

Careers Impact in Focus:

Learning from National System Reviews

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THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY



Agenda

- Welcome, Framing and Aims
- The Role of CEC and impact insight
- The Value of Holistic Careers Provision & The Careers Impact System
- National System Review 2: The role of Careers in mitigating disadvantage
- National System Review 2: Practice Insight
- National System Review 3: Preview
- Reflections

Standardised continuous
improvement and quality
assurance of careers
across the system

Who are we?

We are the national body for careers education in England, supporting providers to deliver modern, 21st century careers education.

Our mission:

To help every young
person find their best
next step.

CEC impact model – why Gatsby Benchmark progress matters

1 | We support and challenge schools, colleges and employers



Networks

93% schools and colleges in a Careers Hub (**44** Careers Hubs covering all of England)

233k Future Skills Questionnaire student responses

112,679 primary pupils benefitting from **1,122** employer encounters



Educators

3,708 Careers Leaders trained (**90%** accessing CPD)

92% schools and colleges reporting using Compass

1,100 Teacher Encounters



Employers

811 Employer Standard Assessments

416 Cornerstone and Hub Employers

3,810 Enterprise Advisers

Data from September 2024

2 | Which improves provision, closing gaps



Average Gatsby Benchmarks* across the system up from **2.1** to **5.8** in 6 years

Schools and colleges in Careers Hubs for the longest achieve **nearly double** the number of Gatsby Benchmarks (**6.2**) compared to those not engaged (**3.4**)



Employers who work with Careers Hub improve the impact of their outreach - performing on average **16%pts** higher across all standards than other employers



This year, **39,000 extra workplace experiences** were provided for disadvantaged young people via Careers Hubs.

*There are 8 Gatsby Benchmarks

3 | Delivering better outcomes for young people



20% reduction in NEET* for most disadvantaged schools where they meet 8 Gatsby Benchmarks



From Year 7 to Year 11, student **understanding of apprenticeships more than doubles**, on par with understanding of A-Levels, and **career readiness rises from 49% to 68%**

