. Twenty-five per cent (17 respondents) said the qualifications professionals need to provide one-to-one support should be clearly stated. The following quotes provide examples of the refinements suggested:

> **I would include the minimum interview time and formal action plan created and saved somewhere to validate this vital benchmark. To me the wording seems less robust than the others.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about revising the length, number and style of interviews

> **Specify the 'appropriately qualified' path eg, minimum level 6 careers advice qualification.**
> Careers leader in a school speaking about stating the qualifications professionals need

Senior leadership teams

All 48 of those that responded who were part of a school's senior leadership team (SLT) said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the Gatsby framework. Thirty-four provided further details about what they most valued. Ten of the 34 (29%) said they valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Seven SLT members (21%) said professional guidance provided by qualified advisers was what they valued. Six (18%) said that impartial and independent guidance was provided.

Of the 48 SLT members who answered this question, 50% (24 respondents) said they had found elements of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. All 24 gave qualitative answers about what they had found most challenging. Fifty per cent (12 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services was the main reason they found this benchmark difficult to achieve. Ten respondents (42%) said the lack of funding was a significant reason, and 7 SLT members (31%) said that time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Examples of challenges experienced are illustrated in the quotes below:

> **Shortage of L6+ trained careers guidance professionals [and] Limited budget to buy in guidance.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about the lack of qualified advisers

> **The biggest challenge is time and conflict with curriculum time, especially in Year 11. Some subject areas are more supportive than others when allowing students out of class for a 30 minute careers interview.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about time restrictions and quantity of students

Of the 42 SLT members that gave an answer, only 8 respondents (19%) said elements of the benchmark needed to be refined, and 81% (34 respondents) said they did not. Of the 8 that gave qualitative responses, 5 suggested that clarifying the required length, number and style of interviews needed to achieve this benchmark would help, as shown in the following quote:

> **The sub-goal should be increased – students should have a careers meeting every year, or twice a year, from the start of Year 7.**
> SLT member in a school speaking about clarifying the required length, number and style of interviews

Careers advisers

All 90 careers advisers from school settings who gave an answer said Benchmark 8 was an important element of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Eighty-one careers advisers gave more details about what they most valued. Thirty-seven per cent (30 respondents) said they most valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Twenty-eight per cent (23 respondents) said they valued the focus on supporting students to make key decisions about the next steps in their career when they leave school. Twenty-seven per cent (22 respondents) said the professional guidance provided by qualified advisers was valuable.

Of the 89 that answered, 62% (55 respondents) found elements of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Of the 54 that gave further details, 59% said time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Twenty-four per cent (13 respondents) said getting students to engage. Nine careers advisers (17%) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging. The following quotes illustrate some examples of the challenges careers advisers faced:

> **The sheer number of students in larger schools is very challenging and schools do not always have the budget to secure more guidance, I know it is often a challenge. I have a large school and am [an] experienced adviser, and I struggle to get them all seen. Those who need or want further support don't always get it, and this is a real shame, due to the sheer volume of work.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about the time restrictions and the quantity of students

> **Not all students are willing to come, despite all my effort. I cannot ever achieve 100% in this benchmark.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about getting students to engage

Of the 86 respondents that answered, 50% (43 respondents) said Benchmark 8 needed refining and 50% (43 respondents) said it did not. Forty-five respondents provided suggestions about what changes they would like introduced to the benchmark. Thirty-seven per cent (16 respondents) wanted the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself being mandatory for students to attend. Thirty per cent (13 respondents) suggested clarifying the required length, number and style of interviews that students have with the careers adviser to achieve this benchmark. Ten careers advisers (23%) wanted resources to support implementation to be provided or specified. Examples of suggestions made are illustrated in the following quotes:

> **I think it should be emphasised more, that although all students are encouraged to see an adviser, some may not need to or may not want to. While I understand we advisers need to have a priority system – potential NEET and vulnerable students do need to be seen even if they are reluctant to have IAG – however, others need the "opportunity" to have guidance but if they refuse it, this should be recognised fully, as the engagement and readiness of the student is [an] important part of guidance. It shouldn't be forced on them against their will.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about making the offer of a guidance interview mandatory, not the interview itself

> **Schools need a triage plan – formats for delivery in the absence [of], or with a limited amount of funding, eg, a plan for triaging and prioritising, and clearer guidance on whether 1-1 40 min[ute] sessions are mandatory for every KS4. There is still confusion over this and differing interpretations.**
> Careers adviser in a school speaking about length, number and style of interviews and making the offer of a guidance interview mandatory, not the interview itself

COLLEGE PERSPECTIVES

All responses
Of the 66 that answered, 98% (65 respondents) from college settings said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Fifty-six respondents provided further details about the aspects they particularly valued. Forty-three per cent (24 respondents) most valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Thirty-six per cent (20 respondents) said having professional guidance provided by qualified advisers and ten of the 56 respondents (18%) said they valued how it supported students to make key decisions about the next steps in their careers.

Of the 67 that gave an answer, 76% (51 respondents) had found elements of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Fifty gave qualitative responses about what they had found most challenging. Seventy-four per cent (37 respondents) said the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Thirty-five per cent (18 respondents) said getting students to engage, and 30% (15 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging.

