

# WHEN DID CAREERS AND WORK EXPERIENCE BECOME SO DIFFICULT TO MANAGE?

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Observations from delivering careers and work experience provision at scale for nearly 20 years across schools, colleges and Trusts.

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## THE COMPLETE CAREERS AND WORK EXPERIENCE PARTNERSHIP

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# WHEN DID CAREERS AND WORK EXPERIENCE BECOME SO DIFFICULT TO MANAGE?

**You can have a strong careers programme on paper and still feel like you are holding it together manually.**

Most Careers Leaders are not short of ambition.  
They are not short of ideas.  
They are not short of commitment.

**They are short of time, capacity and connected support.**

The role has changed significantly over the last decade.

Today, Careers Leaders are expected to coordinate employer engagement, work experience, deliver against Gatsby Benchmarks, personal guidance, provider access, destination outcomes, vulnerable learner support, compliance, reporting and much more.

Each responsibility is important.

The challenge is that many have been added over time, often through different systems, different processes and different providers.

As a result, careers education can start to feel less like a strategic programme and more like a constant exercise in coordination.



**Chasing employers**  
and opportunities



**Managing spreadsheets**  
and data



**Finding placements**  
for every student



**Updating records,**  
chasing responses



**Responding to issues**  
quickly



**Answering questions**  
from students, parents and staff



**Preparing evidence**  
for leaders, governors and Ofsted



**Trying to keep**  
everything moving



Most schools are working incredibly hard to deliver meaningful careers education.

**The question is whether the infrastructure supporting that delivery has kept pace with the expectations placed upon it.**



**THE ROLE HAS CHANGED.**

What was once a focused careers programme is now a complex ecosystem of interconnected responsibilities.



**EXPECTATIONS HAVE GROWN.**

Schools are expected to deliver more, evidence more and support more students than ever before.



**CAREERS LEADERS ARE THE CONSTANT.**

In the middle of it all, Careers Leaders are keeping everything connected.

# CAREERS LEADERS

## AREN'T SHORT OF AMBITION

## THEY'RE SHORT OF TIME,

## CAPACITY AND CONNECTED SUPPORT.

You have a careers programme you're proud of.

**But there are days when it feels like you are the thing holding everything together.**



### Multiple systems

Employer engagement sits in one place.  
Work experience sits somewhere else.  
Student information lives across multiple systems.



### Information everywhere

Important updates arrive through email.  
Evidence is stored in different folders.  
Nothing talks to each other.



### People, not processes

Relationships with employers often depend on individual staff members.  
When people move on, progress slows down.



### Not enough time

There never seems to be quite enough time.  
Time to engage more employers.  
Time to support more students.  
Time to develop new opportunities.  
Time to build stronger relationships.  
Time to step back and think strategically.



### Operational overload

Making sure students have placements.  
Making sure employers have the right information.  
Making sure paperwork is complete.  
Making sure nobody gets missed.  
Making sure nothing falls through the cracks.



### A role that has outgrown capacity

Many Careers Leaders have become programme managers, relationship managers, administrators, compliance coordinators and problem-solvers all at the same time.

### That's a huge responsibility.

Particularly when the reason most people came into careers education was to help young people make informed decisions about their future.



### THE EXPECTATIONS KEEP GROWING.



Deliver meaningful work experience



Strengthen employer engagement



Support Gatsby Benchmarks consistently



Evidence impact clearly



Support students at risk of becoming NEET



Maintain safeguarding and compliance oversight



Provide high-quality guidance



Engage employers at scale



Manage increasing administrative pressure



Prepare for inspection scrutiny

**All while operating within stretched capacity.**

# THE IMPACT IS REAL. FOR SCHOOLS. FOR CAREERS LEADERS. FOR STUDENTS.

Fragmentation doesn't always look like failure.

**Sometimes it looks like good people working incredibly hard in disconnected systems.**

Over time, this creates pressure across the whole careers and work experience programme.



