
APPENDIX 5

INSIGHTS ON THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS
FROM PUBLIC DATA AND SOURCES PROVIDED
BY THE CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report uses publicly available data and reports from The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) website to collate information to answer key questions raised in the broader review of the benchmarks.

I. WHAT ARE THE ADOPTION AND ACHIEVEMENT RATES OF THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS?

The Compass survey tool can be used to self-assess performance against the Gatsby Benchmarks. Ninety-two per cent of state-funded secondary education providers in England used Compass in 2023/24. This suggests that providers have a high level of engagement with the framework and that the data provides an accurate picture of careers provision in England.

Compass data shows that, on average, schools and colleges successfully implemented close to six of the eight benchmarks for the first time in 2023/24. Looking back to the first comparable survey by the Gatsby Foundation in 2013/14 shows that implementation has improved from an average of 1.3 to 5.8 benchmarks.

Infrastructure and support is now in place to help schools and colleges implement the benchmarks, particularly the CEC's Careers Hub system and Careers Leader Training. In general, schools and colleges reported achieving more benchmarks when they had engaged more intensively and over longer periods of time with this infrastructure and when they had employed trained Careers Leaders. The quality of careers guidance in providers with more economically disadvantaged intakes is on par with that delivered in providers with less economically disadvantaged intakes.

Benchmark 3 (addressing the needs of each pupil) and Benchmark 7 (encounters with further and higher education) were the benchmarks that fewest providers achieved. In 2023/24 they were the only two benchmarks that were achieved by less than 60% of schools and colleges. The achievement rate for Benchmark 1 (a stable careers programme) was the next lowest, at 69%, but has nevertheless improved three percentage points since 2022/23.

2. WHAT EVIDENCE EXISTS OF IMPACT LINKED TO THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS?

Analysis of Year 11 leavers from three cohorts (2016/17 to 2018/19) confirmed a positive relationship between benchmark achievement and post 16 NEET rates, showing that for each additional benchmark achieved the likelihood of any young person becoming NEET or in an unknown destination reduced by 1.1%.¹

Similar evidence of impact can be identified by the link between benchmark achievement and the reduction of post-18 rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or in unknown destinations. On average, students from schools and colleges meeting all eight Gatsby Benchmarks have lower rates of not being in education, employment, or training (NEET) after age 18 compared to those at schools with lower quality careers provision. For example, non-EET rates drop from 15.1% to 13.9% when comparing high and low performing schools. If we imagine a school with no career guidance at all, the improvement is even larger, at 3.4%pts.²

Cross-sectional analysis shows increased student career readiness in schools that achieve more benchmarks. The analysis shows that a student in a school achieving all eight benchmarks would typically score 3.5%pts (score on a 0-100% scale) more at Key Stage 4 than a student in a school achieving only one benchmark. While this is a small increase, it is worth noting that such provision would be able to more than compensate for the average disadvantage associated with being in receipt of free school meals (FSM – students in receipt of FSM typically score 1.5%pts lower than students not in receipt of FSM using the same type of analysis).³ Higher career readiness was also associated with students making less gender-stereotyped career choices that are better aligned to the economy.⁴

Given the relatively low costs of individual careers interventions, financial estimates also suggest that achieving more benchmarks is likely to have a positive return on investment. High NEET rates have lifetime consequences for individuals, society and the taxpayer. Previous analysis from The Careers & Enterprise Company estimated a £42,000 lifetime saving to the public purse from a single 16-18-year-old prevented from being NEET, such that the levels of improvement correlated with improved benchmarks would save the Treasury £150m per year in England.⁵

¹ Percy, C (2023) Percy, C. (2023) *Technical note: Further analysis on post-16 destinations for the 2016/17 to 2018/19 cohorts*, extending and replicating an analysis in Percy, C. and Tanner, E. (2021) *The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations*

² Percy, C. (2024) *Technical note: looking deeper at destinations*

³ Percy, C. and Findlay, I. (2024) *Technical note: Careers education and career readiness*

⁴ CEC (2024) *Right students, right jobs*.

⁵ CEC (2024): *Careers Education 2022/23: Now & next*

3. HOW POSITIVE ARE STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS?

The CEC's survey of Careers Leaders showed that the benchmarks were widely valued for improving careers guidance, with more than 90% of respondents supporting their use in both schools and colleges. Surveys of Enterprise Advisers also showed high levels of commitment to the framework, with 88% of the Enterprise Advisers who have been in role the longest say they have supported the school and college they work with to achieve the Gatsby Benchmarks, up from 59% (+29%pts) for those who joined most recently.⁶

CEC's surveys and evaluations have typically been focused on whether CEC initiatives support benchmark achievement and have been positive about the value of benchmark achievement. CEC analysis has also respected the original Gatsby vision of treating the benchmarks as a holistic framework, instead of analysing the impact of individual benchmarks.

⁶ CEC (2024) *Enterprise Adviser Insight Briefing*

OVERVIEW – THE BIG PICTURE OF THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

BACKGROUND ON THE DATA AVAILABLE

The Careers & Enterprise Company's (CEC) data on the Gatsby Benchmarks is drawn from the Compass evaluation, which is available for free online for education providers to self-report their performance against the benchmarks. The Compass evaluation consists of about 50 questions, and it is recommended that providers complete it termly to support annual analysis. The Compass evaluation is embedded in two digital products from the CEC – Compass and Compass+.

Initially a single version of the Compass evaluation was developed, which primarily had secondary schools in mind. Over time the tool has developed into three main versions: one for secondary schools, one for colleges (both further education and sixth forms) and one for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) providers, including Alternative Provisions and Pupil Referral Units. Individual questions within each version can differ depending on the age range in the institution. This report draws only on the data made available in public CEC reports.

The Compass evaluation is intended as a self-assessment tool, although the CEC has enacted a system of peer-to-peer review of a provider's careers provision.⁷ Compass+ gives schools the ability to manage more aspects of their careers provision assessment, such as providing surveys that are tailored to different age groups of young people (the Future Skills Questionnaire) and tracking student-level participation in individual activities. The benchmark-related questions have not really changed over time, particularly since 2016/17 when the CEC launched Compass, which was adapted from the questionnaire used in 2013/2014 in the original Good Career Guidance research. While the data is self-reported, several factors highlighted by Percy and Tanner suggest the data is likely to be reliable:

At the institution-level, Compass is used for planning and reflection, rather than as part of an external accountability framework. The Careers Strategy (DfE, 2017)⁸ set an ambition for all schools to achieve all benchmarks by the end of 2020, but does not assign specific incentives or penalties for this target at the school-level ...

⁷ "The Careers Impact Review System, being piloted with 100 schools and colleges this year, aims to bring peer challenge and expert review to drive continuous improvement". CEC (2023) *Ready for the future: A review of careers education in England 2021/22*

⁸ DfE (2017) *Careers strategy: Making the most of everyone's skills and talents*

Secondly, the majority of questions are phrased as objective statements, reducing the flexibility for subjective judgement and personal bias. Example questions include whether the careers programme is “written down”, “published online”, with “resources/funding allocated to it”; whether 76% or more students in each school year (asked separately) receive impartial and independent career guidance; and whether the school collects and maintains destinations data on each pupil for three years after they leave the school ...⁹

Thirdly, while Compass scores are rarely externally validated formally, careers leaders typically have to explain and defend their assessments to their Enterprise Coordinators, who cover a range of local schools. In a Hub setting in particular, where schools and colleges are typically sharing progress and good practice, it would be hard to maintain a highly exaggerated score (or indeed an overly modest one).

Fourthly, schools and colleges typically assign themselves low scores that are only increasing gradually over time ...¹⁰

⁹ Further details about the Compass questionnaire can be found on the [Compass careers benchmark tool](#) website.

¹⁰ Percy, C. and Tanner, E. (2022) *Careers hubs: Pilot of a place-based school improvement network in England*. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 51(6) p.1001.

GATSBY BENCHMARK ACHIEVEMENT RATE OVER TIME

On average, schools and colleges successfully implemented close to six of the eight benchmarks for the first time in 2023/24. A comparable survey carried out by the Gatsby Foundation in 2013/14 showed average attainment was 1.3 benchmarks. By 2023/24 this had increased to 5.8 benchmarks (see Table I).

Ninety-two per cent of state-funded secondary education providers in England used Compass in 2023/24. The improving trajectory of both adoption and achievement is a testimony to providers' engagement with the framework and the hard work across the system to improve careers provision.

Table I: Benchmark achievement rate 2013/14 to 2023/24

| Academic year | Average number of benchmarks achieved reported in CEC publications | Number of schools or colleges |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 2013/14 (Gatsby survey) | 1.34 | 361 |
| 2016/17 | 1.87 | 578 |
| 2017/18 | 2.13 | 3,092 |
| 2018/19 | 3.00 | 3,351 |
| 2019/20* | 3.70 | 350 |
| 2020/21 | 3.98 | 3,893 |
| 2021/22 | 4.86 | 4,200 |
| 2022/23 | 5.48 | 4,534 |
| 2023/24 | 5.83 | 5,751 |

Source: Annual state of the nation and trends reports published by CEC and the Good Career Guidance report.¹¹

* Value based on 350 Compass returns completed in June or July and based on activity that was confirmed to have taken place. This compares to 3.75 benchmarks based on the returns submitted up to end March 2020 (n=3,296) prior to the Covid-19 lockdowns and subsequent changes relative to original provision plans.

¹¹ Holman, J. (2014) *Good career guidance*

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH ACHIEVING MORE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

The publicly available 2023/24 Compass returns¹² and the 2022/23 Careers Education: Now & Next¹³ report describe similar factors. The latest data shows that providers that engaged more with CEC initiatives reported achieving more benchmarks (Table 2).

For instance, the providers who have been engaged since Careers Hubs were introduced in September 2018, achieved an average of 6.3 benchmarks compared to 3.8 for those who have never engaged with a Hub. More benchmarks were also achieved by those completing Careers Leader Training, onboarded to the Compass+ tool, used for recording individual-level careers activities, and supporting young people to use the Future Skills Questionnaire. Similar benefits could be seen for schools and colleges engaging with the Enterprise Adviser network, who received support from CEC's expert Enterprise Coordinators and employer volunteers in the form of Enterprise Advisers.

Alternative provision schools reported attaining slightly fewer benchmarks (5.2) than mainstream schools (5.8), and further education colleges and SEND providers who both achieved 5.9 benchmarks (see Table 2).

Table 2: Benchmark achievement by provider type and Careers Hub engagement

| Group | 2023/24 | | 2022/23 | |
|--|---------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| | Benchmarks achieved | Number | Benchmarks achieved | Number |
| All schools & colleges in England | 5.83 | 4,751 | 5.48 | 4,534 |
| In a Careers Hub | 5.87 | 4,656 | 5.52 | 4,452 |
| In a Careers Hub since September 2018 | 6.26 | 676 | 5.99 | 673 |
| In a Careers Hub since September 2019 | 6.27 | 605 | 5.99 | 607 |
| In a Careers Hub since September 2020 | 6.2 | 933 | 5.94 | 940 |
| In a Careers Hub since September 2021 | 5.88 | 976 | 5.47 | 958 |
| In a Careers Hub since September 2022 | 5.32 | 1,466 | 4.78 | 1,274 |
| Not in a Careers Hub | 3.76 | 95 | 3.21 | 82 |
| In the Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN) (including Careers Hubs) | 5.87 | 4,666 | 5.52 | 4,441 |
| Not in the Enterprise Adviser Network | 3.81 | 85 | 3.39 | 93 |
| Careers Leader trained | 6 | 2,504 | 5.7 | 2,122 |

¹² CEC (2023) *Insight briefing – Gatsby Benchmark Insight Briefing 2023/24*

¹³ CEC (2024): *Careers Education 2022/23: Now & next.*

| Group | 2023/24 | | 2022/23 | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| | Benchmarks achieved | Number | Benchmarks achieved | Number |
| Mainstream schools | 5.87 | 3,306 | 5.52 | 3,226 |
| Alternative provision | 5.21 | 277 | 4.79 | 256 |
| Further Education | 5.9 | 267 | 5.48 | 260 |
| Special schools | 5.85 | 901 | 5.56 | 792 |

*The 2023/24 results are based on 4,751 schools and colleges that submitted a Compass return (92% of state-funded providers). During 2023/24, Compass was completed by 97% of mainstream secondary, 88% of post-16 providers, 81% of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) institutions and 85% of alternative provision (AP).

In 2023¹⁴ and 2024¹⁵, the CEC reported comparisons of benchmark achievement against various descriptive characteristics of schools and colleges.

- Benchmarks drive positive outcomes for young people, with schools and colleges achieving all eight benchmarks reducing the likelihood of young people being NEET by about 8% (post-16 and post-18).¹⁶
- Schools and colleges in areas serving the most disadvantaged cohorts are deploying careers advisors to deliver more personal guidance for young people (82% fully achieving Benchmark 8 (personal guidance), compared to an average of 75% for all institutions).¹⁷
- Special schools achieved well on the Gatsby Benchmarks (5.6 on average) and outperform the mainstream when it comes to workplace experiences and interactions with further and higher education.¹⁸
- Education institutions accredited under the Quality in Careers Standard achieved an average of 6.1 Gatsby Benchmarks in 2022/23. This is half a benchmark higher than the previous year (up from 5.6 benchmarks), similar to the proportional increase of all schools and colleges in England since 2021/22.¹⁹
- Engaging with more of the CEC's resources, including being in a Careers Hub, completing Careers Leader Training, using Compass+ and using the Future Skills Questionnaire, was associated with attaining more benchmarks.
- Using Compass over a longer period of time was also associated with attaining more benchmarks.