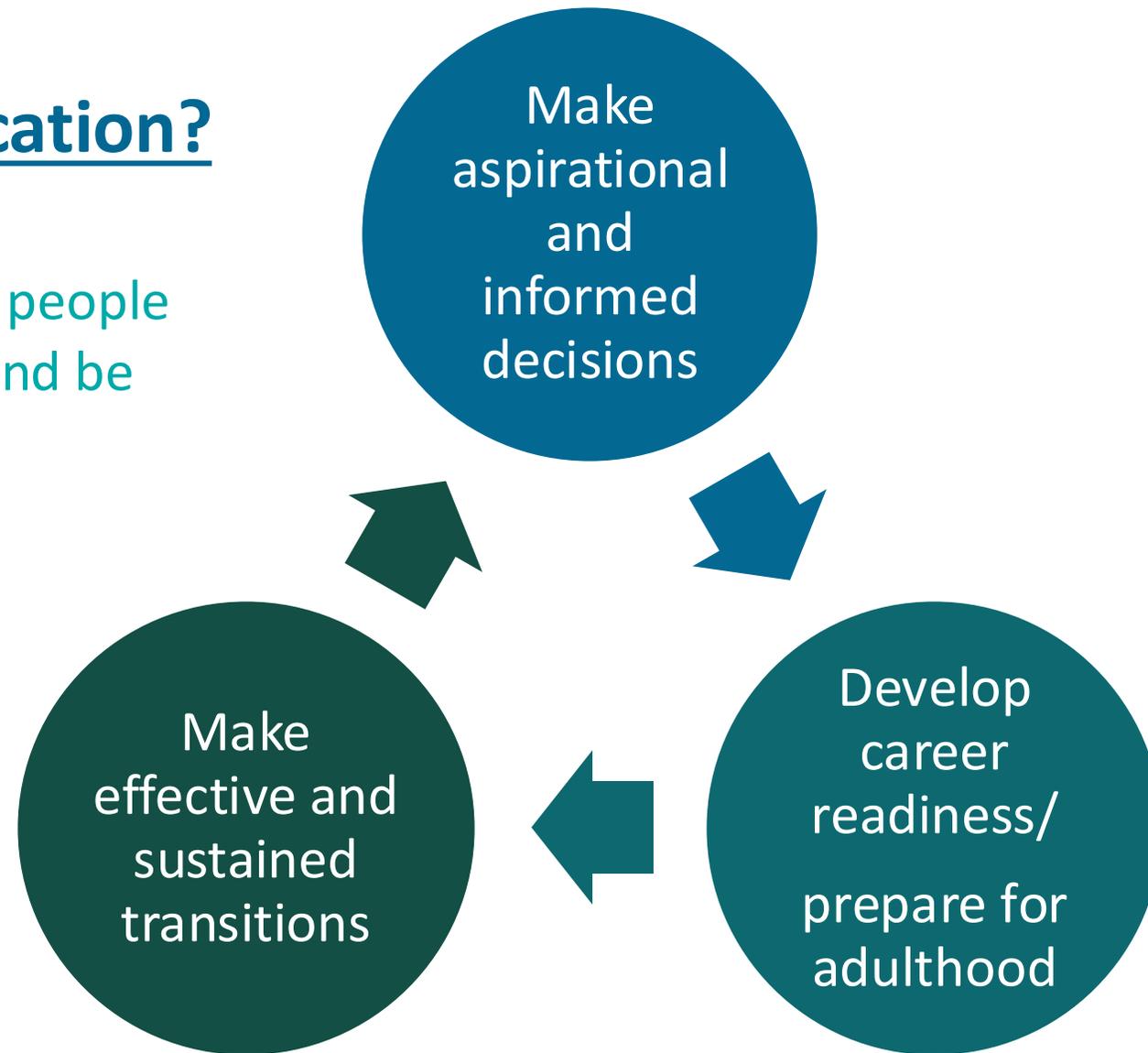


80% of employers working with Careers Hubs say their work in schools and colleges is **helping to bring apprentices into their organisations**.

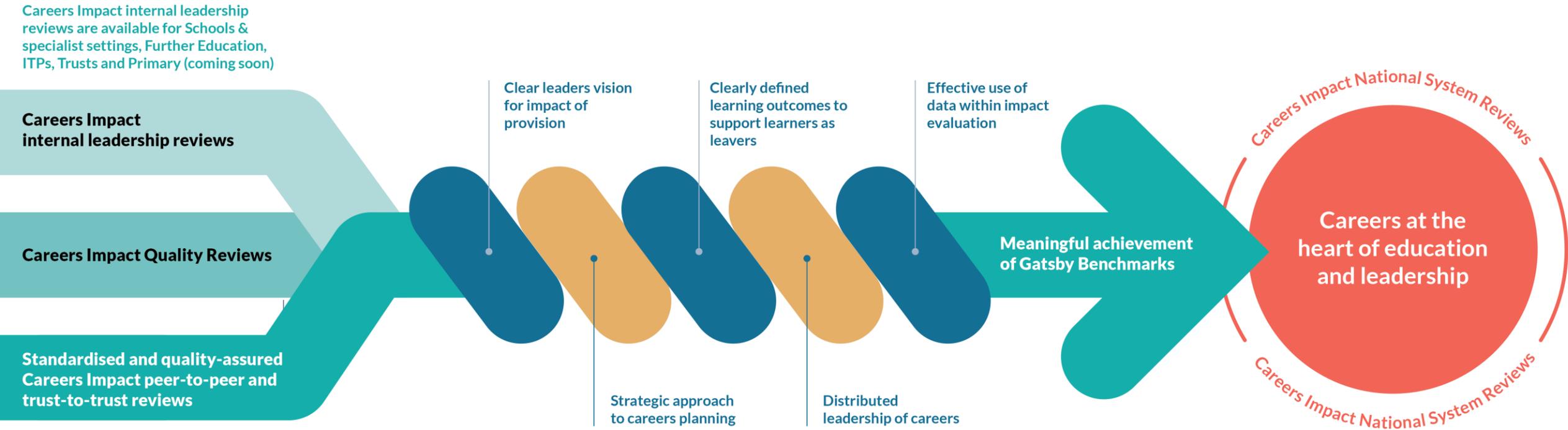
*Not in education, employment or training, including unknowns