Of the 65 respondents in colleges that answered this question, 60% (39 respondents) said Benchmark 8 needed to be refined and 40% (26 respondents) said it did not. Interestingly, respondents from colleges were the only cohort that had more respondents saying Benchmark 8 needed to be revised than those saying it did not. All 39 gave suggestions of changes they would like made. Forty-three per cent (17 respondents) want the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself being mandatory for students to attend. Ten respondents (25%) want clarification of the length, number and style of interviews needed to achieve this benchmark. Six of the 39 (15%) said they want clarification of the qualifications professionals need to provide careers guidance.

Careers leaders

Of the 43 careers leaders from colleges that answered, 98% (42 respondents) said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Thirty-six gave details of the aspects they most valued. Forty-two per cent (15 respondents) said they valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Thirty-nine per cent (14 respondents) said providing young people with professional guidance by qualified advisers was a valuable element of the benchmark. Five of the 36 (14%) said providing impartial and independent guidance was important.

Of the 44 careers leaders that answered, 86% (38 respondents) said they had found some aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. 38 gave qualitative answers detailing what they had found most challenging. Seventy-four per cent (28 respondents) said time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made it difficult to implement the benchmark. Thirty-seven per cent (14 respondents) said getting students to engage was challenging. Eleven careers leaders (29%) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging. Examples of these challenges are presented in the following quotes:

> **We have 4,700+ students and cannot have a 1:1 with all of them. Students have a lot of careers conversations with tutors and teachers, but these aren't trained advisers. We interpret this as they all have the opportunity to have one.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about the time restrictions and the quantity of students

> **Opportunities is absolutely fine, but the "Every learner should have at least one" is VERY challenging and should be questioned firstly on behalf of the learner, as they may not have need for one. For example, if a student is wanting to progress from a Level 3 programme to uni[versity], they may not see the need for a careers 1:1, and they may have had UCAS sessions, and all the other GBs that link with widening horizons. "Forcing" an interview on a person, is not the way forward, they have to know how to access and want one, for it to be meaningful. Lack of real careers funding is a HUGE challenge, as college careers teams do an amazing job, for large student numbers, with very small teams.**
> (Careers leader in a college speaking about time restrictions and the quantity of students, the lack of funding and student engagement)

Of the 42 careers leaders that gave an answer, 64% (27 respondents) said Benchmark 8 needed to be refined, and 36% (15 respondents) said it did not. Twenty-seven careers leaders provided suggestions on the changes they would like made to this benchmark. Twelve respondents want the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself being mandatory for students to attend. Seven respondents want the criteria for the length, number and style of interviews to be clarified. Three careers leaders said the qualifications professionals need to provide careers guidance should be clearly stated. The following quotes illustrate the refinements that were suggested:

> **Change the language as it doesn't reflect the capacity issues colleges are facing. It is not possible to offer every learner a guidance interview. My college currently has 1 careers adviser who works term time only. If she enforced a 1 hour careers appointment for each learner and did nothing else all year she would only be able to see a maximum of 975 learners in an academic year.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about the length, number and style of interviews

> **Remove the word "should" have at least one interview and rephrase to settings should evidence their offer to students to receive careers advice is available to all students – settings should demonstrate how they review use of the service to support students career pathways.**
> Careers leader in a college speaking about the wanting the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

All responses
Of the 36 responses from special schools and alternative provision settings, 94% (34 respondents) said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Thirty-one respondents provided more information on what they most valued about this benchmark. Eight of the 31 (26%) most valued that Benchmark 8 provides support to students to make key decisions. Six respondents (19%) said that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Another 6 respondents (19%) said they valued the professional guidance provided by qualified advisers.

Of the 36 who responded, 69% (25 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. All 25 respondents of these explained the reasons why. Fifty-two per cent (13 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging. Seven of the 25 (28%) said the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students in special schools and alternative provision settings needing one-to-one support made it challenging to achieve the benchmark. Four respondents (16%) said a lack of funding made Benchmark 8 difficult to implement.

Interestingly, of the 35 who gave an answer, only 40% (14 respondents) said Benchmark 8 needed to be refined, whereas 60% (21 respondents) disagreed. Fourteen respondents made suggestions about potential refinements that could be made. Six of the 14 (43%) said the qualifications professionals need to provide careers guidance should be clearly stated. Four respondents (29%) would like criteria for the length, number and style of interviews.

Careers leaders

Ninety-three per cent (27 respondents) of the 29 careers leaders in special schools and alternative provision settings who answered, said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the benchmarks framework. Twenty-five respondents provided further commentary on the specific aspects they valued. Eight careers leaders (32%) said they valued the support provided to students to make key decisions about the next steps in their careers. Five of the 25 (20%) said they valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice, and another five (20%) said the professional guidance provided by qualified advisers.