¹⁴ CEC (2023) [Ready for the Future: A review of Careers Education in England 2021/22](#)

¹⁵ CEC (2024) [Careers Education 2022/23: Now & next | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)

¹⁶ CEC (2023) [Looking deeper at destinations](#)

¹⁷ CEC (2023) [Insight briefing: Gatsby Benchmark results for 2022/23](#)

¹⁸ CEC (2023) [Insight briefing: Gatsby Benchmark results for 2022/23](#)

¹⁹ Quality in Careers (2024) [Quality in Careers Gatsby Benchmark Report November 2023](#)

Surveys of Careers Leaders provided further insights into the operational barriers and success factors for successfully implementing more benchmarks. A survey of 750 Careers Leaders identified the typical barriers to careers interventions to be resources, both financial and non-financial, and teaching staff engagement.²⁰ The survey also showed that “Schools with full-time equivalent hours for Careers Leaders and administrators combined (as opposed to minimal capacity of a few hours a week) achieved around one extra benchmark on average”.²¹

Evidence of the impact of training and careers hub support can be seen in the positive evaluation by Williams et al. (2020)²² and Finlay and Tanner (2021).²³ Of particular value are the quantitative insights in Finlay and Tanner which relate careers leaders participating in training to benchmark achievement and consider the possible confounding factor of engaging with a Careers Hub. Specifically, careers leaders training was most strongly associated with improvements in achieving benchmarks 1 (a stable careers programme), 3 (addressing the needs of each pupil), 5 (encounters with employers and employees) and 7 (encounters with further and higher education). The report does not explain why progress was faster in some benchmarks than others, except in one instance. Training made no difference to attaining Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces), which the authors explained was because of the reduced opportunities during the Covid-19 disruption rather than the training.

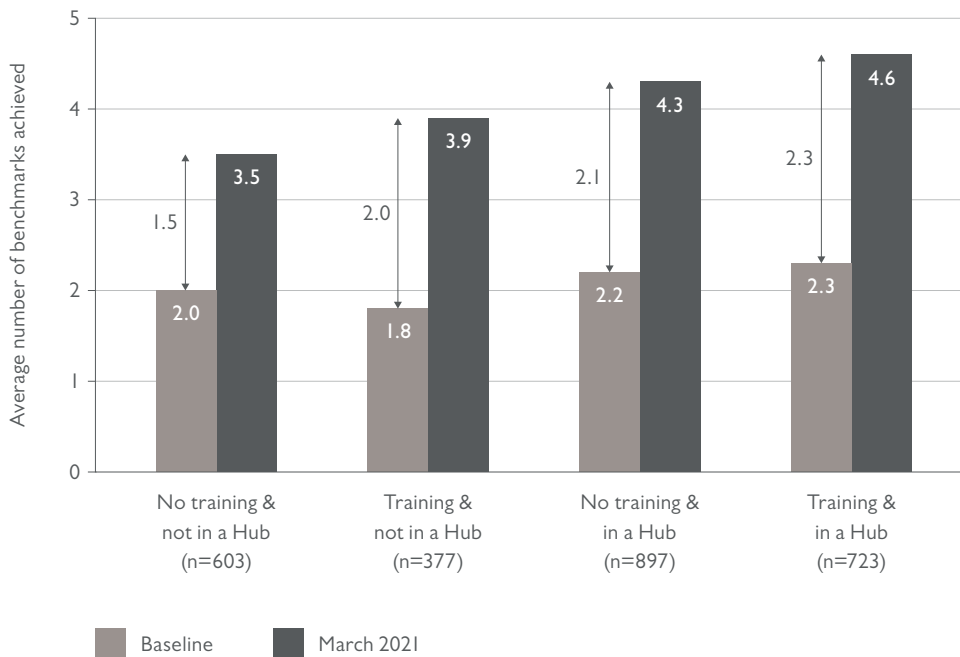
Figure 1 shows the average number of benchmarks achieved by those engaged with a Careers Hub and by those who had participated in Careers Leader training. It suggests that for those not part of a hub, the benefit of training is approximately 0.5 additional benchmarks. For those who are part of a hub, the benefit of training is an additional 0.2 benchmarks. This could be because those in hubs are already achieving more benchmarks, meaning further progress is harder to achieve.

²⁰ Tanner, E., Percy, C. and Andrews, D. (2019) *Careers leaders in secondary schools: The first year*

²¹ Tanner, E., Percy, C. and Andrews, D. (2019) *Careers leaders in secondary schools: The first year* p.3.

²² Williams, J., Akehurst, G., Alexander, K., Pollard, E., Williams, C. and Hooley, T. (2020) *Evaluation of the careers leader training*

²³ Finlay, I. and Tanner, E. (2021) *Careers leader training: Impact on knowledge, practice and programmes 2018-2020*

Figure I: Average benchmarks achieved at baseline and at March 2021²⁴

Gibson et al. (2021) surveyed 81 careers leaders in colleges and conducted 27 follow-up qualitative interviews. They concluded that:

An effective whole college approach to careers education was created via the collaborative working of staff across an entire college. This included SLT [senior leadership team], management and operational levels, and those within careers education, curriculum and wider college services. Levels of progression towards this ideal varied across the colleges. The most progressive colleges had careers cross-college working groups, bringing together colleagues to review strategy and progress against the Gatsby Benchmarks, and to generate actions to drive plans forward. The Careers Leader was often the instigator and leader of such groups. Their objective was to instil a sense of shared responsibility and ownership for careers across all college areas ...

In the majority of colleges, a dedicated Careers Leader role had elevated the position of careers education, driven provision forwards, helped to integrate it within colleges and been positively impacted by the implementation of the Gatsby Benchmark

There was also evidence that some colleges had benefitted from additional funding due to the implementation of the benchmarks. They reported that the Gatsby Benchmarks had been the driving force behind raising the careers education profile which had helped the college build a case for more investment in careers education and the need for additional funding.

²⁴ Finlay, I. and Tanner, E. (2021) *Careers leader training: Impact on knowledge, practice and programmes 2018-2020* p.28.

A minority of the Careers Leaders in larger colleges thought that implementation of the benchmarks had hindered their strategy and approach to careers education and they had increased workload. The framework was considered to be too constraining, not allowing for colleges to develop their own plans or formulate ways to monitor progress.²⁵

PATTERNS BY BENCHMARK

Benchmark 3 (addressing the needs of each pupil) and Benchmark 7 (encounters with further and higher education) are the benchmarks that the fewest have achieved in most years (see Table 3). In 2023/24 they were the only two benchmarks that fewer than 60% of providers had achieved. The most rapid progress has been made against Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces), which 72% of schools and colleges achieved, recovering impressively from the effects of Covid-19 in 2020/21, during which only 36% achieved this benchmark. Benchmark 1 (a stable careers programme) also saw significant progress, starting from a low base of 43% to being successfully implemented by 69% of providers in 2021/22. The slowest progress has been on Benchmark 8 (personal guidance). However, it was already being achieved by many providers, so it already had a relatively high base that has increased, with 78% of providers achieving this benchmark in 2023/24.

Table 3: Percentage of providers achieving each benchmark over time

| | 2023/24 (n=4,751) | 2022/23 (n=4,534) | 2021/22 (n=4,200) | 2020/21 (n=3,892) | Change in %pts |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. A stable careers programme | 69% | 66% | 56% | 43% | 26 |
| 2. Learning from career and labour market information (LMI) | 83% | 81% | 75% | 66% | 17 |
| 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil | 59% | 54% | 46% | 38% | 21 |
| 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers | 80% | 76% | 70% | 60% | 20 |
| 5. Encounters with employers and employees | 85% | 80% | 71% | 56% | 29 |
| 6. Experiences of workplaces | 72% | 64% | 52% | 36% | 36 |
| 7. Encounters with further and higher education | 57% | 52% | 46% | 33% | 24 |
| 8. Personal guidance | 78% | 75% | 71% | 65% | 13 |

²⁵Gibson, S., Tanner, E. and Webster, A. (2021) *Careers leadership in college: Supporting learners through a 'whole college' approach* pp.8, 9 & 43.

Table 4: Ranked positions of the most frequently achieved benchmarks over time

| | 2023/24 (n=4,751) | 2022/23 (n=4,534) | 2021/22 (n=4,200) | 2020/21 (n=3,892) | Change in %pts |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. A stable careers programme | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | -1 |
| 2. Learning from career and LMI | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | -1 |
| 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil | 7 | 7 | 8= | 6 | -1 |
| 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | = |
| 5. Encounters with employers and employees | 1 | 2 | 3= | 4 | +3 |
| 6. Experiences of workplaces | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | +2 |
| 7. Encounters with further and higher education | 8 | 8 | 8= | 8 | = |
| 8. Personal guidance | 4 | 4 | 3= | 2 | -2 |

PATTERNS BY DISADVANTAGE

The 25% of mainstream schools with the most economically disadvantaged intakes reported achieving slightly fewer benchmarks overall than the least disadvantaged quartile (5.9 and 6.2 respectively). They have also progressed slightly less since 2018/19 (+2.7 and +3.2 respectively), although these are not major differences (Table 5) and a slight trend in the opposite pattern has also been identified previously.

Table 5: Benchmark achievement by FSM eligibility of cohort

| Average number of Gatsby Benchmarks achieved by mainstream schools 2018/19 and 2023/24 by FSM quartile | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------|---|
| | Quartile 1 (least disadvantaged 25% of schools, n=575) | Quartiles 2&3 (n=1,129) | Quartile 4 (most disadvantaged 25% of schools, n=539) |
| 2023/24 | 6.18 | 5.96 | 5.94 |
| 2018/19 | 2.96 | 3.16 | 3.15 |

*Sample: 2,243 mainstream schools that completed Compass in both 2018/19 and 2023/24 and have FSM data. FSM quartile percentages based on Department for Education (DfE) data for all mainstream secondary schools from July 2022, with thresholds at 16.1%, 24.2% and 34.8%.

To examine patterns of achievement by benchmark and level of disadvantage, we use the full CEC dataset for 2023/24 mainstream schools, incorporating both Compass and FSM data. This is a larger sample compared to the 2018/19 dataset used in Table 5, which focused on changes over time. As shown in Figure 2, schools with more disadvantaged intakes (Quartile 4) tend to outperform less disadvantaged schools (Quartiles 2, 3, and 1) in Benchmark 7 (encounters with further and higher education) and Benchmark 8 (personal guidance). However, this outperformance is partially offset by underperformance in other benchmarks, such as Benchmark 1 (a stable careers programme), Benchmark 4 (linking curriculum learning to careers), and Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces).

Overall, there is minimal variation in which benchmarks are easier or harder to achieve between schools with more disadvantaged intakes and those with less disadvantaged intakes. The most disadvantaged quartile of schools excels in Benchmark 8 (personal guidance) and Benchmark 7 (encounters with further and higher education) compared to more advantaged schools.

However, schools with disadvantaged intakes find Benchmarks 1, 4, and 6 more challenging, as reflected in their slightly lower performance compared to schools with less disadvantaged intakes.

Figure 2: Achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks according to disadvantage (FSM quartiles of mainstream secondary schools)

| | Quartile 4: Most disadvantaged (n=819) | Quartiles 2 & 3 (n=1,634) | Quartile 1: Least disadvantaged (n=816) |
|---|--|---------------------------|---|
| 8. Personal guidance | 86% | 81% | 68% |
| 7. Encounters with further and higher education | 62% | 55% | 53% |
| 6. Experiences of workplaces | 69% | 72% | 78% |
| 5. Encounters with employers and employees | 87% | 86% | 87% |
| 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers | 78% | 78% | 85% |
| 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil | 54% | 55% | 60% |
| 2. Learning from career and labour market information | 84% | 85% | 90% |
| 1. A stable careers programme | 67% | 71% | 76% |

*Sample. 3,269 mainstream secondary schools who completed Compass and had FSM data in 2023/24. FSM quartiles based on all state-funded schools in DfE data (including those not completing Compass).

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Post-16 sustained destinations in education, employment or training

Evidence of impact can be found in statistical analysis relating benchmark achievement to post-18 rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). This analysis uses high-quality government data and an analytical framework that, as far as possible, adjusts for possible confounding effects in the cross-sectional data available, including factors such as school intake, school structure, local area features and academic achievement.

An analysis of Year 11 leavers from three cohorts (2016/17 to 2018/19) confirmed a positive relationship between the number of benchmarks achieved and a reduction in the likelihood of young people becoming NEET or having an unknown destination. Specifically, each additional benchmark achieved was associated with a 1.1% reduction in the likelihood of becoming NEET or having an unknown destination.²⁶ For example, in institutions that achieved all the benchmarks, the NEET or unknown destination rate was 6.7%, compared to 7.3% in institutions that had not achieved any benchmarks. This relationship was twice as strong in schools with the most economically disadvantaged populations, based on FSM entitlement (p-value 0.01). Achievement of all eight benchmarks was also associated with a 17% increase in post-16 apprenticeship uptake (p-value 0.00).

²⁶ Percy, C (2023) Percy, C. (2023) *Technical note: Further analysis on post-16 destinations for the 2016/17 to 2018/19 cohorts*, extending and replicating an analysis in Percy, C. and Tanner, E. (2021) *The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations*

Analysis on the Millennium Cohort Study²⁷ dataset similarly found that students in institutions achieving a full Gatsby Benchmark score were indicatively less likely to be NEET after year 11 than their peers in schools with no Gatsby-style provision (p-value 0.09, noting the smaller sample size of schools in this analysis).

Post-18 sustained destinations in education, employment or training

On average, students from schools and colleges meeting all eight Gatsby Benchmarks have lower rates of being in NEET or unknown destinations after age 18 compared to those at schools with lower quality careers provision. For example, the non-EET rate drops from 15.1% to 13.9% when comparing high and low performing schools. If we imagine a school with no career guidance at all, the improvement is even larger, at 3.4%.²⁸ As schools get closer to achieving perfect Gatsby Benchmark scores (around 80-85%), the impact on non-EET rates started to level off in this dataset. This suggests that focusing on improving career guidance might yield greater gains to schools starting their career provision journey.

Student-reported career readiness

Another way to measure impact is through student surveys (the Future Skills Questionnaire), the results of which were reported in an insight briefing:

Students felt increasingly career ready as they approached key points of transition, their scores rising from 46% in Year 7 to 67% in Year 11. By Year 11, 80% of students felt that they knew what types of skills employers need, an increase from 64% of Year 7 students. Similarly, over 8 in 10 (81%) Year 11 students had learned about careers other than those of their family or carers, compared to two-thirds of Year 7 students (66%). This perhaps reflects that the overwhelming majority (85%) of the institutions with students completing the FSQ had achieved Gatsby Benchmark 5, which requires schools to provide multiple opportunities for pupils to learn directly from employers.

Fewer students were aware of some types of businesses and employers in their area (52% in Year 7, 64% in Year 11) and knew how to find out how much they could earn in different types of jobs (51% in Year 7, 65% in Year 11), but there was still a steady increase in awareness between younger and older students.²⁹

This suggests that young people are making progress as they get older, but it is unclear how much of this is due to benchmark-related provision or to other education activities, support from outside school or changes in attitude as they age. Future CEC work intends to address these questions using longitudinal data to gain a better understanding of the causal link between benchmark achievement and student progress.

