

Benchmark 1 - A stable careers programme

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

- A sustained and flexible intervention, Brightside mentoring can be incorporated into the school timetable and enhance other careers interventions taking place within the curriculum.
- Pupils can discuss what they have learned across different careers interventions with their mentor.
- Brightside's safe and secure online platform is accessible at any time from any device, meaning pupils can use it to get as much high quality careers advice as they need.
- We evaluate every project using our impact framework, which provides robust evidence of impact and value.

Benchmark 2 - Learning from career and labour market information

Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.

- Mentors have first-hand knowledge of a range of industries and educational routes, so information they provide will be well-informed, trustworthy and accurate.
- Mentors help young people relate information about education and careers to their individual situation and context.
- Our platform includes resources and e-learning activities providing accurate and accessible information about future study options and careers routes.

Benchmark 3 - Addressing the needs of each pupil

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

- Young people are matched with the mentor most suitable to their interests, skills and background, wherever they are in the country.
- Young people receive personalised 1:1 support from their mentor, who takes time to understand the young person's individual strengths and circumstances, and tailors their guidance accordingly.
- Mentors act as role models, raising young people's aspirations and belief that they can achieve similar things.

Benchmark 4 - Linking curriculum learning to careers

All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.

- Brightside mentoring for specific subjects can be embedded directly into the curriculum. Using examples from their own experiences, mentors help young people to understand how what they learn at school is relevant to a range of future careers.
- Our Sector Insight projects connect pupils with mentors from specific industries who helps them learn about the different routes into the sector, linking these routes to the subjects they are currently studying.
- Mentors help young people develop skills around time management and communication valuable for both school and their future careers.
- We run programmes connecting young people with current higher education and further education students studying STEM subjects or graduates working in related careers.

Benchmark 5 - Encounters with employers and employees

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.

- Mentors come from a wide range of industries and professional backgrounds. They can explain different sectors and introduce young people to the range of different roles and opportunities, helping them find the best fit for their skills and the various routes they can take.
- Mentors also give an honest insight into what to expect from the day-to-day reality of working in their sector.
- Working with leading employers, Brightside has also developed Sector Insight projects of 'virtual work experience' combining mentoring and e-learning for young people with an interest in specific industries. We currently offer programmes in Business, Creative and Digital, Education, Engineering, Finance, Healthcare, IT and Law.

Benchmark 6 - Experiences of workplaces

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks.

- Brightside mentoring can prepare young people for work experience placements by connecting them with mentors who can help them understand what to expect and how to make the most out of their time with an employer.
- Mentors aid young people in reflecting on their experience afterwards, identifying what they have learnt and how it can be applied in future careers.
- A safe, convenient and flexible way for employers and pupils to maintain contact after or between placements and encounters.

Benchmark 7 - Encounters with further and higher education

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

- Our mentors include current undergraduates, former apprentices and those who have taken other educational routes.
- Mentors support young people to decide if higher education or more vocational routes are better for them, help them to choose the best options at school to apply for the post-16 courses they want, and give them impartial information which clears up any confusion around topics such as tuition fees or the relative value of apprenticeships.

Benchmark 8 – Personal guidance

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

- Mentors offer additional support and continuity between face-to-face interviews with careers advisers, helping pupils explore ideas in more detail.
- Brightside mentoring provides impartial and informed advice and personalised 1:1 support.
- Brightside mentoring programmes can be co-ordinated around periods in the school year when important decisions are being made.
- Our online model means mentors can be contacted at short notice to discuss pressing questions, without having to wait to schedule a meeting.

Contact Alex Reilly on alex.reilly@brightside.org.uk or 0203 096 8127 to find out more about how Brightside mentoring can help your school meet the Gatsby benchmarks.