Of the 29 that answered, 76% (22 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. All 22 respondents provided further detail about the elements that they had found most challenging. Fifty-five per cent (12 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging. Six careers leaders (27%) said the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Four of the 22 (18%) said lack of funding was a challenge. Examples of challenges careers leaders had experienced are presented in the quotes below:

> **Finding a personal adviser for SEN – I am a teacher and have been actively involved in careers [and] also understand the complex needs of our learners. However, we cannot achieve this as I am not 'qualified' as a careers leader.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services

> **Each pupil has individual needs. To be able to facilitate 1:1 guidance interviews takes time, planning and class support is taken from rest of the class, leaving the teacher short staffed.**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students

Despite the challenges, of the 28 careers leaders that answered, only 46% (13 respondents) said Benchmark 8 should be refined, in comparison to 54% (15 respondents) who said it should not. Thirteen careers leaders made suggestions about what those refinements should be. Six of the 13 (46%) said the qualifications professionals need to provide careers guidance should be clearly stated. Four said (31%) said they would like criteria for the length, number and style of interviews. The following quotes illustrate some examples of future considerations suggested by the respondents:

> **Clarifications regarding qualifications and the 'independent and impartial' nature of the careers adviser. Training our own adviser or utilising school staff who already have relationships with students should be allowed and encouraged. We are professionals and should be trusted to be impartial and acting in the best interests of the student. Impartial is also a tricky concept for students with SEND. We may have students who have their heart set on the local sixth form college, however, we know, because of their complexity of need, that a different position is in their best interests. Where do we stand with this?**
> Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about the qualifications professionals need

Flexibility in the way guidance is offered?
(Careers leader in a special school or alternative provision setting speaking about the criteria for the length, number and style of interviews)

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Enterprise coordinators

Of the 81 enterprise coordinators that answered, 80 said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Sixty-seven provided further details about the elements they most valued. Forty-six per cent (31 respondents) said they valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Twenty-eight per cent (19 respondents) said having professional guidance provided by qualified advisers. Twenty-seven per cent (18 respondents) said they valued how the benchmark supported students to make key decisions.

Of the 81 enterprise coordinators that answered, 84% (68 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Sixty-six explained the reasons why. Sixty-one per cent (40 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services was the biggest challenge. Fifty-six per cent (37 respondents) cited the lack of funding to implement the benchmark effectively, and 33% (22 respondents) said the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve.

Eighty enterprise coordinators answered the question about whether Benchmark 8 or any of its sub-benchmarks needed to be refined: 56% (45 respondents) said it did and 44% (35 respondents) said it did not. Forty-five respondents made suggestions about what refinements they would like to see. Thirty-six per cent (16 respondents) want the qualifications that professionals need to provide careers guidance to be clearly stated in the benchmark. Twenty-nine per cent (13 respondents) want the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself being mandatory for students to attend. Twenty-four per cent (11 respondents) want criteria for the length, number and style of interviews.

Careers hub leads

All 33 careers hub leads that answered said Benchmark 8 was an important element of the benchmarks. Twenty-two respondents shared the elements they valued most. Fifty-five per cent (12 respondents) said that students receiving one-to-one and personalised advice was what they valued. Fifty-per cent (11 respondents) said they valued how the benchmark supported students to make key decisions. Seven careers hub leads (32%) cited the importance of students receiving professional guidance from qualified advisers.

Of the 32 that answered, 78% (25 respondents) said they had found aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Twenty-five gave qualitative answers about what they found most challenging. Seventy-two per cent (18 respondents) said the lack of funding made it difficult to achieve Benchmark 8. Sixty-eight per cent (17 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services was the biggest challenge. Eight careers hub leads (32%) said the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve.

Of the 31 that gave an answer, 45% (14 respondents) said Benchmark 8 needed to be refined, whereas 55% (17 respondents) said it did not. 14 gave suggestions for the refinements they would like introduced. Seven careers hub leads (want clarification on the length, number and style of interviews required to achieve this benchmark. Five respondents want the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself being mandatory for students to attend. Four respondents said the qualifications professionals need to provide careers guidance to young people should be clearly stated.

Enterprise advisers
All enterprise advisers (17 respondents) said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Fourteen respondents provided further details about what they most valued. Five of the 14 (36%) said they valued that this benchmark supported students to make key decisions about their careers.

Of the 17 respondents that gave an answer, 76% (13 respondents) had found elements of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Thirteen enterprise advisers gave qualitative responses about what they had found most challenging. Seven respondents said the school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Five respondents said the lack of funding made implementing the benchmark challenging.

Of the 17 enterprise advisers that answered, 9 (53%) said Benchmark 8 or its sub-benchmarks needed to be refined, while eight (47%) said it did not. Nine respondents made suggestions about the refinements they would like made to the benchmark. Three of the 9 (33%) suggested that the criteria for the length, number and style of interviews should be clarified.

Employers
All employers that gave an answer (7 respondents) said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the benchmarks. Seven respondents out of the 8 (88%) that had answered, found aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Seven respondents provided further commentary about the challenges. Three (43%) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging. Five of the 6 employers that answered (83%) said Benchmark 8 needed to be refined, whereas 1 employer said it did not.

