

CAREERS
HUB. CENTRAL
LONDON

IMPACT REPORT

2024
2025



Reed in Partnership

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



Funded by
UK Government



**“At the
heart of our
success is
collaboration.”**





INTRODUCTION

The Central London Careers Hub continues to champion the ongoing improvement of careers education in schools and colleges in the capital. We are pleased to bring this report together to reflect on another year of progress, innovation and collaboration.

Our work in the last 12 months has seen our network grow in strength and ambition, with deeper partnerships, broader reach and a sharper focus on the issues relevant to young people's preparation for the future of work.

This year we've taken bold steps to begin to modernise work experience, aligning with the plans for the government's Work Experience Guarantee and ensuring that every young person has access to meaningful, skills-rich encounters with the world of work. We are reimagining what impactful work experience looks like in a changing economy, with pioneering employer partnerships and new models of delivery.

At the heart of our success is collaboration. Whether with employers, educational settings, local authorities or fellow London Careers Hubs, we've seen time and again that London works best when it works together. Our shared commitment to social mobility, inclusion and opportunity has driven significant change.

As we move into the next academic year, we welcome the launch of the Gatsby 10 Year Review, which has reflected on a decade of careers education reform and set the direction for the future.

We also know there is more we can do to continuously improve our work. We want to make further improvements so we can go even further in ensuring every young person can confidently take their next step beyond education and successfully out into a fulfilling career.

We are proud of what we've achieved and even more excited for what's to come.

Michelle Sporle
Strategic Hub Lead

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

252

EDUCATIONAL
SETTINGS
ACROSS:

144
MAINSTREAM
SCHOOLS

58
SEND

18
ALTERNATIVE
PROVISION

32
FE
COLLEGES

95% coverage of
Central London education settings

185,000 11-18 year-old students

183 new employers onboarded

163 voluntary Enterprise Advisers

9 cornerstone employers

6 Industry Advisory Groups convened

ABOUT US

The Central London Careers Hub is delivered by Reed in Partnership as part of a wider national network. It is funded nationally by the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and in London by the Greater London Authority.

Our mission is to ensure every young person in Central London has access to high-quality, inclusive careers education and meaningful employer engagement. Doing this helps them to make confident, informed decisions about their futures.

We bring together schools, colleges, employers, training providers and local authorities to create a joined-up approach to careers education. We work with over 250 educational settings in our Central London network, which are attended by around 180,000 young people aged 11–18.

We have used data-driven insights, including the Compass+ platform and the Future Skills Questionnaire, to tailor our support to each institution's needs.

Our work is powered by a network of industry volunteers who bring real-world expertise into these education settings. This includes 163 Enterprise Advisers and six Industry Advisory Groups.

Our work over the last academic year was guided by five strategic priorities set by the Careers & Enterprise Company:



IMPROVING CAREERS PROVISION

Supporting schools and colleges to deliver high-quality careers education that is aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks.



DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY EMPLOYER EXPERIENCES

Ensuring students have meaningful encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace.



AMPLIFYING VOCATIONAL ROUTES

Raising awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships, T Levels and technical education pathways.



CHALLENGING DISADVANTAGE

Targeting support to those who face the greatest barriers to opportunity, including students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those eligible for free school meals.



CONNECTING CAREERS EDUCATION TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

Aligning provision with London's evolving labour market and growth sectors.

OUR IMPACT



IMPROVING CAREERS PROVISION

Over the last academic year, we focused on further improving the quality of careers education across the educational settings in our network.

The Gatsby Benchmarks remain the core measurement framework for careers education. Research from the Careers & Enterprise Company shows that higher Gatsby Benchmark performance directly correlates to improved student destination outcomes and reduced NEET (not in education, employment or training) rates.

We are really pleased to report continued year-on-year improvement in achievement of every one of the Gatsby Benchmarks by educational settings in our network. The average number of Gatsby Benchmarks achieved has also increased this year to 5.8, up 0.5 on the previous year.