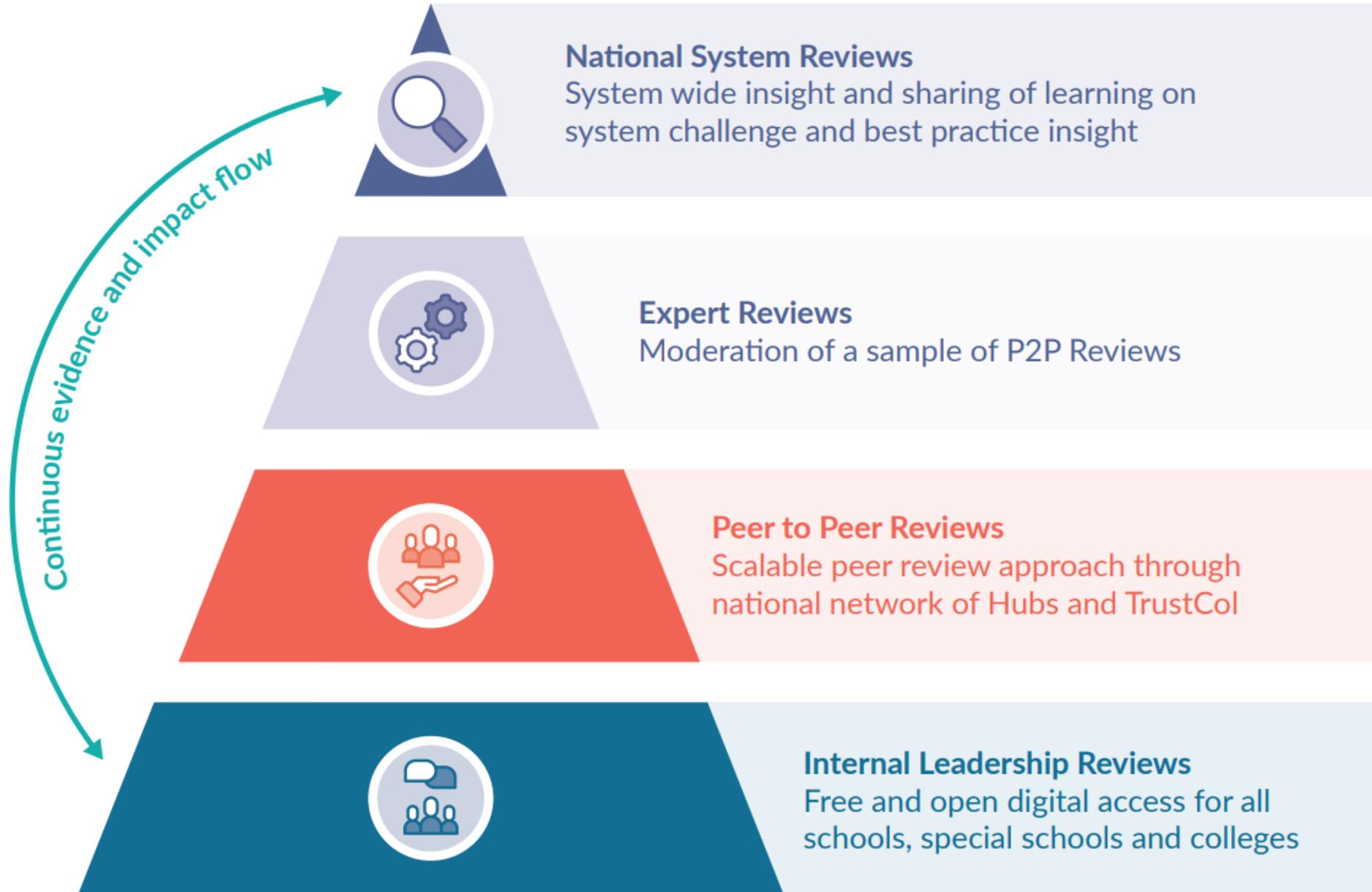
What is careers education?

Careers is everything young people need to know, understand and be able to do in order to:



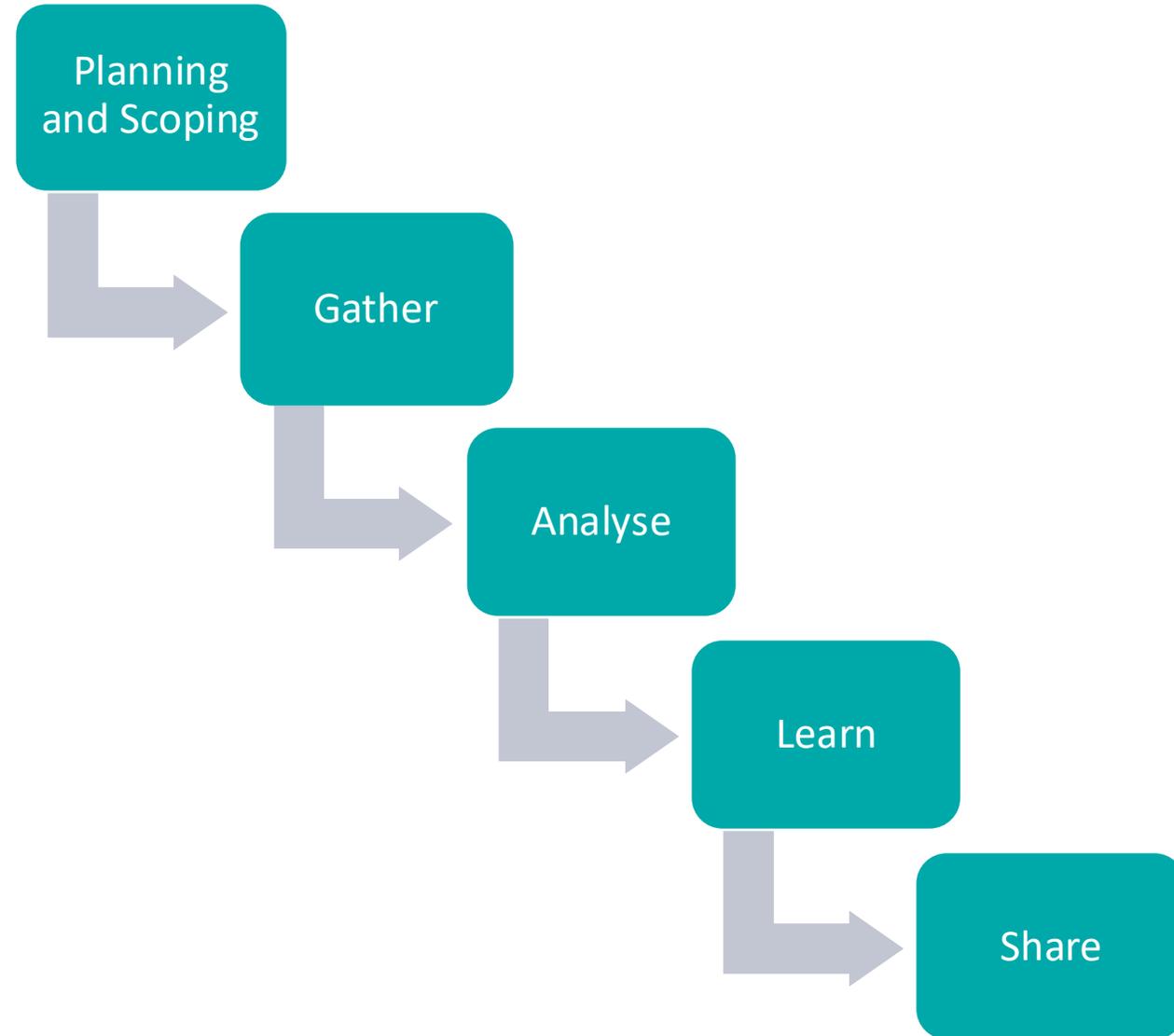
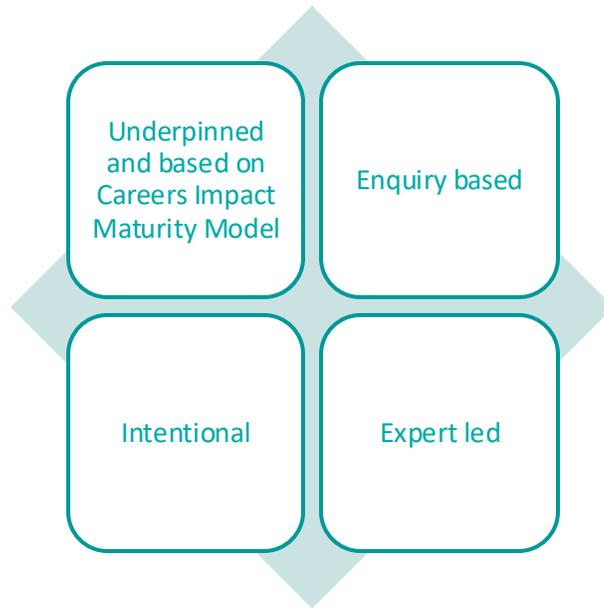
The Careers Impact System in practice