Longitudinal analysis shows increased student career readiness in schools that achieve more benchmarks. The results suggest a positive association between careers provision, as reported in Gatsby Benchmarks, and KS4 students' career readiness.

²⁷ UCL. [CLS | Millennium Cohort Study \(ucl.ac.uk\)](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/cls/millennium-cohort-study)

²⁸ Percy, C. (2024). [Looking deeper at destinations.](#)

²⁹ CEC (2023) [Insight briefing: Update on student career readiness in 2022/23](#). P.6-7.

The analysis, which uses cross-sectional data, suggests that achieving all eight Gatsby Benchmarks can outweigh the average career readiness disadvantage associated with being in receipt of FSMs. The average benefit associated with the best careers provision is higher than the average FSM disadvantage. This positive association lends credibility to the CEC impact model, in which good career guidance improves students' career readiness, including their labour market awareness, understanding of post-16 options and transition skills:

The analysis shows that a student in a school achieving all eight benchmarks would typically score 3.5%pts (score on a 0-100% scale) than a student in a school achieving only one benchmark. While this is a small increase, it is worth noting that such provision would be able to more than compensate for the average disadvantage associated with being in receipt of free school meals (students in receipt of FSM typically score 1.5%pts lower than students not in receipt of FSM).³⁰

Links to career sector interests

Higher career readiness was also associated with students making less gender-stereotyped career choices that were better aligned to the economy.³¹ For instance, compared to those with a 0% score, students with a 100% career readiness score typically engaged more with career options, being over two times more likely to have specific industry interests. They were also more likely to overcome negative gender stereotypes with over twice the interest in engineering for female students. Their choices of industry were also perhaps more considered and better aligned to projected vacancies, being over two times less likely to choose gender-biased, over-subscribed sectors. Given the major discrepancy between student interests during secondary education and projected job demand, even slight improvements in alignment are to be welcomed, potentially reducing future disappointment and disengagement, as well as helping to meet sector skill shortages.

Likely return on investment estimates

Given the relatively low costs for individual careers interventions, financial estimates also suggest that efforts to improve the Gatsby Benchmarks are likely to have a positive return on investment for the Exchequer,³² as does the provision of personal guidance interviews in Benchmark 8.

For instance, Percy (2020) identifies:

... a typical direct cost of £80 per young person for two interviews during secondary education [i.e. excluding overheads or scheduling inefficiency], personal guidance is highly likely to be a net positive investment for the Exchequer. Using valuations by government-commissioned studies, breakeven is achieved if – for instance – one in 500 secondary school students were prevented from becoming NEET prior to the age of 18 or one in 1,800 were prevented from dropping out of Higher Education.³³

³⁰ Finlay, I. (2023). *Careers education and career readiness*.

³¹ CEC (2024) *Right students, right jobs*.

³² Percy, C. and Tanner, E. (2021) *The benefits of Gatsby Benchmark achievement for post-16 destinations* p. 1.

³³ Percy, C. (2020) *Personal guidance in English secondary education: An initial Return-on-Investment estimate* p. 1.

The paper reviews the available research literature which:

...suggests that these breakeven requirements are highly likely to be exceeded. Drawing mainly on meta-analyses of comparison group trials and three longitudinal datasets, a partial and conservative picture of the possible benefits identifies a midpoint ROI [return on investment] for the Exchequer of 4.4x with an 80% probability range of 3x-5x. For each £1 the government invests in personal guidance, it should be confident of recouping at least £3 and most likely much more.³⁴

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

The CEC has conducted a number of surveys and evaluations, including Careers Leader surveys and Enterprise Adviser surveys, as well as evaluations of its various investment funds and its network provision more generally. Case studies and inputs from the CEC's Youth Advisory Group and other stakeholders are also regularly included in the annual state of the nation and trends reports. However, these surveys and evaluations typically focus on whether stakeholders have found CEC activities or support helpful, rather than on the Gatsby Benchmarks themselves. Instead, commitment to the benchmarks is assumed, and the success being measured is whether the CEC's initiatives have helped benchmark achievement.

In general, the CEC's survey and evaluation activities indirectly support the benchmarks as an overarching framework, but do not include any commentary on specific benchmarks that might inform a revision process. However, these survey activities are, by definition of scope, focused on individuals already supportive of or working with the benchmarks. For instance, 94% of the 750 careers leaders surveyed in their first year in the role agreed that the benchmarks had helped improve careers guidance.³⁵ A dedicated study of 81 college careers leaders found that 92% also agreed that the benchmarks had improved careers guidance.³⁶

A 2024 Enterprise Adviser survey received 938 responses (23% of the total Enterprise Adviser population) and resulted in broadly positive findings and a willingness among these volunteers to engage with the careers system. Eighty-three percent would recommend the role to someone else. Eighty-three percent also said they feel the improvements they have made means students are better prepared for the world of work. The longer Enterprise Advisers had been in post the more likely they were to report that they were impacting on the quality of careers provision.

The longer an EA has been in the role, the more impact they have on young people's outcomes. Four-fifths (79%) of EAs who have been in post for less than a year say that the improvement they have driven in the quality of a school or college's careers education has meant that students are now better prepared for the world of work. This rises to nearly nine in ten (89%) for those in post for three years or longer.³⁷

³⁴ Percy, C. (2020) *Personal guidance in English secondary education: An initial Return-on-Investment estimate* p.1.

³⁵ Tanner, E., Percy, C. and Andrews, D. (2019) *Careers leaders in secondary schools: The first year* p.10.

³⁶ Gibson, S., Tanner, E. and Webster, A. (2021) *Careers leadership in colleges: Supporting learners through a 'whole college' approach*

³⁷ CEC (2024). *Enterprise Adviser Insight Briefing 2024*.

This points to the likely importance of stability and the potential for greater impact through sustained engagement with the framework.

The evaluation of the Enterprise Adviser network and Careers Hubs involved several surveys of Careers Leaders in schools and colleges (1,910 responses), Enterprise Coordinators (283) and Enterprise Advisers (1,505), as well as qualitative interviews and case studies.³⁸ The report was positive about the benchmarks and made no specific suggestions or commentary on improving the framework. For instance, in a survey of 799 enterprise advisers, “the Gatsby Benchmarks and Compass were also rated highly as factors that helped them deliver their role, which suggests that Enterprise Advisers appreciate the structure and guidance these resources offer”.³⁹ In another example, the survey of schools and colleges found that the most common reason for joining the enterprise adviser network was to improve careers provision (88%) and help the organisation meet the benchmarks (80%). This showed that the employers who were volunteering for the network were highly committed to the framework.⁴⁰

³⁸ SQW (2020) *Enterprise Adviser Network and careers hubs evaluation report*

³⁹ CEC and SQW (2020) *Evaluation of the enterprise adviser network: Enterprise adviser survey 2020* p.14.

⁴⁰ CEC and SQW (2020) *Evaluation of the enterprise adviser network: School and college survey 2020* p.2.

BENCHMARK BREAKDOWN

SUMMARY

Beneath each benchmark are sub-benchmarks⁴¹ which have different achievement profiles across the three groups of state-funded education providers reported by the CEC: mainstream schools, colleges (sixth form and further education) and SEND/alternative provision schools. The top and bottom five sub-benchmarks by percentage of those providers achieving them for each of the three groups are reported in tables 6 to 8, followed by tables 9 to 11 that show which sub-benchmarks are most and least frequently achieved for each of the eight benchmarks.

In general, the organisational and legal duties in benchmarks 1 and 3 are most frequently achieved, such as sharing data with the local authority, having a careers leader and writing down careers programmes. By contrast, student-centred careers activities whose costs increase with the number of students involved are least widely achieved. This includes activities such as visits, encounters, personal guidance interviews, and tracking activities/destinations outside of the immediate stages of education the provider is responsible for.

Table 6: Most and least frequently achieved sub-benchmark by schools (2023/24)

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| 1 | School has Careers Leader | 100% |
| 1 | Website has information aimed at students | 99% |
| 1 | Careers programme has explicit backing of senior leadership | 99% |
| 3 | Careers programme is written down | 99% |
| 1 | Careers programme includes feedback from students | 98% |
| 7 | 76-100% students have had at least 2 visits to HE providers | 62% |
| 3 | School collects and maintains accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for 3 years after they leave school/after they leave college | 71% |

⁴¹ Please note that the sub-benchmarks in this section are identified based on the Compass questions as summarised in the published CEC data, rather than the benchmark sub-criteria as originally detailed in Gatsby (2014) *Good career guidance*. All sub-benchmark data in these eight sections are drawn from three excel files published by CEC in 2023: School Compass sub benchmarks, College Compass sub benchmarks and SEND Compass sub benchmarks. Available from CEC (2024) *Insight briefing – Gatsby Benchmark results*.

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| 8 | 76-100% students have had 2+ interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13 | 73% |
| 7 | 76-100% students have had meaningful encounters with Independent Training Providers | 74% |
| 6 | 76-100% students have had experience of workplace by end Y11 | 76% |

Table 7: Most and least frequently achieved sub-benchmark achievement by colleges (2023/24)

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Evaluation of programme includes feedback from learners | 100% |
| 1 | Careers programme evaluated at least every 3 years | 100% |
| 1 | Website has information aimed at learners | 100% |
| 1 | Careers programme is regularly monitored | 100% |
| 1 | Careers programme has resources/funding allocated to it | 100% |
| 1 | Careers programme has explicit backing of senior leadership | 100% |
| 8 | 76-100% learners have had 1+ interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of their programme of study | 47% |
| 6 | 76-100% learners have had an experience of a workplace (excluding part-time jobs) by the time they finish programme of study | 67% |
| 3 | College integrates records of learners' participation in careers programmes at previous stages of education | 69% |
| 7 | 76-100% of learners have had meaningful encounters with a range of FE providers | 71% |
| 7 | 76-100% of learners have had meaningful encounters with a range of apprenticeship providers | 77% |

Table 8: Most and least frequently achieved sub-benchmark by SEND/alternative provision schools (2023/24)

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| 1 | School has Careers Leader | 99% |
| 1 | Website has information aimed at parents/carers | 99% |
| 4 | 76-100% students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of PSHE to future career or progression paths | 99% |
| 1 | Careers programme has explicit backing of senior leadership | 98% |
| 1 | Evaluation includes feedback from students/learners | 97% |
| 1 | Careers programme evaluated at least every 3 years | 97% |
| 2 | 76-100% students/learners use labour market information | 55% |
| 7 | 76-100% have had at least 2 visits to HE providers* | 64% |
| 7 | 76-100% have had meaningful encounters with HE providers* | 73% |
| 7 | 76-100% have had meaningful encounters with Independent Training Providers | 76% |
| 6 | 76-100% of students (for whom appropriate) have experience of workplace or community-based setting by end Y11 | 77% |

Table 9: Most and least frequently achieved sub-benchmarks for each benchmark – schools (2021/22)

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| 1 | School has Careers Leader | 100% |
| 1 | Website has information aimed at students | 85% |
| 2 | Parents/carers are encouraged to access LMI, study options and career paths information to inform support | 93% |
| 2 | 76-100% students use labour market information | 89% |
| 3 | School works proactively with LA/careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of vulnerable and SEND students | 98% |
| 3 | School collects and maintains accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for 3 years after they leave school/after they leave college | 71% |

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| 4 | 76-100% students have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of PSHE to future career paths | 95% |
| 4 | 76-100% students have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of Maths to future career paths | 83% |
| 5 | 76-100% students have had at least one encounter every year | 86% |
| 5 | n/a (only one sub-benchmark) | |
| 6 | 76-100% students have had experience of the workplace in Year 12 or 13 | 84% |
| 6 | 76-100% students have had experience of the workplace by the end of Year 11 | 76% |
| 7 | 76-100% students have information about the full range of apprenticeships | 94% |
| 7 | 76-100% students have had at least 2 visits to higher education providers | 62% |
| 8 | 76-100% have had interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11 | 88% |
| 8 | 76-100% have had 2+ interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13 | 73% |

Table 10: Most and least frequently achieved sub-benchmarks for each benchmark – colleges (2021/22)

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Evaluation of programme includes feedback from learners | 100% |
| | And | |
| | Careers programme evaluated at least every 3 years | 100% |
| | And | |
| | Website has information aimed at learners | 100% |
| | And | |
| | Careers programme is regularly monitored | 100% |
| | And | |
| | Careers programme has resources/funding allocated to it | 100% |
| 1 | And | |
| | Careers programme has explicit backing of senior leadership | 100% |
| | And | |
| 2 | Careers programme is written down | 100% |
| | Evaluation of programme includes feedback from parents/carers | 92% |
| 2 | Parents/carers are encouraged to access LMI, study options and career paths information to inform support for children | 97% |
| 2 | 76-100% learners use labour market information during programme of study | 94% |

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| 3 | College works proactively with LA/careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of vulnerable and SEND learners | 99% |
| 3 | College shares accurate and timely data with the local authority on learner transitions and destinations | 69% |
| 4 | 76-100% learners are aware of the importance of Maths for their career | 97% |
| 4 | 76-100% learners are aware of the importance of English for their career | 97% |
| 5 | 76-100% learners have at least 1 encounter through the curriculum every year | 99% |
| 5 | 76-100% learners have at least 2 encounters every year they are at college | 84% |
| 6 | 76-100% have had an experience of the workplace (excl. part-time jobs) by the time they finish their programme of study | 67% |
| 6 | n/a (only one sub-benchmark) | |
| 7 | 76-100% learners had meaningful encounters with a range of universities | 83% |
| 7 | 76-100% of learners have had meaningful encounters with a range of further education providers | 71% |
| 8 | Interviews with a qualified careers adviser are made available to all learners whenever significant study or career choices are being made | 95% |
| 8 | 76-100% have had 1+ interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of their programme of study | 47% |

Table II: Most and least frequently achieved sub-benchmarks for each benchmark – SEND/alternative provision schools (2021/22)

| Benchmark | Sub-benchmark | Achievement rate |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| 1 | School has a careers leader | 99% |
| 1 | Evaluation includes feedback from employers | 85% |
| 2 | Parents and carers encouraged to use LMI, study options and career paths information to inform support for children | 95% |
| 2 | 76-100% students/learners use LMI | 55% |
| 3 | School works proactively with LA/careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of students | 97% |
| 3 | School shares accurate and timely data with the local authority on pupil transitions and destinations | 85% |
| | And School collects and maintains accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for 3 years after they leave school/college | 85% |
| | And School enables pupils and parents/carers/families to access accurate records about their own careers and enterprise activities and decisions on future pathway | 85% |
| 4 | 76-100% students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of PSHE to future career or progression paths | 99% |
| 4 | 76-100% students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of Science to future career or progression paths | 80% |
| 5 | 76-100% students (for whom appropriate) have had at least one encounter every year | 84% |
| 5 | n/a (only one sub-benchmark) | |
| 6 | 76-100% of students (for whom appropriate) have had an experience of the workplace or a community-based setting during Year 12, Year 13 and above | 88% |
| 6 | 76-100% of students (for whom appropriate) have had an experience of the workplace or a community-based setting by the end of Year 11 | 77% |
| 7 | 76-100% have had meaningful encounters with further education providers | 87% |
| 7 | 76-100% have had at least two visits to higher education providers | 64% |
| 8 | 76-100% have had interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11 | 80% |
| 8 | 76-100% have had 2+ interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13 | 79% |

BENCHMARK I A STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME

The least frequently achieved sub-benchmarks in schools involve students having at least two visits to higher education providers, schools collecting and maintaining accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for three years after they leave school, and the majority of students having two or more interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13. However, achievement of these sub-benchmarks has significantly improved over the last three years.