Year	GB1 A stable careers programme	GB2 Learning from career and labour market information	GB3 Addressing the needs of each student	GB4 Linking curriculum learning to careers	GB5 Encounters with employers and employees	GB6 Experiences of the workplace	GB7 Encounters with further and higher education	GB8 Personal guidance
2022	42% ↑	55% ↑	38% ↑	58% ↑	62% ↑	54% ↑	30% ↑	52% ↑
2023	49% ↑	65% ↑	50% ↑	63% ↑	71% ↑	66% ↑	41% ↑	59% ↑
2024	56% ↑	73% ↑	56% ↑	75% ↑	81% ↑	72% ↑	45% ↑	61% ↑
2025	67% ↑	82% ↑	64% ↑	84% ↑	86% ↑	80% ↑	50% ↑	69% ↑

some figures have been rounded down

A range of factors have contributed to this improvement.

Improvements to achievement of **Gatsby Benchmark 1** were achieved by using the Careers Impact System (CIS) to help careers leaders in educational settings in our network to reflect on the quality and intent behind their delivery. The structured framework helps them to assess the impact of their careers programme on whole-institution priorities, helping them to move from isolated activity toward holistic and embedded practice. We have seen immediate impact from the schools who have used the system.

We have also scaled up our use of the Internal Leadership Reviews (ILR), built around the Careers Impact Maturity Model (the first stage before going through CIS). The ILR process provides a shared language for school, college

and SEND leadership to frame careers as a driver for institutional improvement. We have seen 63 educational settings in our network complete the ILR over the last academic year. This has helped them to better identify barriers to providing great careers education, build on existing strengths and develop focused improvement plans.

We have made significant progress in supporting schools to fully meet **Gatsby Benchmark 4** (linking curriculum learning to careers), largely driven by the rollout of a structured encounter programme with employers for teachers.

Building on a successful pilot two years ago, the initiative was scaled up over the past year and involved partnerships with a wide range of employers, including ZSL London Zoo, Lloyds Banking Group and Investment 2020 Into Film.

These encounters were specifically designed to get teachers into workplace environments, with the aim of:

- Helping teachers better understand the breadth of careers available within different sectors.
- Equipping them with up-to-date labour market information.
- Enabling them to embed this knowledge into classroom teaching and curriculum planning – making careers learning more relevant and contextualised for students.



DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY EMPLOYER EXPERIENCES

The Central London Careers Hub is actively preparing the education and employer engagement system to align with the UK Government's vision for modern work experience, as outlined in the updated statutory guidance and Gatsby Benchmarks.

The vision includes a commitment to guarantee every young person 10 days of high-quality, meaningful work experience during their secondary education. This reflects a broader ambition to modernise work experience, making it more inclusive, skills-focused and employer-led.

The **Equalex Framework**, developed by The Careers & Enterprise Company, is supporting the aims of government's Work Experience Guarantee.

We have collaborated with educational settings in our network to see how the framework can be embedded into their careers planning and use it to better integrate work experience into a whole-school/college careers programme. The aim is to enable multiple formats of work experience opportunities, including virtual, hybrid and in-person experiences and support progressive learning outcomes, mapped to core themes such as employability, sector awareness and workplace behaviours.

“Thank you for the insightful session, which was very helpful and interesting. Thank you for sharing your journey with us – such a wonderful opportunity.”

**– Lead of Business,
Southbank University
Sixth Form**

In support of this, we have launched an Equalex Employer Charter. This is a commitment-driven initiative that empowers employers to engage meaningfully with students, helping them to build future talent pipelines or drive social value in communities. We are encouraging them to:

- Commit to providing high-quality work experience activity, including contributing to the government's Work Experience Guarantee by committing at least one day per year to activities aligned with the principles of the Equalex Framework.
- Support diverse and inclusive hiring practices by offering opportunities to young people from all backgrounds, including those who face barriers to employment.
- Engage in continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and enhancing their career outreach activities to align with the national Employer Standards framework. Chartered Employers will complete the assessment annually, supported by the Central London Careers Hub.

Taken together, these initiatives will help educational settings in our network to prepare for assessment against the updated Gatsby Benchmark 6 definition, that the government's Work Experience Guarantee is necessitating.