The Careers
Impact System

National System Reviews: Format





Careers Impact:

National System Review 2

Driving equity and tackling disadvantage through careers provision -
Executive Summary



Key Insights - Driving equity and tackling disadvantage through careers provision (2024/25)

- The second NSR focused on **how schools, special schools and colleges leverage careers as a vehicle to achieve equity for all learners and address the disproportionate impact of disadvantage**
- Between September and December 2024, **35 educational institutions** took part in the National System Review
- **15 mainstream secondary schools**
- **13 special schools / alternative provision**
- **7 Further Education (FE) colleges, settings**



Insight 1

Identify disadvantage and vulnerability using information and data



Insight 2

How to position careers as a key driver for tackling disadvantage



Insight 3

Spotlight on practice



Use data to identify and address disadvantage or vulnerability



Meaningful work experience prepares disadvantaged or vulnerable learners for future careers



Careers is a tool to tackle disadvantage or vulnerability



Identify
disadvantage
using information
and data



Make careers
provision
responsive



Integrate careers
provision into
strategy



Empower Careers
Leaders and
strengthen
leadership support



Identify disadvantage and vulnerability using information and data:

- Identify groups of learners and learner context that can indicate risk of disadvantage or vulnerability
- Identify outcomes/data insight that can indicate disadvantage or vulnerability
- Track, record and establish cross-team information sharing systems and processes to effectively identify learners at risk of disadvantage or vulnerability



Insight 1

Identify disadvantage and vulnerability using information and data

The Review highlighted how schools, special schools and colleges demonstrated a strong commitment and effective practices using comprehensive methods for identifying, tracking, recording and sharing information about learners at risk of negative impacts of disadvantage or vulnerability.

Identify groups of learners and learner context that can indicate risk of disadvantage or vulnerability

Vulnerable groups considered by schools, special schools and colleges in the Review:

- SEND students (EHCP and SEN support status)
- Students supported by external agencies (e.g. social services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Service children (students with a parent in the armed forces)
- Young people experiencing personal difficulties (e.g. mental health issues, bereavement)
- Young carers
- Young people with a family member in the criminal justice system
- Young offenders
- Learners identified as at risk of exploitation
- Young people impacted by homelessness
- Young people living in areas of high deprivation (wards/postcodes)
- Students who joined mid-academic year
- Learners with low attendance/persistent absence
- Learners with a high number of behaviour referrals and/or exclusions
- Teenage parents and pregnant teens
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Learners with English as an additional language
- Learners with low literacy
- Learners with low prior attainment
- Care experienced young people
- Young people with low GCSE qualifications (particularly those without Grade 4 English/Maths)

Key learning:

- Use Pupil Premium eligibility ('Ever 6 FSM' and 'looked after' children) or learner postcodes (FE) as primary identification methods
- Consider other key vulnerable groups (see above) and identify other contextual indicators to inform tracking, recording and information sharing systems



Make careers provision responsive:

- Use data and insight to underpin careers provision, with progressive learning outcomes responsive to the needs of cohorts and individuals
- Maximise the value of work experiences and employer encounters within Careers Learning Journeys
- Apply ongoing monitoring of learner progress (i.e. intended destinations and Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) data) and adjust interventions using performance and destinations data to address identified barriers



Integrate careers provision into strategy:

- Develop a strategic careers plan and embed careers in whole school/college improvement planning
- Position careers provision as integral to the whole school/college approach for tackling disadvantage
- Ensure careers is embedded across the curriculum, focusing on personal development and skills development



Empower Careers Leaders and strengthen leadership support:

- Give Careers Leaders autonomy to deliver a strategic and sustainable approach to careers and embed it into the school's/college's wider improvement priorities. Support Careers Leaders to engage in relevant continuing professional development (CPD)
- Ensure strong leadership support, with headteachers and governors prioritising careers as a strategic approach to raise aspirations and tackle disadvantage



Insight 1

Identify disadvantage and vulnerability using information and data

The Review highlighted how schools, special schools and colleges demonstrated a strong commitment and effective practices using comprehensive methods for identifying, tracking, recording and sharing information about learners at risk of negative impacts of disadvantage or vulnerability.