Patterns are similar in SEND, with the two of the least frequently achieved sub-benchmarks involving learners having meaningful encounters with and visits to higher education providers, along with learners using labour market information.

The least frequently achieved sub-benchmarks in colleges include the majority of learners having one or more interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of their programme of study, the majority of learners having an experience of a workplace (excluding part-time jobs) by the time they finish their programme of study, and colleges integrating records of learners' participation in careers programmes at previous stages of education.

Figure 3: Benchmark I sub-benchmark achievement by schools⁴²

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| School has Careers Leader | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Careers programme includes feedback from parents/carers | 85% | 83% | 75% |
| Careers programme includes feedback from employers | 91% | 89% | 80% |
| Careers programme includes feedback from teachers | 93% | 92% | 87% |
| Careers programme includes feedback from students | 98% | 98% | 93% |
| Careers programme evaluated at least every 3 years | 98% | 98% | 97% |
| Website has information aimed at parents/carers | 98% | 97% | 92% |
| Website has information aimed at employers | 91% | 91% | 83% |
| Website has information aimed at teachers | 90% | 88% | 80% |
| Website has information aimed at students | 99% | 98% | 93% |
| Careers programme is published on website | 97% | 97% | 96% |
| Careers programme has strategic and operational elements | 98% | 98% | 96% |

⁴² Figure 3 to Figure 26 are taken from the three excel files published by CEC in 2023: School Compass sub benchmarks, College Compass sub benchmarks and SEND Compass sub benchmarks. Available from CEC (2023) *Insight briefing – Gatsby Benchmark results 2021/2022*

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Careers programme is regularly monitored | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| Careers programme has resources/funding allocated to it | 98% | 98% | 97% |
| Careers programme has explicit backing of senior leadership | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Careers programme is approved by the governors | 95% | 94% | 92% |
| Careers programme is written down | 99% | 99% | 99% |

Figure 4: Benchmark I sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| College has a Careers Leader | 99% | 100% | 99% |
| Evaluation of programme includes feedback from parents/carers | 92% | 88% | 80% |
| Evaluation of programme includes feedback from employers | 97% | 94% | 88% |
| Evaluation of programme includes feedback from college staff | 97% | 98% | 97% |
| Evaluation of programme includes feedback from learners | 100% | 100% | 99% |
| Careers programme evaluated at least every 3 years | 100% | 98% | 100% |
| Website has information aimed at other agencies | 94% | 91% | 84% |
| Website has information aimed at parents/carers | 98% | 96% | 92% |
| Website has information aimed at employers | 96% | 96% | 89% |
| Website has information aimed at college staff | 96% | 93% | 89% |
| Website has information aimed at learners | 100% | 98% | 97% |
| Careers programme is published on website | 99% | 98% | 97% |
| Careers programme has strategic and operational elements | 99% | 99% | 98% |
| Careers programme is regularly monitored | 100% | 100% | 99% |
| Careers programme has resources/funding allocated to it | 100% | 100% | 98% |
| Careers programme has explicit backing of senior leadership | 100% | 100% | 98% |
| Careers programme is approved by the governors | 96% | 93% | 89% |
| Careers programme is written down | 100% | 99% | 100% |

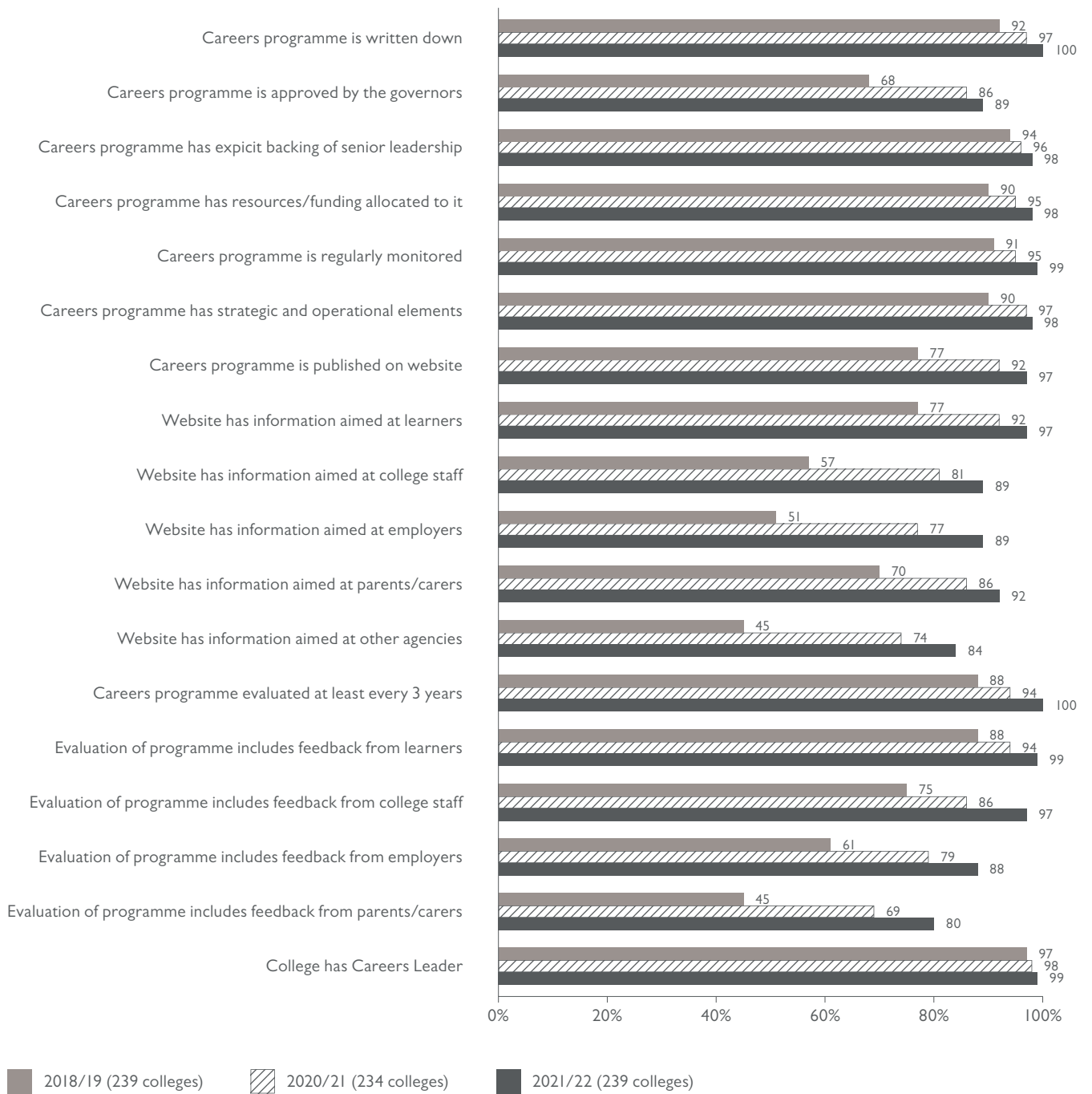
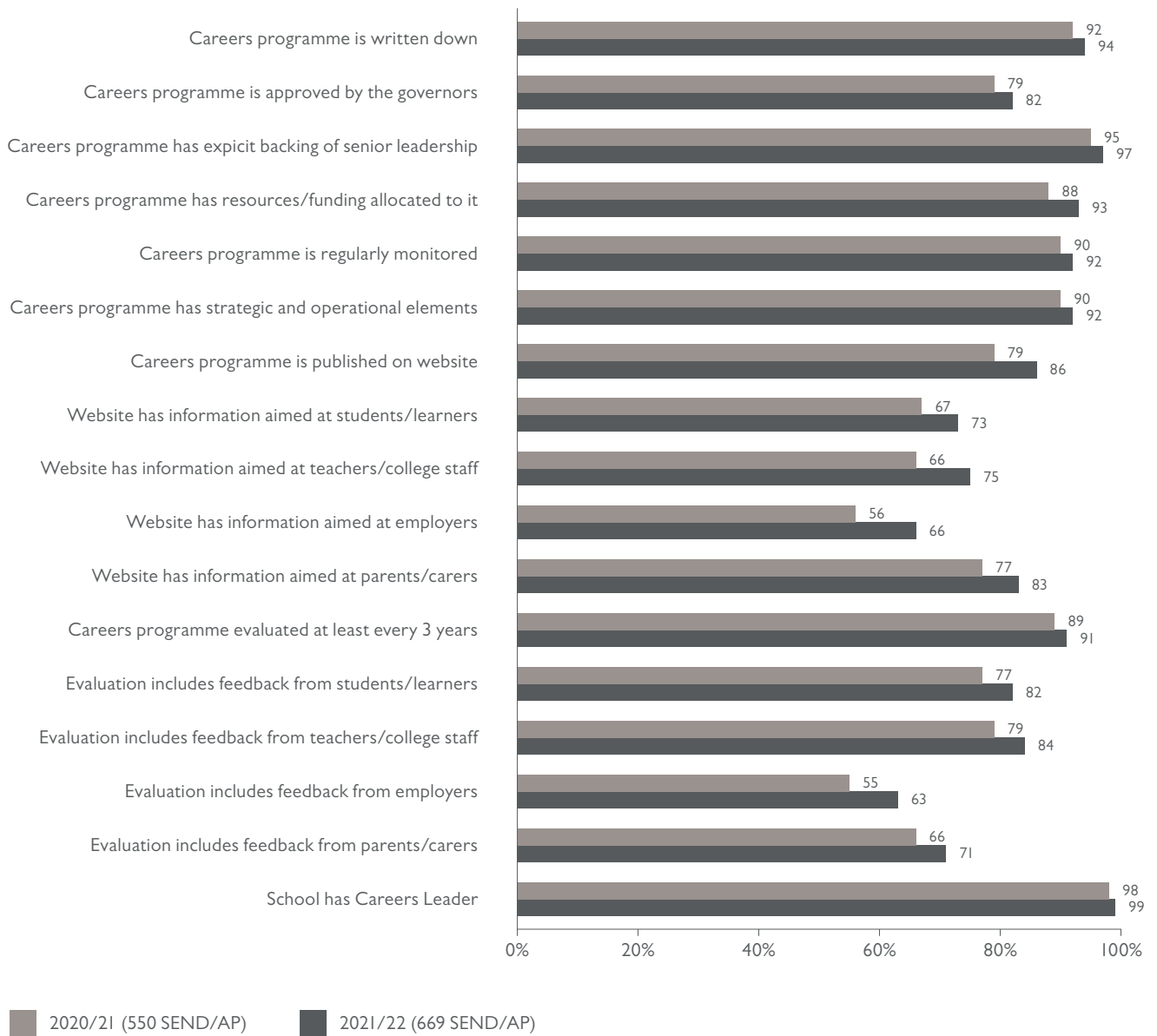


Figure 5: Benchmark 1 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (964 SEND/AP) | 2022/23 (777 SEND/AP) | 2021/22 (669 SEND/AP) |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| School has Careers Leader | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Evaluation includes feedback from parents/carers | 86% | 84% | 71% |
| Evaluation includes feedback from employers | 85% | 78% | 63% |
| Evaluation includes feedback from teachers/college staff | 95% | 92% | 84% |
| Evaluation includes feedback from students/learners | 97% | 91% | 82% |
| Careers programme evaluated at least every 3 years | 97% | 94% | 91% |
| Website has information aimed at parents/carers | 99% | 95% | 83% |
| Website has information aimed at employers | 87% | 82% | 66% |
| Website has information aimed at teachers/college staff | 91% | 88% | 75% |
| Website has information aimed at students/learners | 91% | 88% | 73% |
| Careers programme is published on website | 91% | 91% | 86% |
| Careers programme has strategic and operational elements | 95% | 94% | 92% |
| Careers programme is regularly monitored | 97% | 95% | 92% |
| Careers programme has resources/funding allocated to it | 95% | 95% | 93% |
| Careers programme has explicit backing of senior leadership | 98% | 97% | 97% |
| Careers programme is approved by the governors | 91% | 88% | 82% |
| Careers programme is written down | 97% | 96% | 94% |



**BENCHMARK 2
LEARNING FROM CAREER AND LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION**

In general, providers find it easier to encourage parents and carers to access LMI, study options and career paths information, than to be confident that over 76% of students are using LMI. Ensuring young people are using LMI is particularly challenging in SEND/alternative provision settings, with 55% of providers achieving this sub-benchmark compared to 82% of schools.