AMPLIFYING VOCATIONAL ROUTES

In 2024/5, the Central London Careers Hub has continued to champion technical and vocational pathways, with a sharp focus on embedding employer voice into student experiences and aligning with the Provider Access Legislation. This legislation is driving change, ensuring that all young people having meaningful encounters with a range of providers, particularly those offering apprenticeship and technical routes.

Next Steps Live. These broadcasts had over 29,000 live views in 2024/5 and have since been watched over 13,500 times on demand.

The Hub has worked strategically with schools and colleges to connect employer led sessions, insights days and workshops that bring vocational opportunities to life. These engagements have been designed not only to inform but to inspire, giving students direct access to industry professionals and real-world careers journeys.

Next Steps Magazine launched this year. The pan-London publication is a vibrant resource showcasing positive role models who have progressed through technical and vocational routes. Featuring stories from apprenticeships, information on T levels, and voice of early career professionals, the magazine has helped to challenge outdated perceptions and promote aspirational alternatives to university. We also hosted the three pan-London Next Steps Live broadcasts, aimed to promote apprenticeships and technical pathways through live meaningful broadcasts with employers, providers and apprentices voice. These broadcasts had over 29,000 live views in 2024/5 and have since been watched over 13,500 times on demand. In addition, we collaborated with the other London hubs on a parent focused webinar series with ASK London, to support better understanding and access to information around apprenticeship and technical routes.

The result of the Hub work in this area is driving a more inclusive, dynamic landscape where technical and vocational routes are amplified, and young Londoners are empowered to make informed, confident decisions about their future.



CHALLENGING DISADVANTAGE

In line with the focus on equity in the Equalex Framework, we have been prioritising young people at risk of missing out, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with additional needs.

Over the past academic year, we have implemented a strategic model of support through dedicated Enterprise Coordinators, who work with cohorts across both alternative provision (AP) and SEND settings. The aim is to provide students in these cohorts with early exposure to diverse industries, helping them make informed choices and build confidence in key skills like communication and problem-solving.

This focused approach has had a transformative impact on the quality and consistency of careers education within these educational settings by helping us to address the unique needs of their students.

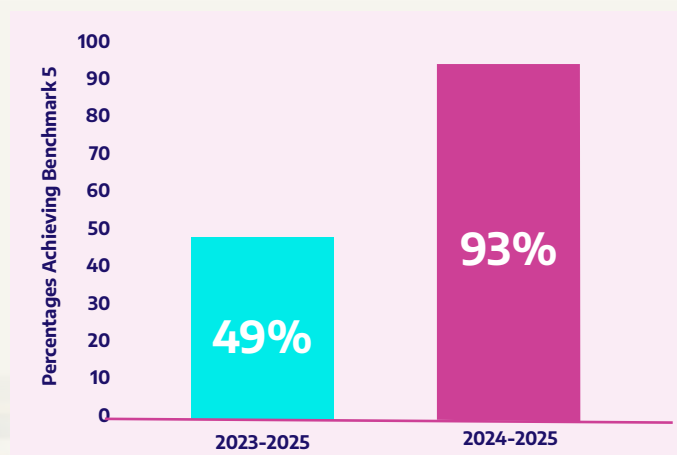
By assigning Enterprise Coordinators with significant expertise and time dedicated to support AP and SEND settings, the Hub has been able to:

- Tailor provision to individual student needs, recognising the complexity and diversity of those in AP and SEND settings.
- Develop strong, sustainable partnerships with employers who understand and value inclusive engagement.

- Embed meaningful employer encounters (**Gatsby Benchmark 5**) into the educational experiences of students who have historically been underrepresented in such opportunities.
- Provide continuous support to staff within these settings, building confidence and capacity to delivery against the other Gatsby Benchmarks.

The impact is evident. There has been a notable increase in Gatsby Benchmark achievement across the entire specialised caseload, with AP settings showing the most significant improvement.

For instance, the proportion of AP settings fully achieving **Gatsby Benchmark 5** rose from 69% in 2023–2024 to 93% in 2024–2025.