Independent training providers
One independent training provider (ITP) responded to the survey. They said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the benchmarks framework. They also found aspects of Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. They said the challenges to implementing the benchmark were getting students to engage and a lack of school knowledge, value and support.

ALL RESPONDENTS

Important aspects

Of the 615 that responded, 99% (610 respondents) said Benchmark 8 was an important aspect of the Gatsby Benchmarks. One hundred and fifty-four respondents provided further commentary about the aspects they most valued (see Figure 9.1). Thirty-eight per cent (193 respondents) valued that students received one-to-one and personalised advice. Twenty-seven per cent (141 respondents) valued that young people were provided with professional guidance by qualified advisers. Twenty-six per cent (135 respondents) cited the impact the benchmark has had by supporting students to make key decisions about the next steps in their careers.

Figure 9.1: Please tell us what you value about Benchmark 8
(number of responses=154)
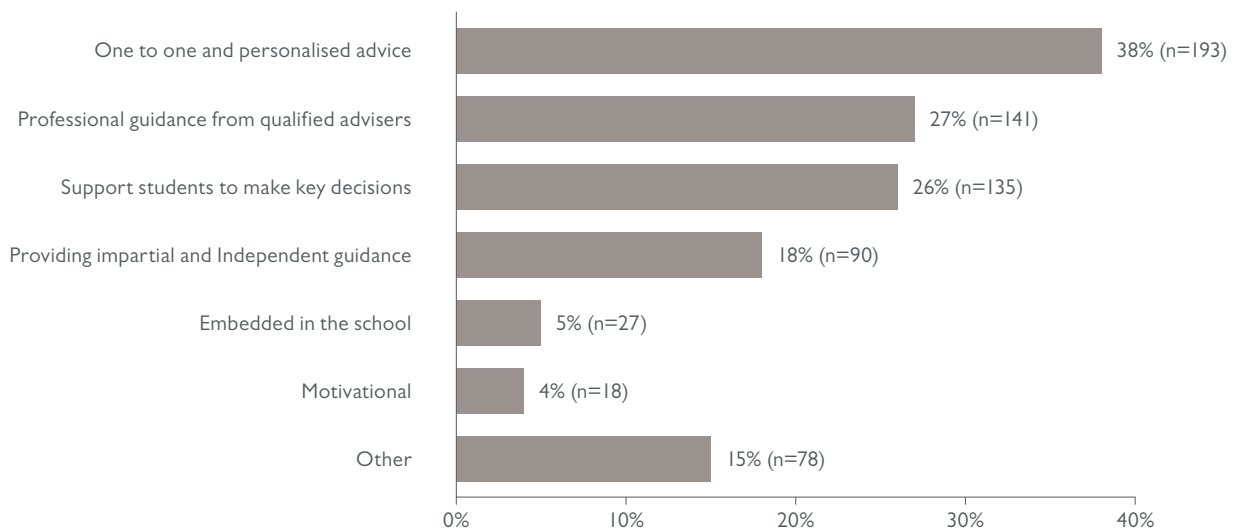
Challenges

Of the 613 respondents who answered this question, 73% (448 respondents) said they had found Benchmark 8 challenging to implement. Figure 9.2 shows the qualitative responses received from 457 respondents about what aspects they had found challenging. Forty-five per cent (204 respondents) said that school's time restrictions and the quantity of students needing one-to-one support made the benchmark difficult to achieve. Of this group 56% (114 respondents) said this was because of staffing, coordination and admin issues. Thirty-one per cent (64 respondents) attributed this challenge to finding it difficult to provide high-quality and effective personal guidance interviews and having the flexibility in their schedules to provide interviews to all students. Another 16% (32 respondents) said it was caused by the length of one-to-one interview appointments and the time that was taken out of lessons for the interviews.

Of the 457 who gave qualitative responses, 39% (180 respondents) said the lack of qualified advisers and quality-assured services made implementing Benchmark 8 challenging. Of this group, 54% (98 respondents) said this was because of the lack of access to qualified and quality advisers with availability, who were in the right locality and who had the right specialisms. Forty-nine per cent (88 respondents) said the biggest challenges were with the recruitment, training and continuing professional development (CPD) of careers staff and 21% (37 respondents) said having insufficiently qualified, or unqualified, existing staff.

Thirty-nine per cent (178 respondents) of the 457 who had answered said that the lack of funding made it difficult to deliver this benchmark effectively.