Insight 2

How to position careers as a key driver for tackling disadvantage

Here are key strategies and best practice to ensure that your careers provision meets the needs of all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Insight 3

Spotlight on practice

Mainstream Secondary



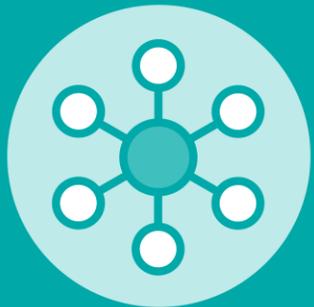
Identify disadvantage and vulnerability using information and data:

- Leaders rigorously track impact using **Compass+**, **Future Skills Questionnaire data**, and **Risk of NEET panels** to identify disengagement and barriers early.
- Data is used to **monitor progression**, highlight vulnerable groups (including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners), and determine who needs targeted support.
- Attendance data revealed specific disadvantage patterns, enabling a focused programme for GRT learners — with attendance improving to **80%**, compared to **60% nationally**.



Make careers provision responsive

- Leaders design **targeted, culturally responsive careers programmes**, such as the year-long identity- and aspiration-focused programme for GRT girls in Year 9.
- Provision includes **regular employer encounters, workplace experiences**, and exposure to **positive female role models** to challenge limiting beliefs.
- Activities develop **interpersonal skills, kindness, and community engagement**, fostering self-worth and belonging.
- Transition support is built in, with early introductions to **college environments and key staff** to smooth post-16 pathways.



Integrate careers provision into strategy

- The academy positions careers as a **whole-school priority**, embedded within improvement planning and personal development strategy.
- Careers work is **woven into curriculum planning**, ensuring every department contributes to aspiration-building and skills development.
- **Employability skills are developed and monitored** across the curriculum and enrichment, preparing students for life beyond school.
- **Careers provision directly supports key school improvement outcomes** — including attendance, engagement, and post-16 readiness.



Empower Careers Leaders and strengthen leadership support

- Leadership is **distributed across departments**, with trained Careers Leaders and careers ambassadors building staff ownership and consistency.
- **Careers Leaders are supported to use data effectively**, shape interventions, and **embed careers into everyday teaching**.
- There is strong relational leadership: staff build trust with families through **home visits** and wraparound support, helping shift cultural expectations and increase engagement.
- **Senior leaders champion** the work, **ensuring careers remains high on the agenda** and **resourced effectively**.



Insight 3

Spotlight on practice

Specialist Setting



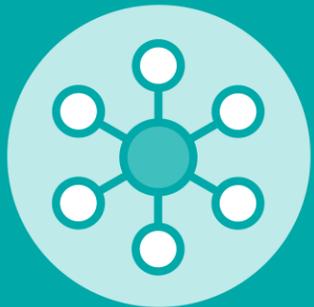
Make careers provision responsive

- Three pathways (Explore, Evolve, Establish) with **differentiated, progressive careers journeys**
- Strong focus on personalised guidance, **targeted CIAG**
- **Meaningful encounters and work experience** designed around ability, interest and accessibility
- Barriers removed through **supported placements, travel training, and flexible, tailored interventions**



Identify disadvantage and vulnerability using information and data:

- Large all-age specialist setting with highly complex SEND; all learners have EHCPs
- Multiple layers of vulnerability: attendance issues, learners in the “wrong setting,” low parental engagement, mental health needs masked by SEND
- Data used continuously: attendance, safeguarding, personal learning plans, careers chats, destination trends
- EHCP outcomes linked directly to long-term careers intentions and next-best-step planning