Figure 6: Benchmark 2 sub-benchmark achievement by schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Parents/carers are encouraged to access LMI, study options and career paths information to inform support | 93% | 92% | 89% |
| 76-100% students use labour market information | 89% | 87% | 82% |

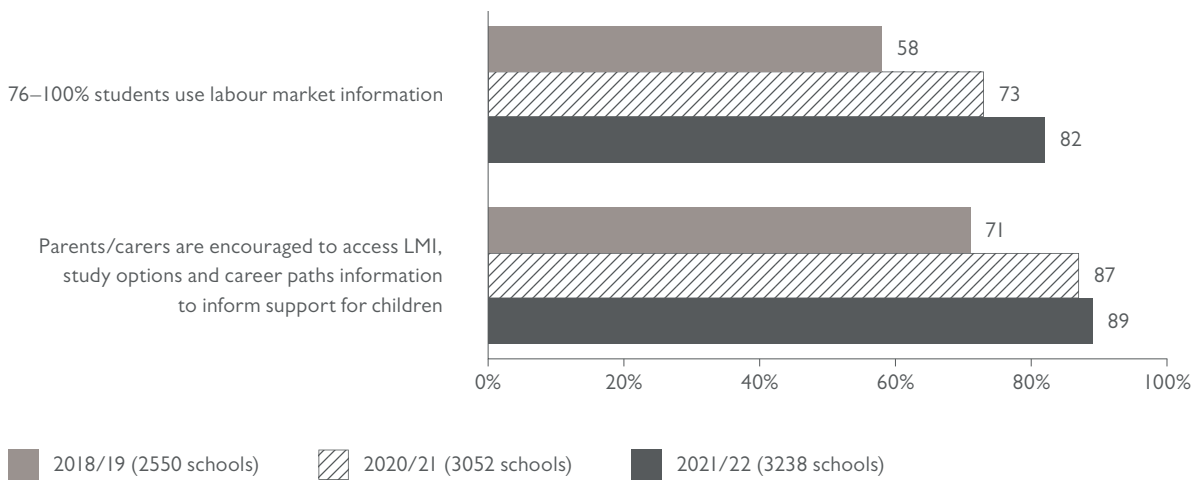


Figure 7: Benchmark 2 sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Parents/carers are encouraged to access LMI, study options and career paths information to inform support for children | 97% | 93% | 93% |
| 76-100% students/learners use labour market information during programme of study | 94% | 91% | 85% |

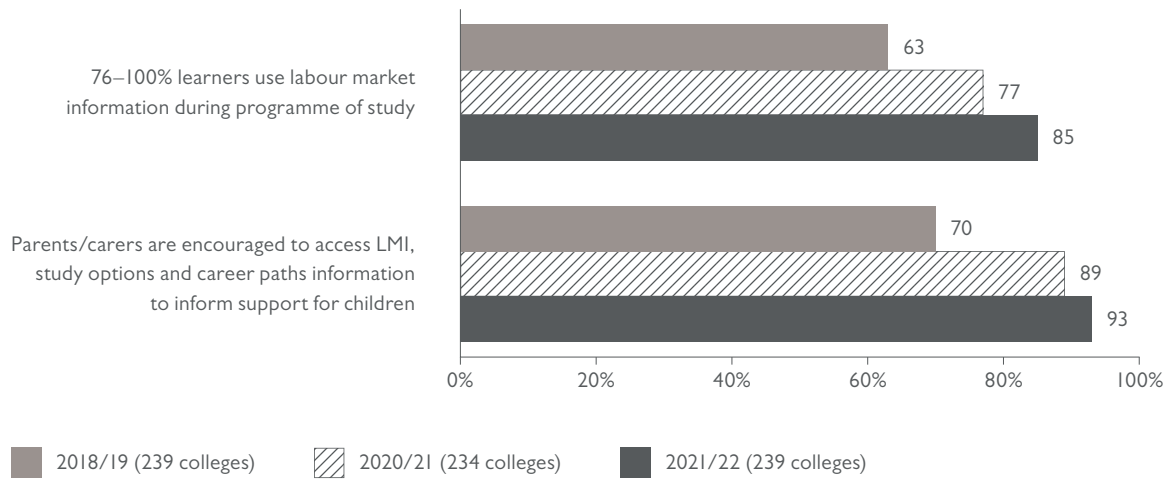
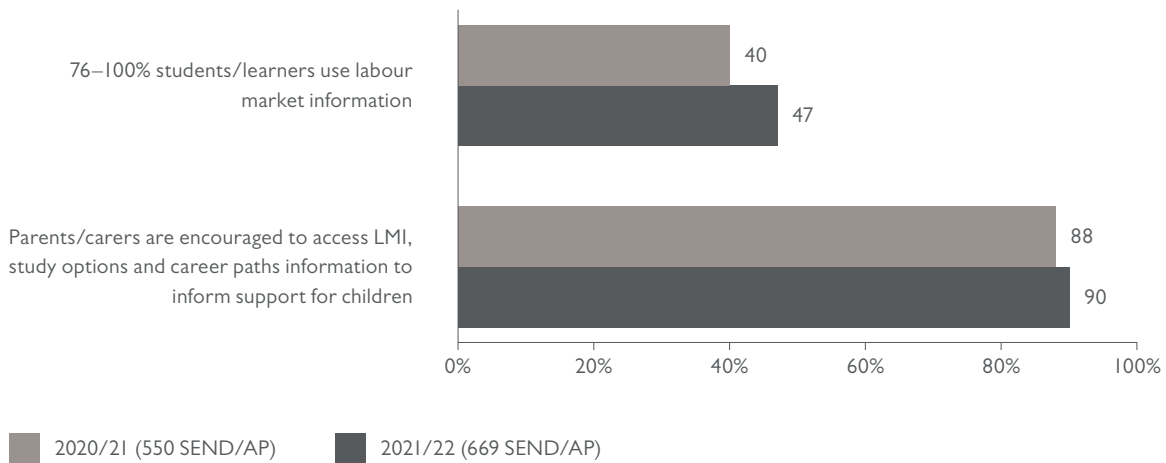


Figure 8: Benchmark 2 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (868 SEND/AP) | 2022/23 (777 SEND/AP) | 2021/22 (669 SEND/AP) |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Parents/carers are encouraged to access LMI, study options and career paths information to inform support for children | 95% | 95% | 90% |
| 76-100% students/learners use labour market information | 55% | 75% | 47% |



BENCHMARK 3 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH PUPIL/STUDENT

The hardest sub-benchmarks for schools to achieve are collecting and maintaining accurate destination data for each pupil for three years after they leave school (71%) and enabling pupils to access accurate records about their own careers and enterprise experiences (79%). The pattern is the same for SEND/alternative provision schools, 85% achieving both sub-benchmarks, but 98% and 9% of colleges achieved these sub-benchmarks respectively. Colleges found it most difficult to integrate records of learners' participation in careers activities from previous stages of their education, and only 69% of them achieved this sub-benchmark.

Figure 9: Benchmark 3 sub-benchmark achievement by schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| School works proactively with LA/careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of vulnerable and SEND students | 98% | 97% | 96% |
| School shares accurate and timely data with the local authority on pupil transitions and destinations | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| School collects and maintains accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for 3 years after they leave school/ after they leave college | 71% | 69% | 66% |
| School enables pupils to access accurate records about their own careers and enterprise experiences | 79% | 77% | 69% |
| School keeps systematic records on experiences of career and enterprise activity | 89% | 86% | 80% |
| Career programme challenges stereotypical thinking | 98% | 96% | 93% |
| Career programme actively seeks to raise the aspirations of all students | 96% | 97% | 97% |

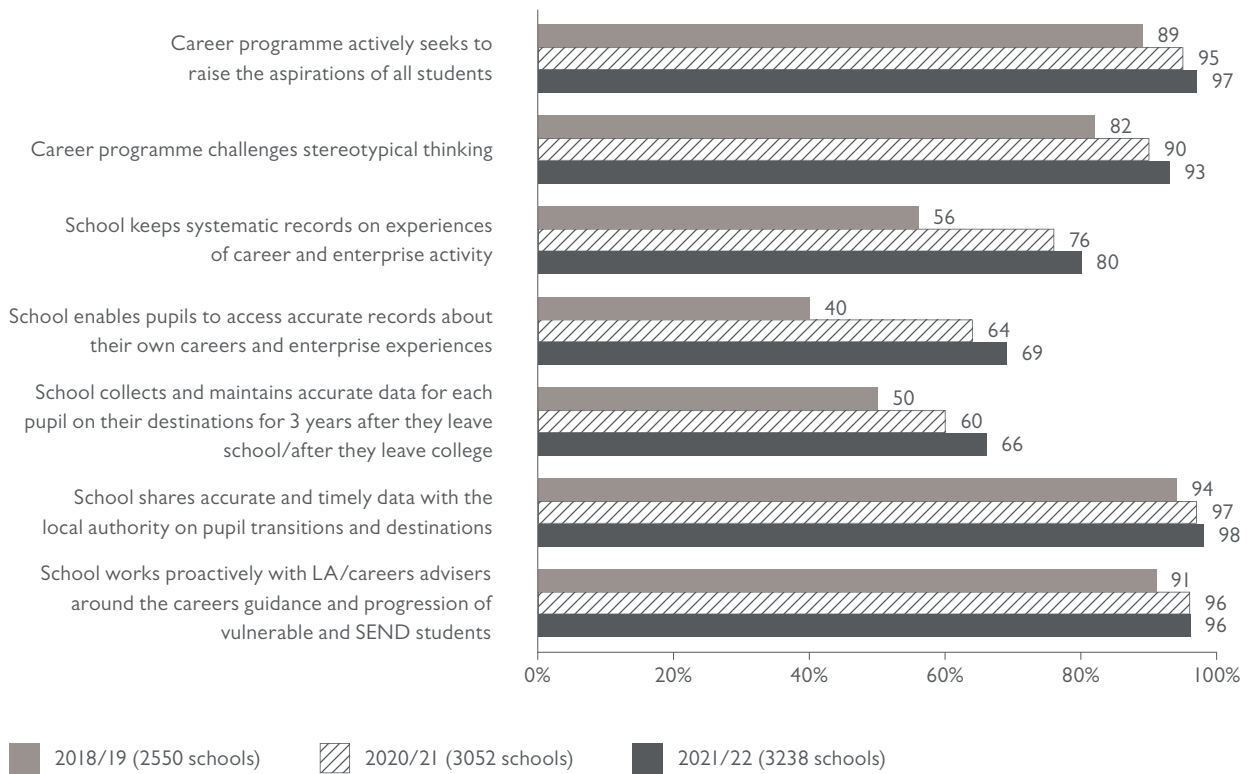


Figure 10: Benchmark 3 sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| College works proactively with LA/careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of vulnerable and SEND learners | 99% | 98% | 97% |
| College shares accurate and timely data with the local authority on learner transitions and destinations | 98% | 94% | 96% |
| College collects and maintains accurate data for each learner on their destinations for 3 years after they leave college | 98% | 97% | 97% |
| College integrates records of learners' participation in careers programmes at previous stages of education | 69% | 61% | 56% |
| College enables learners to access accurate records about their own careers and enterprise experiences | 93% | 93% | 88% |
| College keeps systematic records on experiences of career and enterprise activity | 92% | 92% | 88% |
| Career programme challenges stereotypical thinking | 96% | 98% | 93% |

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Career programme actively seeks to raise the aspirations of all learners | 98% | 99% | 98% |

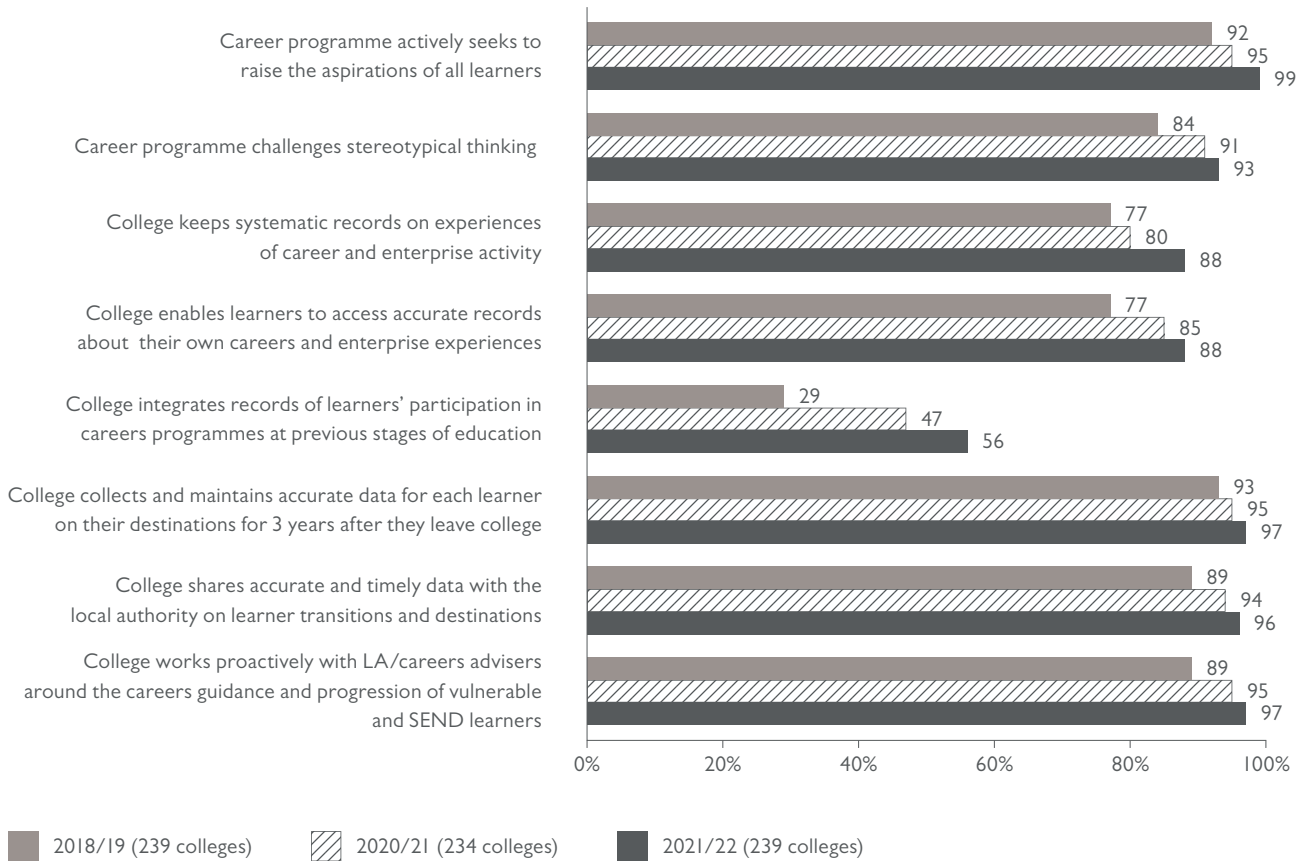
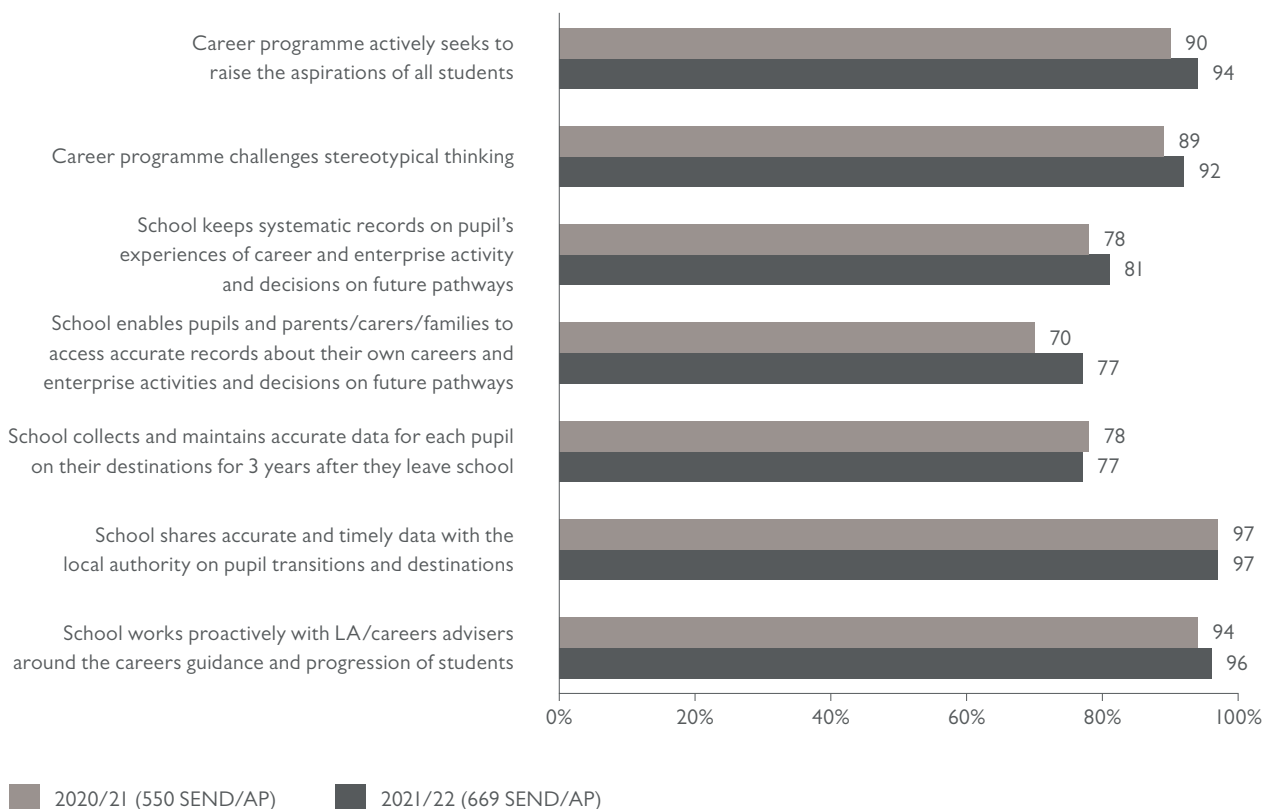