### Employer engagement is harder to sustain

Relationships rely on individuals, not systems.  
Activity starts from scratch, each year.



### Work experience is resource intensive

More students. More placements to find.  
More admin. More chasing.  
Less time for strategic development.



### Information exists, but visibility is limited

Data is scattered across systems.  
Tracking, reporting and evidence take far longer than they should.



### Strategic time disappears

Operational delivery takes priority.  
There's little capacity to plan, improve or innovate.



### Programmes depend on individual effort

When key people are absent or leave,  
consistency and momentum are at risk.



### Ultimately, students feel the impact.

- ✗ Their experiences are less consistent
- ✗ Their opportunities are more limited
- ✗ Their insight into the world of work is less meaningful



## THE HIDDEN COSTS ADD UP.

### Increased workload

More manual processes create more work, not more impact

### Higher resource cost

Duplicated effort, multiple systems and workarounds waste time and money

### Reduced effectiveness

Less visibility means weaker planning and poorer outcomes

### Greater risk

Disconnected information increases the chance of errors and oversights

### Slower improvement

Without joined-up data and insight, continuous improvement stalls

### Higher staff turnover

Pressure leads to burnout. Burnout leads to turnover. Turnover creates more pressure.

**This is not about working harder. It's about having the right infrastructure to work smarter.**

# CAREERS EDUCATION WORKS BETTER WHEN EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED.

The strongest careers programmes aren't the ones doing the most. They're the ones where everything works together.

**Employer engagement supports work experience**  
Stronger relationships.  
More meaningful opportunities.

**Personal guidance drives better outcomes**  
Students gain clearer insight and confidence.

**Technology improves visibility**  
Real-time insight.  
Better planning.  
Smarter decisions.

**Operational support reduces workload**  
Less time on admin.  
More time for impact.

**Work experience supports progression**  
Students explore real options.  
Employers see future talent.

**Progression planning creates clearer pathways**  
Students understand the next step.

**Information flows more easily**  
Less chasing.  
More consistency.  
Better outcomes.

**Strategic capacity is restored**  
Careers Leaders can lead, not just manage.



## THE RESULT? BETTER OUTCOMES FOR EVERYONE.

**For Students**  
More consistent, inspiring experiences that help them explore, decide and progress with confidence.

**For Schools/Colleges**  
A stronger, more sustainable careers programme that meets expectations and reduces pressure.

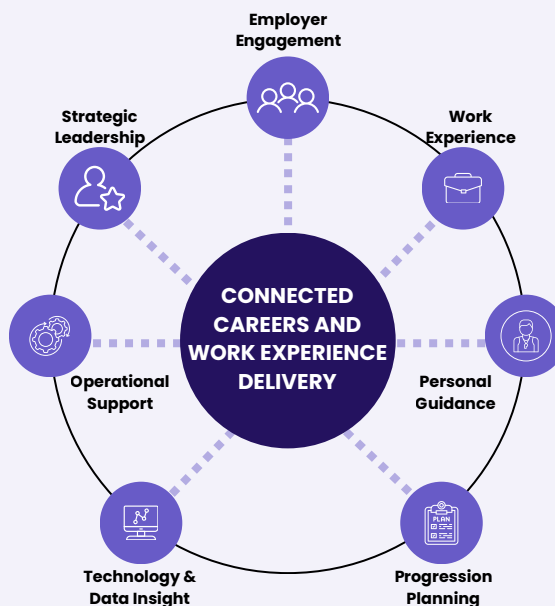
**For Employers**  
Easier engagement. Better experiences. Stronger future talent pipelines.

**For Careers Leaders**  
The clarity, capacity and confidence to focus on what really matters.

**CAREERS EDUCATION SHOULD NOT FEEL LIKE A COLLECTION OF DISCONNECTED ACTIVITIES.**

**IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE A JOURNEY.**

One that helps students understand themselves, explore opportunities and make informed decisions about their future.



## READY TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

With nearly 20 years of delivery experience, let's talk about creating more opportunities for students without adding pressure to your team.