Figure 9.2: Please tell us the elements that are most challenging in Benchmark 8
(number of responses=457)
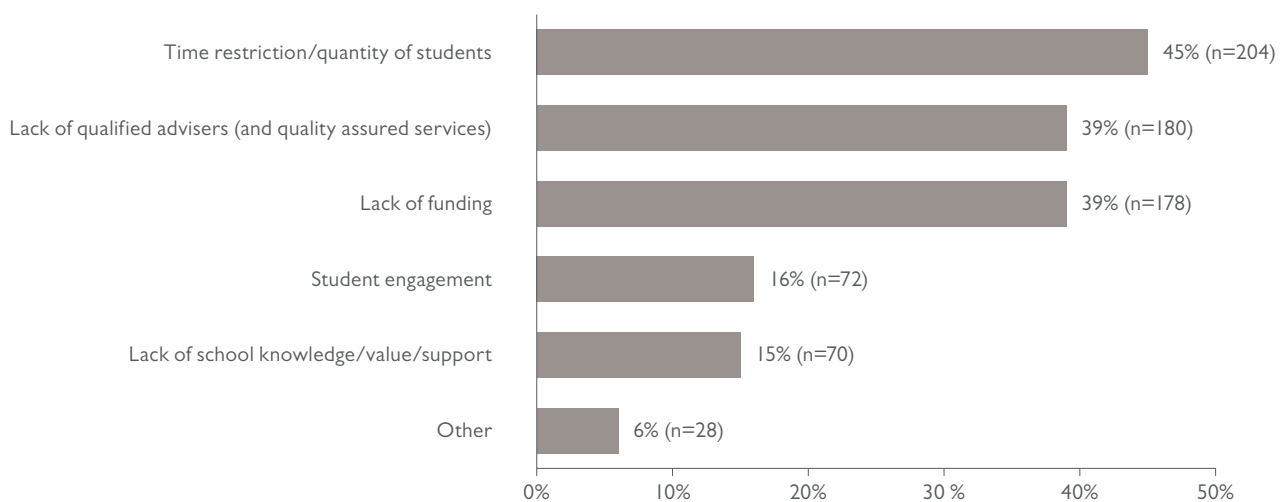
Considerations for the future

Of the 588 respondents who answered this question, 53% (311 respondents) said Benchmark 8 or its sub-benchmarks should be refined. Qualitative responses of what changes they would like to see, were provided by 323 respondents (see Figure 9.3). Clarifying the length, number and style of interviews needed to achieve this benchmark was suggested by 34% (110 respondents). This would enable the differences in students' needs at different stages to be accounted for, for example, some will need more than one interview and students' needs should be examined and grouped accordingly (35%). Thirty-three per cent (36 respondents) asked for a minimum length of time the interviews have to be with students. Thirty-two per cent (35 respondents) highlighted the need for the benchmark to allow more flexibility and creativity in the way personal guidance is delivered, suggesting workshops, small group interviews and drop-ins could all be good uses of careers advisers' time. Nineteen per cent (21 respondents) suggested a clarification of what "appropriately trained" means. Fifteen per cent (16 respondents) suggested the need for more than one interview should be specified in the benchmark.

The second most frequently mentioned refinement, highlighted by 30% (96 respondents) was for the qualifications needed by professionals to provide careers guidance to be clearly stated. Of this group of 96, 43% (41 respondents) suggested clarifying what "appropriate level" means and what part of the delivery it applies to. Thirty per cent (29 respondents) suggested the qualification needs to be minimum Level 6 practitioner level. However, 13% (12 respondents) suggested specifying that the qualification does not need to be Level 6, and that a lower qualification would be acceptable – so this is a contested point among respondents.

The third most frequently mentioned refinement, highlighted by 21% (67 respondents) was for the opportunity for students to have an interview with a careers adviser to be mandatory, instead of the interview itself being mandatory for students to attend. Of this group of 67, 61% (41 respondents) suggested that students being offered an interview but them not having to take it up to achieve the benchmark, allows for different ways for guidance to be delivered and acknowledges the resource challenge. Eighteen per cent (12 respondents) asked, "are guidance sessions mandatory to attend or mandatory to offer the opportunity?" These respondents suggested a clarification of the requirements for the interviews students have with careers advisers.

Figure 9.3: What clarifications, rephrasing, additions or removals would you suggest in Benchmark 8? (number of responses=323)
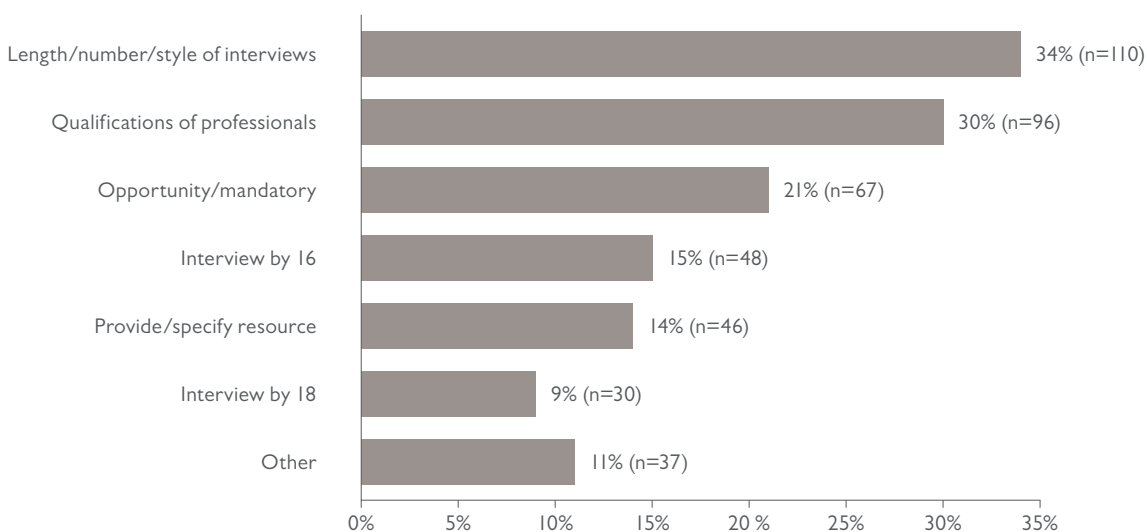
INSIGHTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

As part of the survey, we used a targeted approach by incorporating supplementary questions for specific stakeholder groups, namely employers, senior leadership teams (SLTs) and training providers. This approach allowed us to gather insights into the unique perspectives and requirements of these key stakeholders.