Figure 11: Benchmark 3 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (868 SEND/AP) | 2022/23 (777 SEND/AP) | 2021/22 (669 SEND/AP) |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| School works proactively with LA/careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of students | 97% | 95% | 96% |
| School shares accurate and timely data with the local authority on pupil transitions and destinations | 85% | 98% | 97% |
| School collects and maintains accurate data for each pupil on their destinations for 3 years after they leave school | 85% | 82% | 77% |
| School enables pupils and parents/carers/families to access accurate records about their own careers and enterprise activities and decisions on future pathways | 85% | 80% | 77% |
| School keeps systematic records on pupil's experiences of career and enterprise activities and decisions on future pathways | 91% | 86% | 81% |
| Career programme challenges stereotypical thinking | 97% | 94% | 92% |
| Career programme actively seeks to raise the aspirations of all students | 97% | 96% | 94% |



BENCHMARK 4 LINKING CURRICULUM LEARNING TO CAREERS

97% of colleges reported achieving all the sub-benchmarks concerned with curriculum linkage. Schools reported having greatest difficulty linking English and maths (75% for both subjects), while SEND/alternative provision schools reported having greatest difficulty linking science (80%). Schools and SEND/alternative provision schools were also asked about linking PSHE, and it is the subject that these providers found it easiest to link, with 95% of schools and 99% of SEND/alternative provision schools reporting that at least 76% of their students experienced curriculum learning that highlighted the importance of PSHE to future career paths.

Figure 12: Benchmark 4 sub-benchmark achievement by schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 76-100% students have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of PSHE to future career paths | 95% | 93% | 91% |
| 76-100% students have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of Science to future career paths | 87% | 84% | 79% |
| 76-100% students have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of Maths to future career paths | 83% | 80% | 75% |
| 76-100% students have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of English to future career paths | 84% | 81% | 75% |

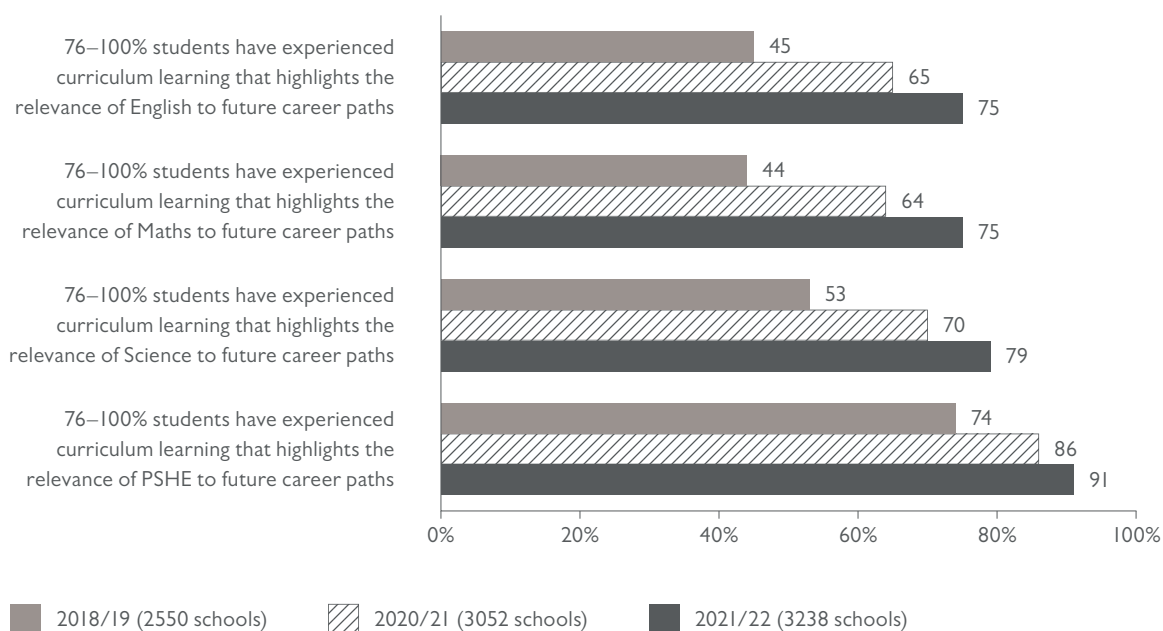


Figure 13: Benchmark 4 sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 76-100% learners are aware of the importance of Maths for their career | 97% | 92% | 91% |
| 76-100% learners are aware of the importance of English for their career | 97% | 93% | 93% |
| 76-100% learners have experienced curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of their subject to future career paths | 97% | 95% | 94% |

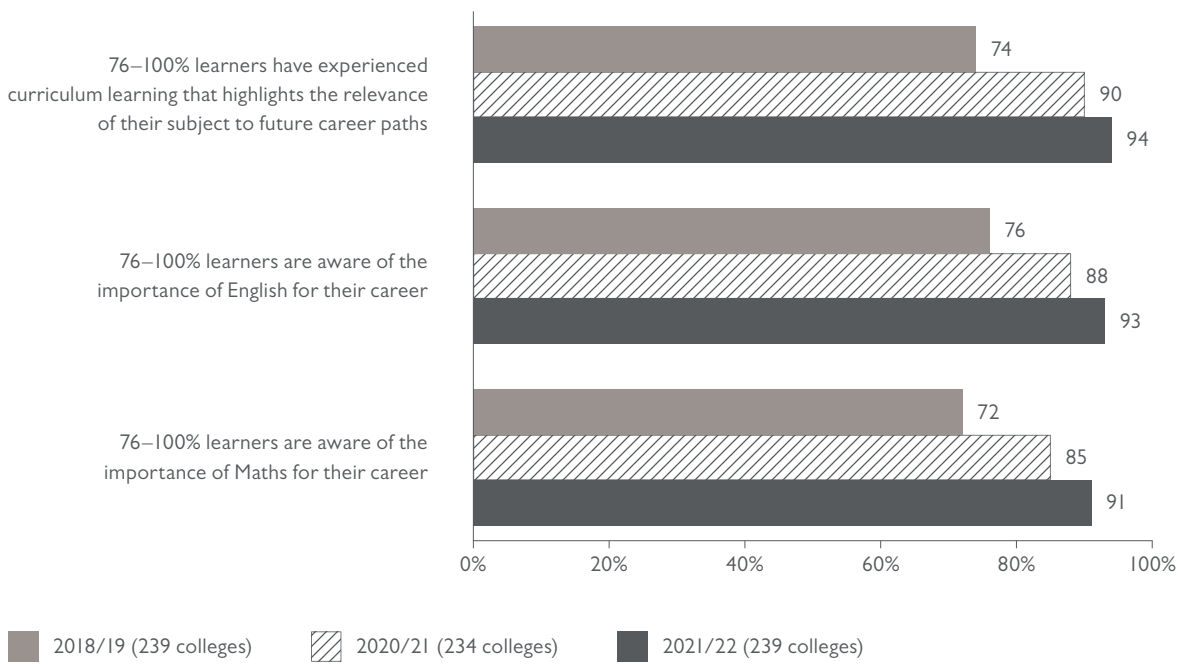
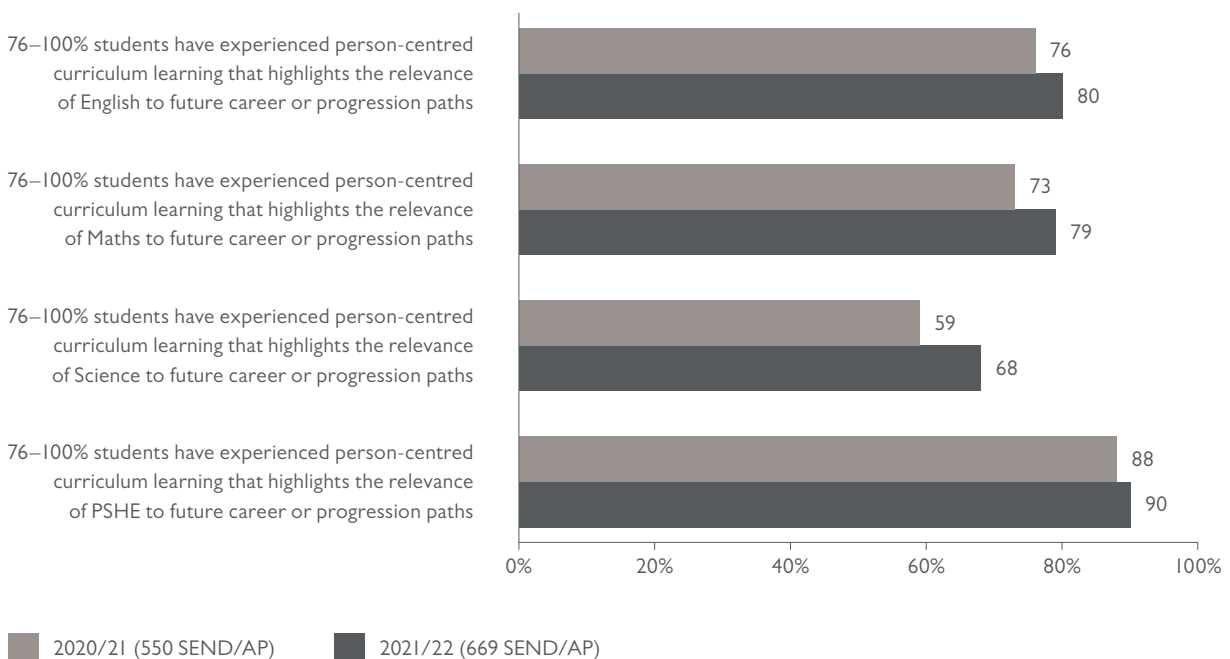


Figure 14: Benchmark 4 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (868 SEND/AP) | 2022/23 (777 SEND/AP) | 2021/22 (669 SEND/AP) |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 76-100% students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of PSHE to future career or progression paths | 99% | 93% | 90% |
| 76-100% students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of Science to future career or progression paths | 80% | 76% | 68% |
| 76-100% students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of Maths to future career or progression paths | 87% | 84% | 79% |
| 76-100% students have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of English to future career or progression paths | 88% | 85% | 80% |



**BENCHMARK 5
ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES**

Only the college framework has more than one sub-benchmark. The percentage of colleges recording and taking account of learners’ part-time employment (84%) is lower than those being able to give their learners at least one encounter with employers and employees every year (99%).