Integrate careers provision into strategy

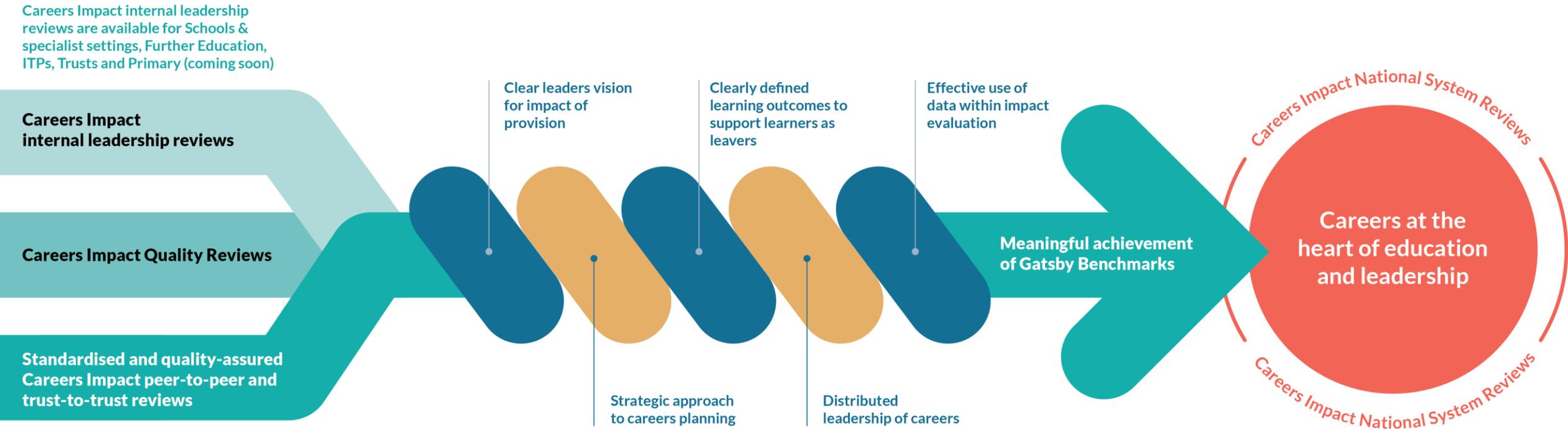
- **Careers** defined as “the next best step” for every learner ‘**preparation for adulthood**’
- Woven through **curriculum, EHCP** processes, **staff development** and **whole-school planning**
- **Careers** used **deliberately** to tackle disadvantage and **raise aspiration**
- **Strategic planning underpinned by destination data**, QA cycles and continuous improvement



Empower Careers Leaders and strengthen leadership support

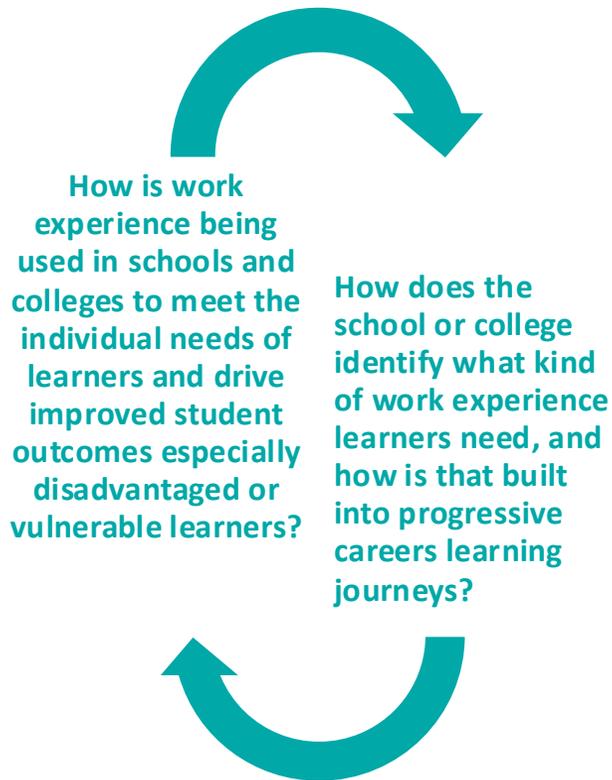
- **Trained Careers Leader:** member of SLT
- **Distributed leadership model:** Careers Leader, Work-Related Learning Coordinator, Work Experience LSA3
- **Careers is everyone's responsibility** through induction, CPD, learning walks and shared systems
- **Strong employer partnerships and community relationships** built over time

The Careers Impact System in practice



Preview: National System Review 3

The most impactful models of work experience for young people whose needs might otherwise go unmet



NSR 3 Timeline



Preview: National System Review 3

The most impactful models of work experience for young people whose needs might otherwise go unmet

Gather Stage

- **Online Research Forum** – 27th-29th January 2026
- **Research Visits** – 3rd Feb – 27th March 2026
- **Identification - Data:** Maturity: Careers Impact Internal Leadership Review; Compass Responses (Meaningful Work Experience); FSQ AND **Known meaningful practice**
- **Valid sample:** context, geography

Next Steps and Resource Signposting

- [Driving equity and tackling disadvantage through your careers provision: Educator Guide](#)
- [CEC Evidence and Reports](#)
- [Modern work experience](#)
- [Careers Impact System](#)
- [On Track+ Practice Guide](#)

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