The SLT's feedback on the Gatsby Benchmarks indicated a strong recognition of their value. Of the 163 respondents from SLT, 74% (121 respondents) said the benchmarks helped the effective targeting of resources. Eighty-nine per cent (145 respondents) acknowledged their role in supporting whole-school improvement, while 91% (148 respondents) said they helped measure progress on careers. The survey results showed an overwhelming 95% (155 respondents) of SLT members considered access to a careers adviser important, and an even higher percentage, 99% (161 respondents), recognised the importance of the careers leader role. These results clearly demonstrate the SLT's endorsement and appreciation of the Gatsby Benchmarks within their organisation.

The responses of the 101 employers, employees and enterprise advisers who completed the survey showcased their active engagement with the careers provision in schools, colleges and other educational providers. A significant 87% (88 respondents) of employers reported taking part in in-person careers events and activities, highlighting their commitment to connecting with students directly. Eighty-four per cent (85 respondents) emphasised the importance of meeting with the careers leader, indicating a proactive approach in collaborating with educational institutions. Sixty-four per cent of employers (65 respondents) indicated they were dedicated to providing students with valuable workplace experiences by offering opportunities for them to visit and engage in real-world work environments. The growing trend of virtual engagement was evident, with 60% (61 respondents) of employers having participated in online careers events and activities. Fifty per cent of employers (51 respondents) demonstrated their support for work-based learning by offering placements and other opportunities, including T levels and apprenticeships.

Fifty-five per cent of 97 employers, employees and enterprise advisers who responded (53 respondents) expressed their interest in meeting senior leaders, including headteachers, principals or governors at schools and colleges. A similar number (54%, 52 respondents) said they wanted to contribute to the subject curriculum. Forty-eight per cent (47 respondents) said they wanted to provide workplace experiences for students. Forty-four per cent (43 respondents) were also drawn towards in-person career events and activities, with an approximately equal number (41%) interested in offering placements and other work-based learning opportunities, or hosting placements for teachers or lecturers.

Employers, employees and enterprise advisers were also asked about making collaboration with educational providers such as schools, colleges and training institutions more effective. Seventy-one per cent (71 respondents) of 100 respondents who answered this question suggested that providing guidance for educators on how to collaborate with employers would be effective. Sixty-two per cent (62 respondents) said better alignment between curriculum and local skills or economic plans could facilitate more effective collaboration. Sixty-one per cent (61 respondents) suggested providing guidance for employers on how to work with educators. Sixty-one per cent (61 respondents) also suggested increasing engagement with school or college senior leaders. Fifty per cent (50 respondents) said sharing best practices between businesses would support effective collaboration. Forty-eight per cent (48 respondents) wanted to have predesigned activities they could participate in.

Of the 91 employers, employees and enterprise advisers who responded, 54% (49 respondents) said clear guidance on the benchmarks and the objectives was needed for their successful implementation. Twenty-eight per cent (25 respondents) said that employer engagement was crucial for successful implementation. Seven employers (8%) want measurable outcomes.

Of the 77 respondents who answered questions about the nature of work and labour market needs that are essential for effective career provision in education, 38% (29 respondents) highlighted the significance of skills awareness, including soft skills and digital skills. Twenty-three per cent (18 respondents) pointed to the relevance of understanding technological trends, and 21% (16 respondents) emphasised the need to consider evolving work patterns, such as hybrid working.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

The data shows that 469 respondents found specific resources and forms of support particularly helpful for implementing the benchmarks. The Careers & Enterprise Company was the most valued resource, with 55% (260 respondents) recognising its significance. Other beneficial resources included the sharing of best practice between schools and colleges, cited by 51% (237 respondents). Careers hubs (50%, 236 respondents) and careers advisers (50%, 235 respondents) were also reported as helpful resources. The emphasis on sharing best practice shows the importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange within the education community.

Training for careers leaders, cited by 50% (234 respondents) and engagement from headteachers and senior leadership teams (SLTs) by 49% (231 respondents) were also highlighted as important factors. The Compass/Compass+ online tool (49%, 229 respondents) and support from wider school staff (43%, 203 respondents) also played important roles in supporting implementation.