Figure 15: Benchmark 5 sub-benchmark achievement by schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 76-100% of students have at least 1 encounter with an employer every year they are at school | 86% | 81% | 71% |

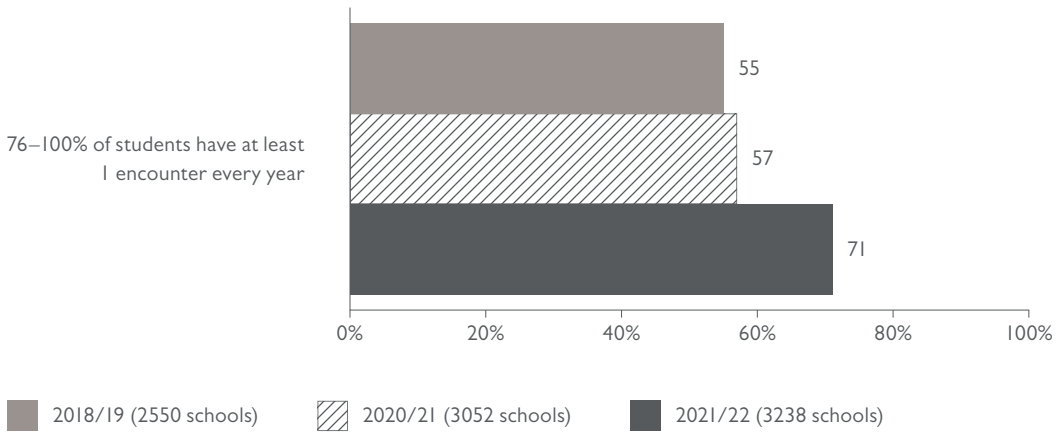


Figure 16: Benchmark 5 sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| College records and takes account of learners' part-time employment and influence on their development | 84% | 81% | 80% |
| 76-100% learners have at least 2 encounters every year they are at college | 98% | 87% | 82% |
| 76-100% learners have at least 1 encounter through the curriculum every year | 99% | 93% | 92% |

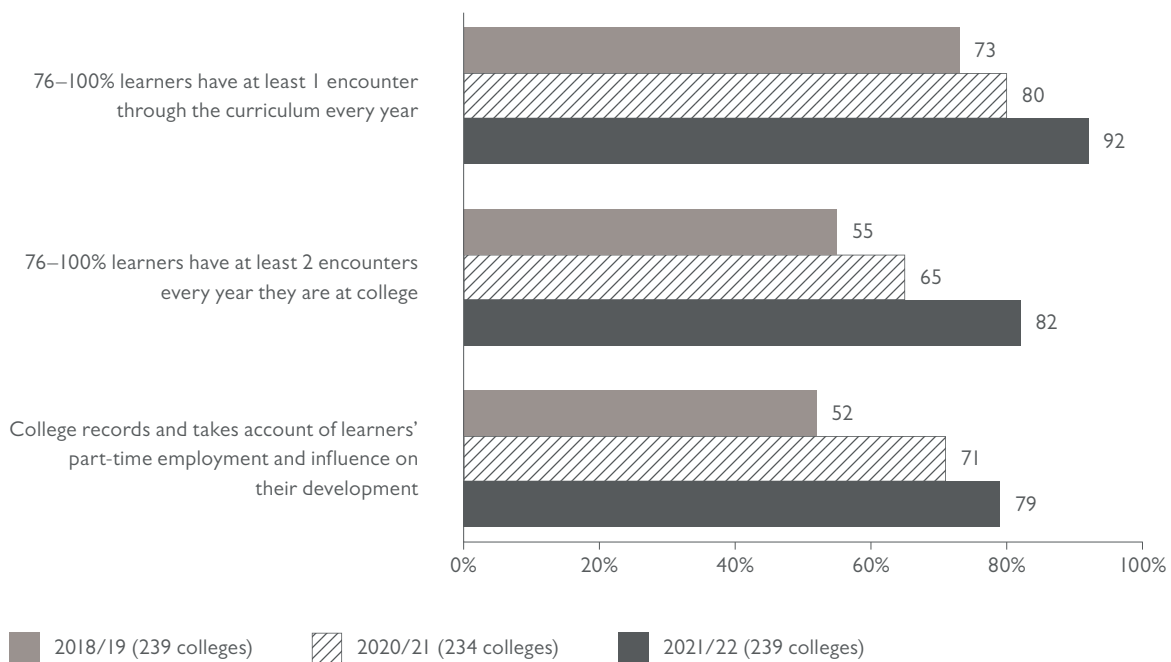
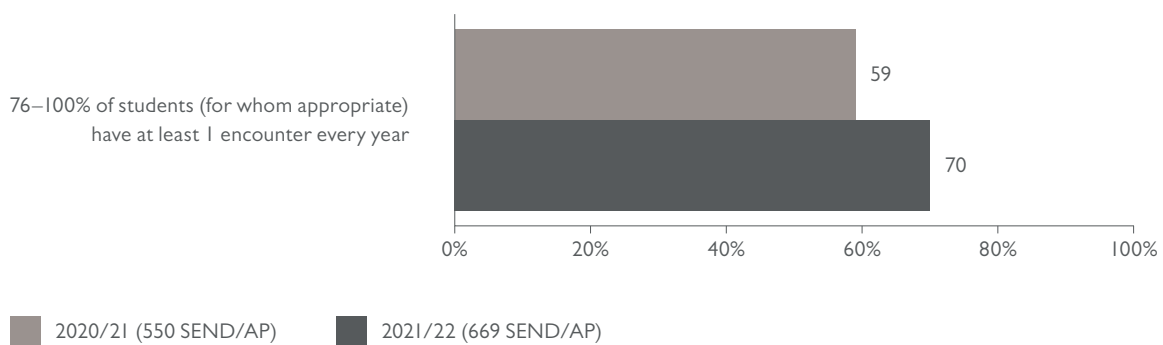


Figure 17: Benchmark 5 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (868 SEND/AP) | 2022/23 (777 SEND/AP) | 2021/22 (669 SEND/AP) | 2020/21 (N=2,550 schools) |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 76-100% of students (for whom appropriate) have at least 1 encounter every year | 84% | 78% | 70% | 59% |



**BENCHMARK 6
EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACES**

In general, a lower percentage of colleges have been able to provide these experiences by the time their learners finish their programmes (67%) than schools (76% by the end of Year 11, 84% in Year 12 or Year 13) or SEND/alternative provision schools (77% by the end of Year 11, 88% in Year 12 or Year 13).

Figure 18: Benchmark 6 sub-benchmark achievement by schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 76-100% students have had experience of workplace in Y12 or Y13 | 84% | 77% | 65% |
| 76-100% students have had experience of workplace by end Y11 | 76% | 68% | 56% |

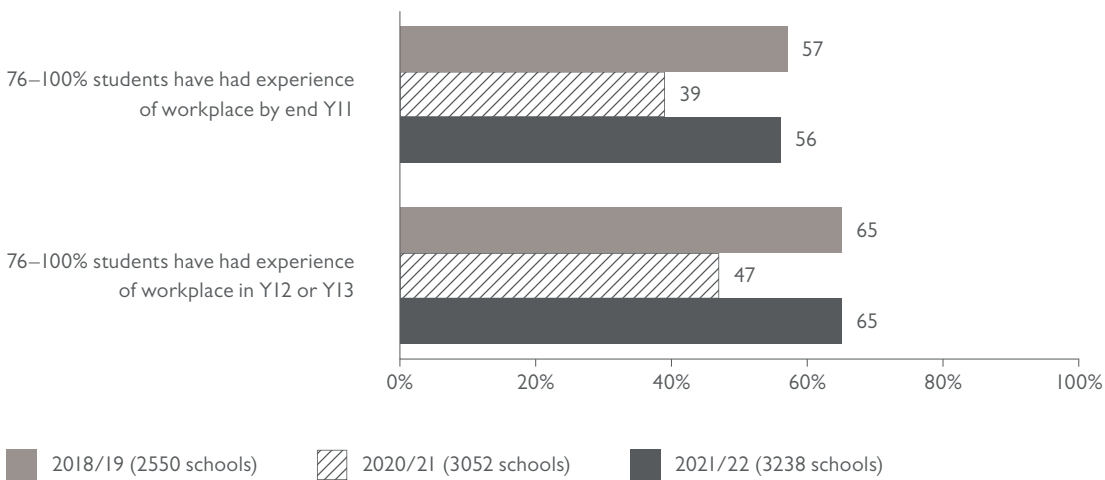


Figure 19: Benchmark 6 sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (n=254) | 2021/22 (n=239) |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 76-100% learners have had an experience of a workplace (excluding part-time jobs) by the time they finish programme of study | 67% | 63% | 57% |

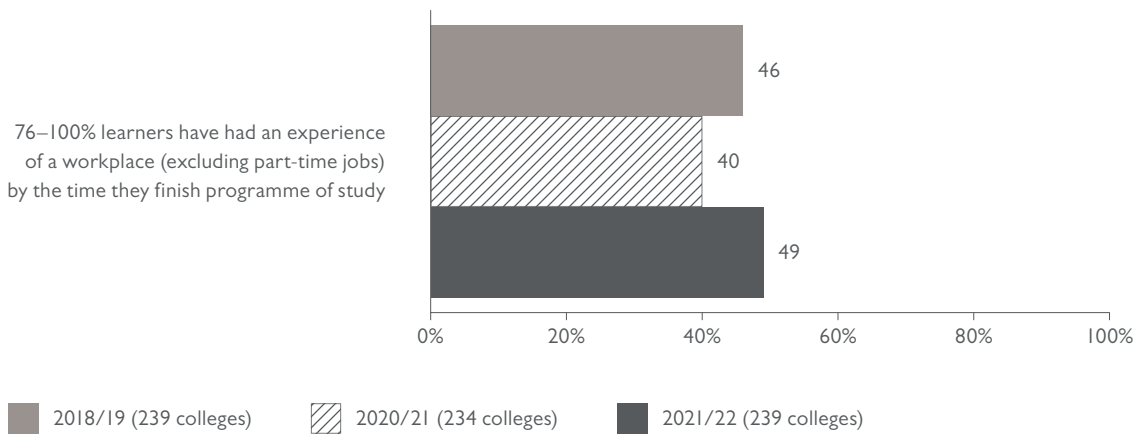
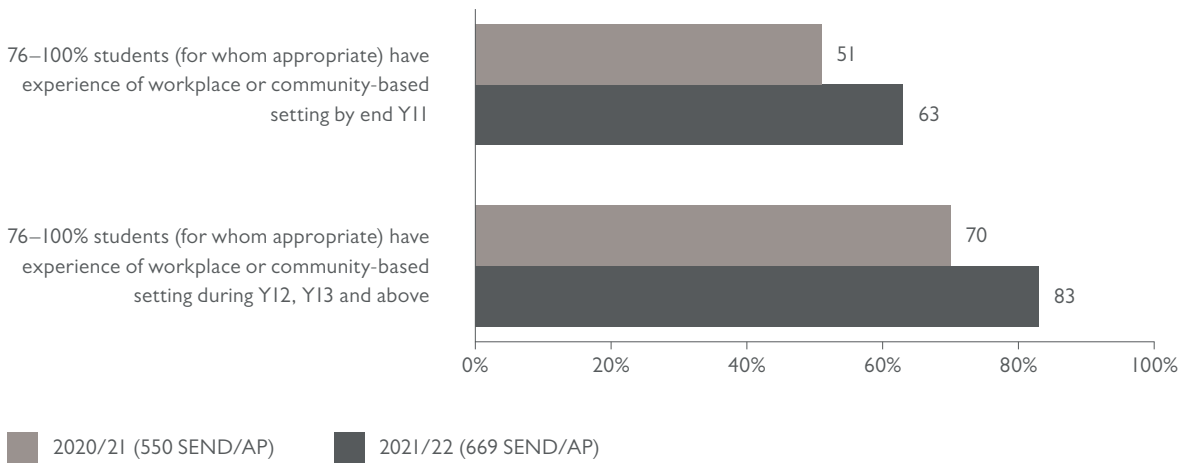


Figure 20: Benchmark 6 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 76-100% students have had experience of workplace in Y12 or Y13 | 88% | 77% | 65% |
| 76-100% students have had experience of workplace by end Y11 | 77% | 68% | 56% |



BENCHMARK 7 ENCOUNTERS WITH FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

A higher percentage of schools reported that 76% to 100% of their students had accessed information about the full range of apprenticeships (94%) than had encounters with further education colleges (90%) and sixth form colleges (88%). The percentage of schools reporting that 76% to 100% of their students had encounters with higher education providers was lower (82%), as was the percentage of those having encounters with ITPs (74%).

Fewer of colleges (71%) reported that 76% to 100% of their students had encounters with a range of further education colleges, compared with universities (83%). 77% reported 76% to 100% of their students having information about apprenticeships.

SEND/alternative provision schools focused on providing encounters with non-higher education providers (89% for further education colleges compared with 78% for higher education providers).

Figure 21: Benchmark 6 sub-benchmark achievement by schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 76-100% students have had at least 2 visits to HE providers | 62% | 58% | 53% |
| 76-100% students have had meaningful encounters with HE providers | 82% | 78% | 75% |
| 76-100% students have had meaningful encounters with Independent Training Providers | 74% | 69% | 60% |
| 76-100% students have had meaningful encounters with FE colleges | 90% | 86% | 79% |
| 76-100% students have had information about the full range of apprenticeships | 94% | 92% | 90% |
| 76-100% students have had meaningful encounters with sixth form colleges | 88% | 85% | 80% |

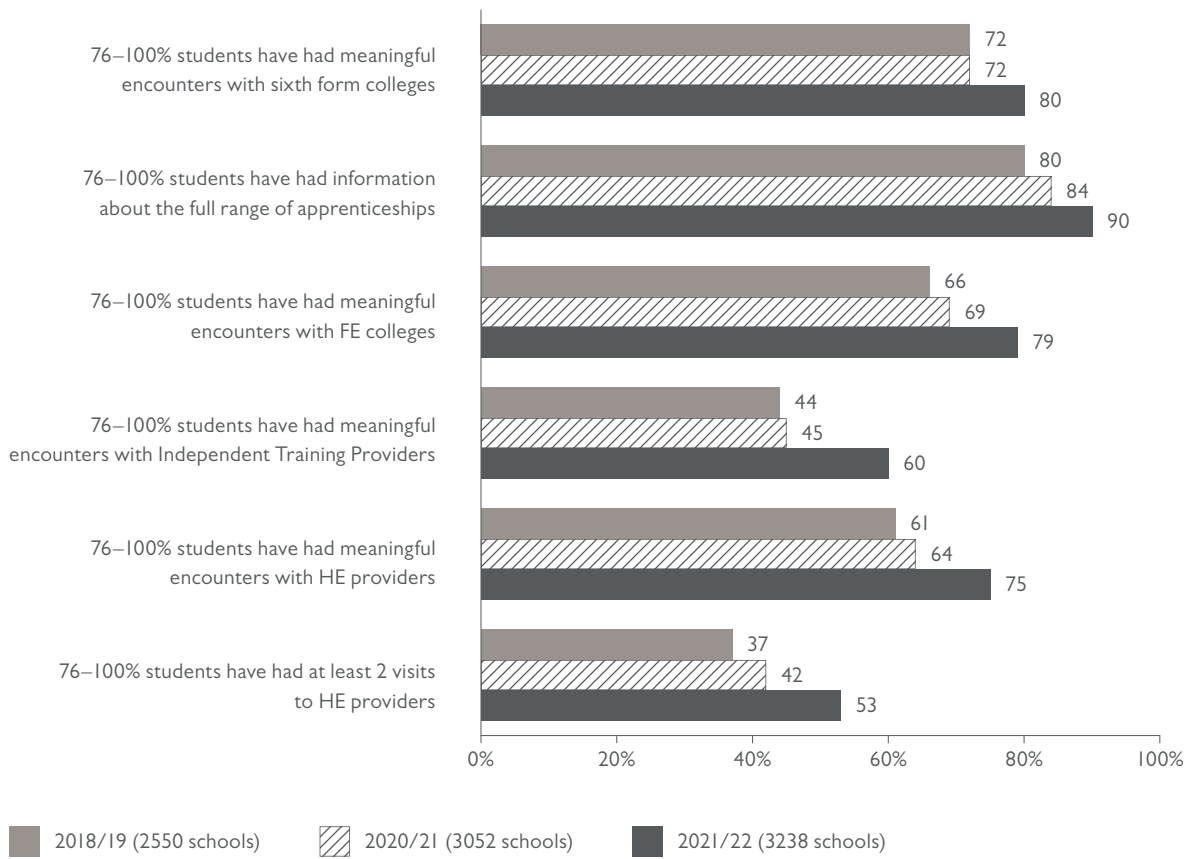


Figure 22: Benchmark 7 sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 76-100% of learners have had meaningful encounters with a range of universities | 83% | 82% | 73% |
| 76-100% of learners have had meaningful encounters with a range of FE providers | 71% | 68% | 62% |
| 76-100% of learners have had meaningful encounters with a range of apprenticeship providers | 77% | 63% | 65% |