CONNECTING CAREERS EDUCATION TO LOCAL ECONOMIES

This year we were proud to launch our Industry Advisory Groups (IAGs). These are comprised of professionals from key sectors who volunteer their time to advise the Central London Careers Hub on our activities and engagement with their sector.

We have formed six IAGs that reflect the government's Industrial Strategy growth-driving sectors (the 'IS-8' sectors) and growth sectors identified in the Mayor of London and London Council's London Growth Plan (LGP):



Digital & Tech IAG, Left to Right: Bhavin Patel (Aarav Solutions), Nahdia Khan (Tasir Consulting, IAG Chair), Connor Natella (OHL – Industry & Policy), Rebecca Wyatt (Project Officer), Sam Holmes (Causeway Education), Jay Lang (Noir Space BH), Charles Humphreys (Enterprise Coordinator).

Supporting the London Growth Plan

The Central London Careers Hub is a key delivery partner in realising the ambitions of the LGP, particularly in driving inclusive talent development, sector-led employer engagement and place-based economic opportunity.

Our IAGs provide sector intelligence and shape employer engagement strategies so we can ensure that careers education reflects current and future labour market needs. Their quarterly recommendations feed directly into the Central London Careers Hub delivery strategy.



Construction, Engineering and the Built Environment (LGP)



Healthcare and Life Sciences (IS8) (LGP)



Hospitality and Retail (LGP)



Finance and Insurance (IS-8) (LGP)



Creative, Culture and Media (IS-8) (LGP)



Digital and Technology (IS-8) (LGP)

Many of the London boroughs that we work in are identified in the LGP as growth hotspots, including Southwark, Camden, Westminster and Islington. We are playing our part in these areas by driving local regeneration and inclusive growth by connecting young people to local opportunities. We are also contributing to the development of borough-level economic growth strategies and London's Skills Improvement Plan by providing labour market insight and employer feedback to our borough partners.

We are also promoting the good work principles within the LGP with the employer partners in our network. This includes encouraging inclusive recruitment and progression practices, particularly in growth sectors where diversity gaps persist, and supporting employers to become active civic partners, contributing to local economic development and social mobility.

OUR FUTURE

As we look ahead to the new academic year and beyond, the Central London Careers Hub remains focused on driving meaningful, measurable change in careers education. Our work will centre around three key priorities that reflect both national strategy and local need:



CONTINUING TO IMPROVE CAREERS EDUCATION

We are aiming to further raise achievement of all eight Gatsby Benchmarks across our network through high quality delivery and partnership work and by fostering a shared culture of continuous improvement and innovation. This includes:

- Expanding the use of the CIS to support self-assessment and peer learning.
- Facilitating borough-wide collaboration to share best practice and drive collective progress.
- Providing targeted support to institutions with the greatest need.

This work is fully aligned with the updated statutory guidance for careers education and the ambitions of the Gatsby 10 Year Review. We will continue to support our network to embed the benchmarks and guidance with greater depth and intent.



MODERNISING AND EXPANDING WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience remains a cornerstone of effective careers education, but it must continue to evolve to meet the needs of today's students and employers. Using the Equalex Framework we will:

- Champion inclusive, high-quality modern work experience for all young people, particularly those facing disadvantage.
- Support the rollout of the national Work Experience Guarantee.
- Work with employers to diversify the types of experiences on offer, including more project-based and sector-specific models.



BOOSTING APPRENTICESHIPS AND TECHNICAL PATHWAYS

We will continue to amplify the benefits of vocational routes and ensure that every young person understands the full range of options available to them after education. Our focus will include:

- Increasing awareness and uptake of apprenticeships, T Levels and other technical qualifications.
- Supporting schools to meet the requirements of the Provider Access Legislation (PAL).
- Equipping educators with the tools and confidence to promote vocational pathways as aspirational, high-quality choices.

By focusing on these three priorities, and continuing to work in partnership with educators, employers and stakeholders, we will ensure that young Londoners are best supported to find their best next step.

As these strategies evolve, we will continue to ensure our work supports a fairer, more resilient and future ready workforce.

**WORK
WITH
US**



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