Figure 10.1: Resources and forms of support which are helpful when implementing the benchmarks (number of responses=469)

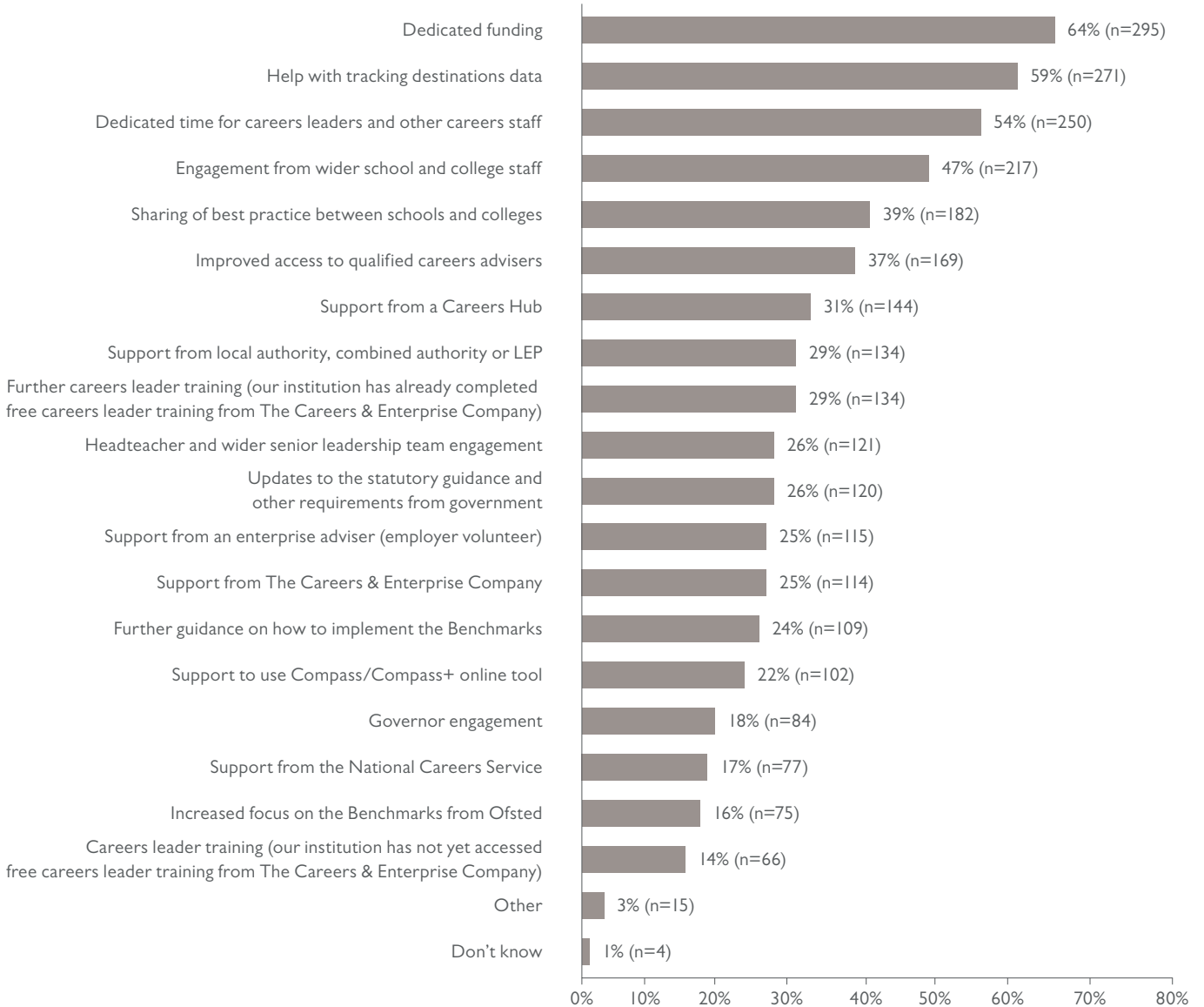| Resource / form of support	Percentage
The Careers & Enterprise Company	55% (n=260)
Sharing of best practice between schools and colleges	51% (n=237)
Careers Hub	50% (n=236)
Careers adviser	50% (n=235)
Careers leader training	50% (n=234)
Headteacher and wider senior leadership team engagement	49% (n=231)
Compass/Compass+ online tool	49% (n=229)
Engagement from wider school staff e.g. curriculum teachers	43% (n=203)
Dedicated time for careers leaders and other careers staff	41% (n=192)
Statutory guidance and other requirements from government	40% (n=187)
Guidance on how to implement the Benchmarks	38% (n=179)
Focus on the Benchmarks from Ofsted	31% (n=147)
Enterprise adviser (employer volunteer)	31% (n=146)
Dedicated funding	27% (n=126)
Support from local authority, combined authority or LEP	26% (n=123)
Destinations data	26% (n=121)
Governor engagement	23% (n=110)
The National Careers Service	14% (n=68)
Other	4% (n=18)
Nothing	1% (n=3)

These findings strongly emphasise the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach that combines expertise, collaboration, tailored guidance and technological tools to effectively implement the benchmarks.