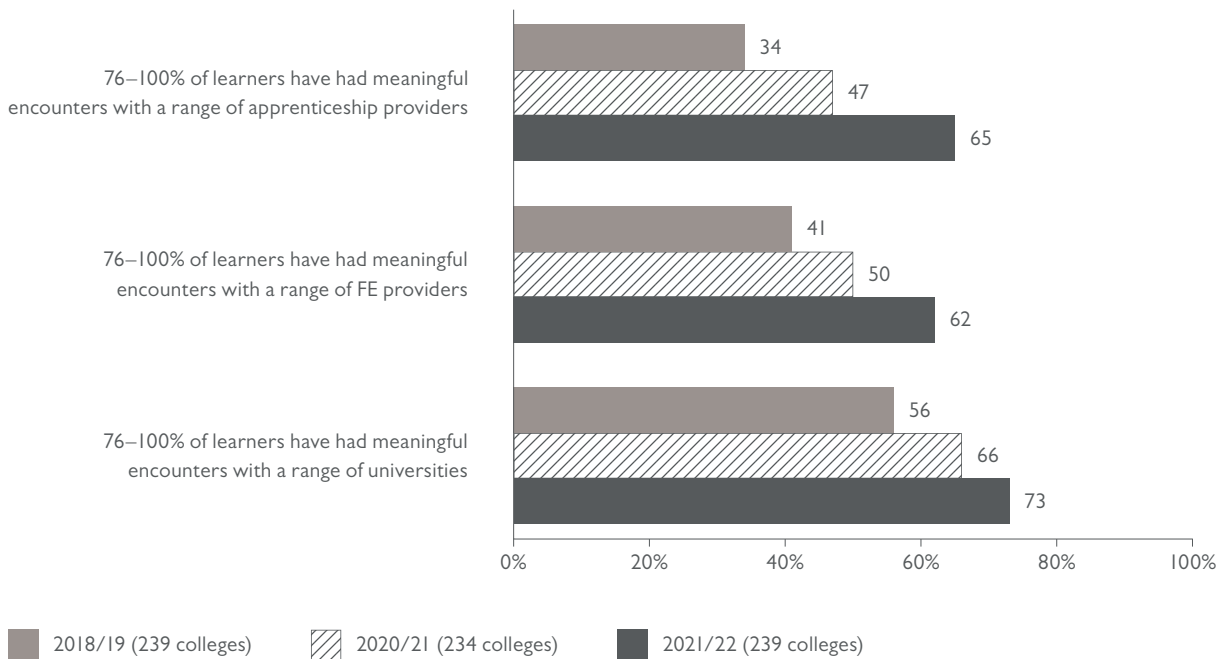
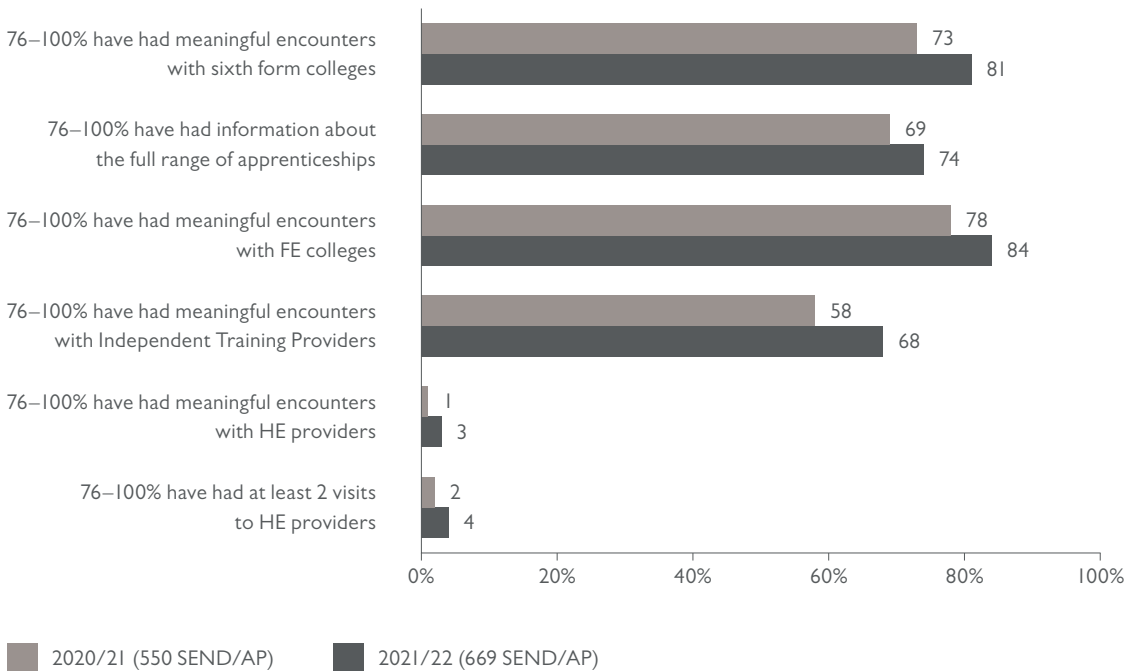


Figure 23: Benchmark 7 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (868 SEND/AP) | 2022/23 (777 SEND/AP) | 2021/22 (669 SEND/AP) | 2020/21 (550 SEND/AP) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 76-100% have had at least 2 visits to HE providers* | 67% | 70% | 47% | 35% |
| 76-100% have had meaningful encounters with HE providers* | 78% | 76% | 64% | 35% |
| 76-100% have had meaningful encounters with Independent Training Providers | 78% | 90% | 68% | 58% |
| 76-100% have had meaningful encounters with FE colleges | 89% | 90% | 84% | 78% |
| 76-100% have had information about the full range of apprenticeships | 82% | 78% | 74% | 69% |
| 76-100% have had meaningful encounters with sixth form colleges | 85% | 85% | 81% | 73% |



**BENCHMARK 8
PERSONAL GUIDANCE**

Ninety-five percent of colleges made interviews with qualified careers advisers available to all learners, but only 47% of them had significant take-up.

The percentage of schools that reported their students participating in interviews in sixth form (73%) was less than those who reported student participation by the end of Year 11 (88%).

Figure 24: Benchmark 8 sub-benchmark achievement by schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550 schools) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 76-100% students have had 2+ interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13 | 73% | 71% | 66% |
| 76-100% students have had an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11 | 88% | 86% | 85% |

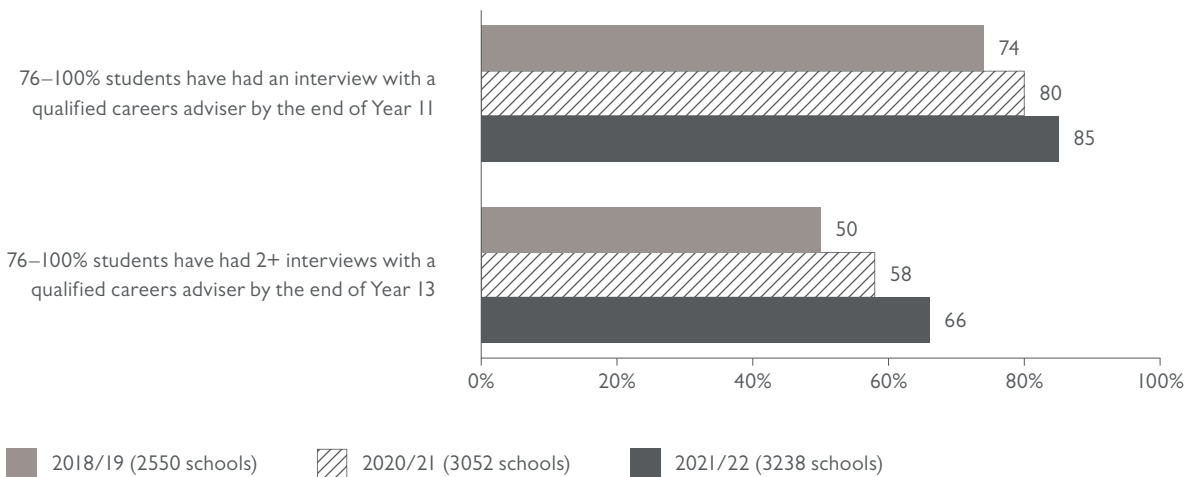


Figure 25: Benchmark 8 sub-benchmark achievement by colleges

| | 2023/24 (256 colleges) | 2022/23 (254 colleges) | 2021/22 (239 colleges) |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Interviews with a qualified careers adviser are made available to all learners whenever significant study or career choices are being made | 95% | 96% | 97% |
| 76-100% learners have had 1+ interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of their programme of study | 47% | 44% | 40% |

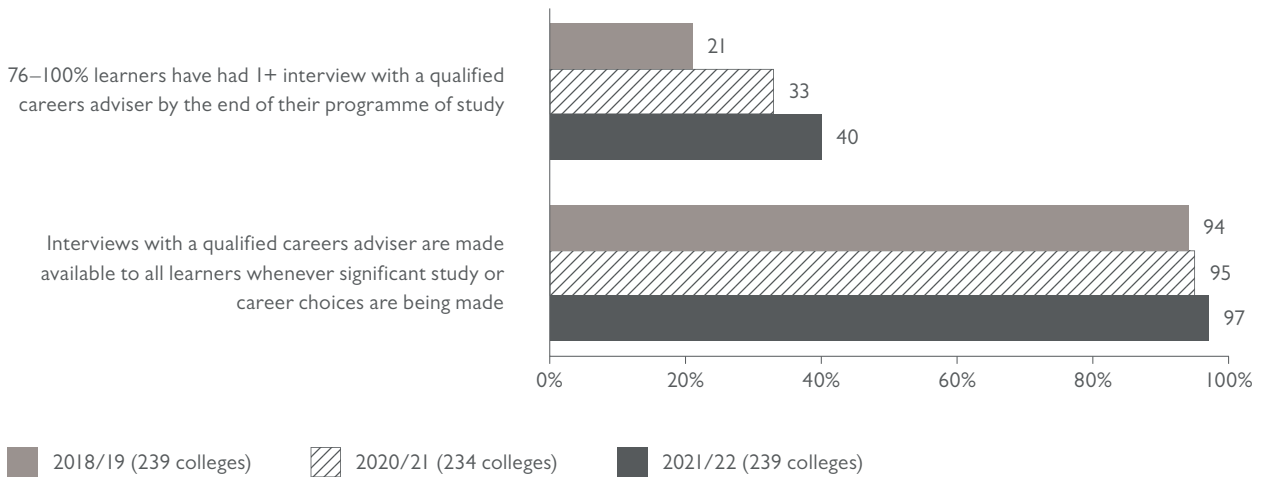
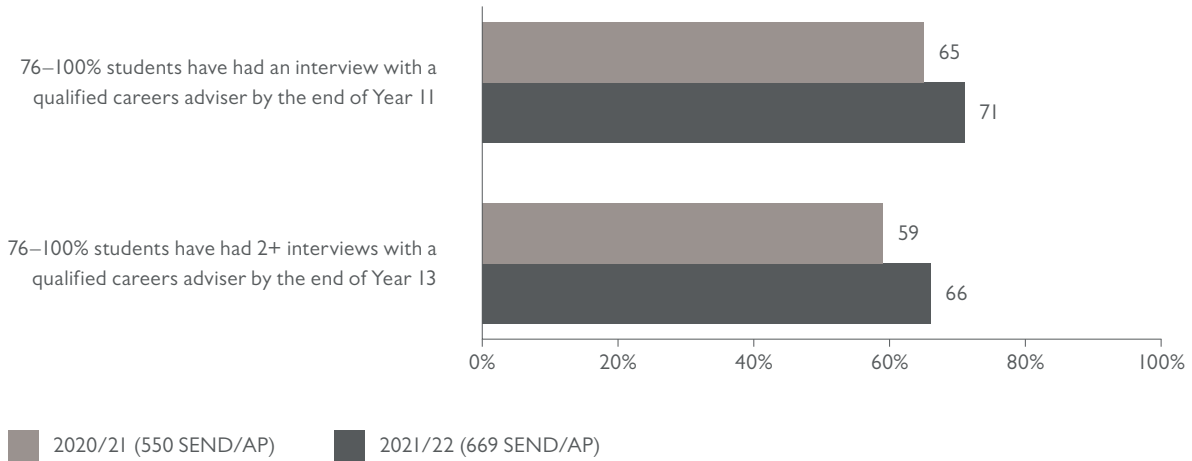


Figure 26: Benchmark 8 sub-benchmark achievement by SEND/alternative provision schools

| | 2023/24 (n=3,550) | 2022/23 (n=3,453 schools) | 2021/22 (n=3,238 schools) |
|---|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 76-100% students have had 2+ interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13 (601 SEND/AP) | 79% | 73% | 66% |
| 76-100% students have had an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11 (821 SEND/AP) | 80% | 76% | 71% |



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