In planning for the future implementation of the benchmarks, 463 respondents identified areas they would appreciate support with (see Figure 10.2). The most sought-after help was dedicated funding, which was requested by 64% (295 respondents). Help with tracking destinations data was also crucial with 59% (271 respondents) asking for support in this area. Fifty-four per cent (250 respondents) said dedicated time for careers leaders and other careers staff to effectively implement the benchmarks and 47% (217 respondents) said engagement from wider school and college staff was vital. Thirty-nine per cent (182 respondents) said sharing best practice between schools and colleges and 37% (169 respondents) said improved access to qualified careers advisers were important needs. The findings show that respondents believe targeted resources, such as funding, data tracking assistance, dedicated time to successfully implement the benchmarks, and staff engagement, are key factors in helping them successfully implement the benchmarks in the future.

Figure 10.2: Areas which support future implementation of the benchmarks (number of responses=463)

Area	Percentage
Dedicated funding	64% (n=295)
Help with tracking destinations data	59% (n=271)
Dedicated time for careers leaders and other careers staff	54% (n=250)
Engagement from wider school and college staff	47% (n=217)
Sharing of best practice between schools and colleges	39% (n=182)
Improved access to qualified careers advisers	37% (n=169)
Support from a Careers Hub	31% (n=144)
Support from local authority, combined authority or LEP	29% (n=134)
Further careers leader training (our institution has already completed free careers leader training from The Careers & Enterprise Company)	29% (n=134)
Headteacher and wider senior leadership team engagement	26% (n=121)
Updates to the statutory guidance and other requirements from government	26% (n=120)
Support from an enterprise adviser (employer volunteer)	25% (n=115)
Support from The Careers & Enterprise Company	25% (n=114)
Further guidance on how to implement the Benchmarks	24% (n=109)
Support to use Compass/Compass+ online tool	22% (n=102)
Governor engagement	18% (n=84)
Support from the National Careers Service	17% (n=77)
Increased focus on the Benchmarks from Ofsted	16% (n=75)
Careers leader training (our institution has not yet accessed free careers leader training from The Careers & Enterprise Company)	14% (n=66)
Other	3% (n=15)
Don't know	1% (n=4)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey reveals strong engagement with, and support for, the Gatsby Benchmarks, by a broad-based user community. That this survey received more than 1,200 responses, shows the high level of interest that there is in the future of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Respondents of all types were overwhelmingly positive about the benchmarks, with 94% (1,136 respondents) saying they provided a strong framework for organising careers guidance, 88% (1,055 respondents) saying they had had a big impact on their organisation and 81% (978 respondents) saying that they had had a big impact on young people.

Almost all respondents said they had found the framework helpful for their practice and recognised that it had had a significant positive impact in guiding students career paths.

Benchmark 1 was valued for emphasising the involvement of the senior leadership team (SLT) and for its strategic approach to careers guidance. However, respondents want clearer guidelines for the structured careers programme and more support with the benchmark's evaluation requirements.

Benchmark 2 was seen as important for increasing engagement with, and the use of, labour market information (LMI) to guide students and inform parents. However, some respondents said it was challenging finding good-quality LMI.

Benchmark 3 was appreciated for its role in challenging stereotypes and emphasising individual needs, and for its focus on record-keeping. However, tracking destination data over a three-year period had been challenging because of resource constraints and data sharing issues. Respondents want local and national bodies to collaborate to facilitate data gathering and sharing. They also want the benchmark phrasing and examples to be more inclusive, including protected characteristics, SEND and mental health.

Benchmark 4 was seen as important for linking curriculum learning with careers, but respondents found engaging with teachers and staff challenging. Suggestions were made to expand the benchmark beyond STEM subjects and provide clearer guidelines and resources that would support the more effective integration of career education into the curriculum.

Benchmark 5 was valued for enabling young people to gain real-world work experiences and for broadening their understanding of their career options and their aspirations. Respondents had found it challenging to organise high-quality encounters with employers because of conflicting schedules and other logistical issues. Despite this, only minor adjustments were suggested for this benchmark.

Benchmark 6 was viewed as important for preparing students for real workplaces. Respondents emphasised the benchmark's critical role in skills development and in supporting young people to make informed career decisions. Respondents want clarity and further guidance, including clear outlines of what makes a work experience meaningful. They also want remote and virtual experiences to be included as work experiences.

Benchmark 7 was valued for informing young people about the range of opportunities available to them for their next step. But respondents experienced challenges with provider access and engagement, and with logistics, time and costs. Suggestions were made for more inclusivity and for clarity on the requirements for meaningful encounters.

Lastly, Benchmark 8 was seen as important for its focus on the key role that qualified careers professionals play in supporting young people's careers. However, respondents found it challenging to provide the quantity and quality of careers guidance specified. Suggestions were made to clarify what qualifications career professionals need and to revise the structure of advisory sessions.

In conclusion, there is strong support for each of the benchmarks and for the framework. While there are no calls for major changes, there is a desire for guidance to be more structured, for greater clarity in the existing requirements and a broader, more inclusive approach to framing some of the benchmarks.

It is hoped that the insights from the survey will inform the current revision of the benchmarks and their continued use over the next decade or more.

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