



Compass is a free online tool that helps Special Schools understand how their careers education and guidance compares to best practice. Completing a **Compass evaluation** can help Special Schools identify strengths and discover areas for improvement within their careers provision.

Compass enables Special Schools to quickly and easily evaluate careers activity against the eight benchmarks of best practice – known as the **Gatsby Benchmarks**.

The Gatsby Benchmarks were developed by Sir John Holman and the [Gatsby Foundation](#), they aim to highlight what good career guidance looks like for young people. In this context, careers guidance is defined as the full range of activity delivered under the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

For learners in Special Schools, the Careers Leader should consult with colleagues to identify the cohort for whom the Gatsby Benchmarks are most appropriate, and report on that cohort. However, we believe that all learners, including those with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) or highly complex needs, should benefit from your Special School's careers programme and transition activities.

The Gatsby Benchmark framework is at the heart of statutory guidance for careers education in England. More support and information about the framework, including how the Gatsby Benchmarks can be applied in your setting, can be found in [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#).

Mainstream schools with a high SEND enrolment are encouraged to contact us. We can help you decide if the Compass evaluation for Special Schools is right for your institution. There is also a range of support available for Careers Leader in SEND settings on the [Resource Directory](#).

Compass evaluations

To evaluate your careers provision against the Gatsby Benchmarks, a Special School can complete a **Compass evaluation**. A Compass evaluation takes around 30 minutes to complete.

If you're using Compass, you will need to know details of learner numbers in your year groups. If you're using Compass+, this information is populated by your MIS (Management Information System).

Further guidance on creating a Compass account and completing a Compass evaluation can be found in the Help Centre articles listed below:

[How to create a Compass account for Special Schools](#)

[How to complete a Compass evaluation for Special Schools](#)

The Compass tool is jointly funded by [The Careers & Enterprise Company](#) and the [Gatsby Charitable Foundation](#). The questions and results are based on the [Gatsby Good Career Guidance Benchmarks for Schools](#), which are used to support best practice in a range of education settings.

Compass evaluation questions for Special Schools

Introduction - Your School

Institution name:

Please state your job title:

Which year groups attend your school?

Below year 6	Enter the number of learners:
Year 6	Enter the number of learners:
Year 7	Enter the number of learners:
Year 8	Enter the number of learners:
Year 9	Enter the number of learners:
Year 10	Enter the number of learners:
Year 11	Enter the number of learners:
Year 12	Enter the number of learners:
Year 13	Enter the number of learners:
Above Year 13	Enter the number of learners:

Do the majority of your learners (more than 75%) typically take Level 2/GCSE qualifications?

Yes / No

If YES: please also complete questions 7.5 and 7.6 under Benchmark 7

If NO: please do not complete questions 7.5 and 7.6 under Benchmark 7

Benchmark 1 – Stable careers programme

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark for a 'Stable careers programme'.

Schools should have an established programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by learners, parents, teachers, Governors, employers and other agencies.

'Career' is defined as a purposeful destination on leaving school or college, and does not necessarily mean paid employment.

1.1 Does your School have a careers programme that:

Is written down?	Yes No Don't know
Is approved by the board of Governors?	Yes No Don't know
Has the explicit backing of Senior Leadership?	Yes No Don't know
Has resources/funding allocated to it?	Yes No Don't know
Is regularly monitored?	Yes No Don't know
Has both strategic and operational elements?	Yes No Don't know

1.2 Does your Special School publish its careers programme on its website?

Yes

No

Don't know

IF 1.2 No/ Don't know : skip to 1.4

1.3 Is there information on your website about the careers programme specifically aimed at:

Learners?	Yes No Don't know
Teachers?	Yes No Don't know
Employers?	Yes No Don't know
Parents/carers?	Yes No Don't know

1.4 Does your Special School evaluate the effectiveness of its careers programme at least every three years?

Yes

No

Don't know

IF 1.4 No/ Don't know: skip to 1.6

1.5 Does the evaluation of your careers programme take into account feedback from:

Learners?

Yes | No | Don't know

Teachers?

Yes | No | Don't know

Employers?

Yes | No | Don't know

Parents/carers?

Yes | No | Don't know

1.6 Does your Special School have a lead person with strategic responsibility for overseeing your Special School's careers programme?

Yes

No

Don't know

Benchmark 2 – Learning from career and labour market information

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark around the importance of 'Learning from career and labour market information'.

'LMI' is defined as information that is pertinent to the achievement of the optimum destination on leaving school/college and will be needed by the learner or/and their representatives.

Every learner, and their parents/carers/families, should have access to good-quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need support to make best use of available information.

2.1 Approximately what proportion of learners have been provided with or have been supported to use up-to-date information about appropriate career or progression paths and the labour market (this may include awareness of 'the local offer') by:

The age of 14	Enter proportion from the options below:
The age of 16	Enter proportion from the options below:
The age of 18	Enter proportion from the options below:
Above the age of 18	Enter proportion from the options below:

None
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
All
Don't know

2.2. Does your Special School encourage parents and carers (where appropriate) to access and use up-to-date information about the labour market, future study options and career paths to inform the support they give to their children?

Yes
No
Don't know

Benchmark 3 – Learner needs

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark around 'Addressing the needs of each learner'.

Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each learner. A Special School's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.

When questions asked about learners directly, those questions can be interpreted as being asked of the learners' representatives too, if relevant.

3.1 How strongly do you agree or disagree that your Special School's careers programme addresses the following issues?

It actively seeks to raise the aspirations of all learners

Rate on scale of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree):

It challenges stereotypical thinking (in terms of gender, etc)

Rate on scale of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree):

3.2 Does your Special School:

Keep systematic records on each learner's experiences of career and enterprise activities and decisions on future pathways?

Yes | No | Don't know

Enable learners and parents/carers/families to have access to accurate records about their own careers and enterprise experiences and decisions on future pathways?

Yes | No | Don't know

Collect and maintain accurate data for each learner on their destinations after they leave your Special School (whatever that may be)?

Yes | No | Don't know

Share accurate and timely data with the local authority on learner transitions and destinations?

Yes | No | Don't know

Work pro-actively with the local authority and careers advisers around the careers guidance and progression of your learners?

Yes | No | Don't know

Benchmark 4 – Curriculum

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Linking curriculum learning to careers'.

All subject staff should link curriculum learning with careers and transition. Where appropriate, STEM subject staff should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career and progression paths.

When considering the curriculum, the levels can include pre-formal learners and you can relate your answers to however you describe levels of learning.

4.1 By the time they leave school, approximately what proportion of learners have experienced person-centred curriculum learning that highlights the relevance of subjects and programmes to future career or progression paths?

English – including functional English :

None
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
All
Don't know

Maths – including functional Maths

None
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
All
Don't know

Science – both accredited and/or non-accredited learning

None

A few (1-25%)

Some (26-50%)

Most (51-75%)

Overwhelming majority (76-99%)

All

Don't know

PSHE - including for example, Life Skills, Soft Skills, Personal and/or Social Development, Independent Travel support

None

A few (1-25%)

Some (26-50%)

Most (51-75%)

Overwhelming majority (76-99%)

All

Don't know

Benchmark 5 – Employer encounters

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Encounters with employers and employees'.

Every learner, for whom it is deemed appropriate, should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, employer visits and experiences. These activities may be delivered in the Special School setting where learners are unable to access settings outside of the school. The Special School can also be considered as an employer when planning these activities.

The term 'for whom it is deemed appropriate' should encourage staff to consider how employer encounters and/or work experience can be more relevant for everyone, and not exclude groups of learners.

We know that it will not always be appropriate for all learners to receive the following encounters with employers and employees. Therefore, rather than working out your answers to the following questions based on the total number of learners in your institution, please work out the percentage range based on the number of learners you think these types of encounters would be most appropriate for. This will provide you with a more accurate score.

5.1 For whom it is deemed appropriate, select the years during which 76-100% of learners have at least one encounter with an employer or employee:

Below year 6

Year 6

Year 7

Year 8

Year 9

Year 10

Year 11

Year 12

Year 13

Above Year 13

Don't know

None of the above

5.2 For whom it is deemed appropriate, what proportion of your learners have at least one encounter with an employer every year they are at school?

None

A few (1-25%)

Some (26-50%)

Most (51-75%)

Overwhelming majority (76-99%)

All

Don't know

5.3 For whom it is deemed appropriate, on average how many encounters with an employer will your learners have had by the time they leave your Special School?

Choose an average number from 0 to '10 or more':

5.4 How many employers will you involve in careers activity in the current academic year?

Choose an average number from 0 to '10 or more':

Benchmark 6 – Workplace experiences

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Experiences of workplaces'.

Every learner, for whom it is deemed appropriate, should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience, employer visits and experiences in school (as an employing organisation) to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks. Workplace experiences may be delivered within the Special School setting especially when learners are unable to access settings outside of the school.

The term 'for whom it is deemed appropriate' should encourage staff to consider how the encounter and/or work experience can be more relevant for everyone, and not exclude groups of learners.

We know that it will not always be appropriate for all learners to receive the following workplace experiences. Therefore, rather than working out your answers to the following questions based on the total number of learners in your institution, please work out the percentage range based on the number of learners you think these types of encounters would be most appropriate for. This will provide you with a more accurate score.

6.1 For whom it is deemed appropriate, approximately what proportion of learners have had an experience of a workplace or community-based setting by the end of Year 11?

None
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
All
Don't know

IF 0 entered for Year 12, 13 or Above 13: skip to 7.1

6.2 For whom it is deemed appropriate, during Years 12 and 13 and for learners still attending above Year 13, what proportion of learners have had an experience of a workplace or community-based setting?

None

A few (1-25%)

Some (26-50%)

Most (51-75%)

Overwhelming majority (76-99%)

All

Don't know

Benchmark 7 – Educational encounters

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark recommending 'Encounters with further and higher education'.

Educational encounters include any and all destinations that learners will go onto from leaving school and college.

All learners, for whom it is deemed appropriate, should have an awareness of the full range of learning and progression opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning.

We know that it will not always be appropriate for all learners to receive the following encounters. Therefore, rather than working out your answers to the following questions based on the total number of learners in your institution, please work out the percentage range based on the number of learners you think these types of encounters would be most appropriate for. This will provide you with a more accurate score.

Further support and guidance on meeting Provider Access Legislation (PAL) is available in the Help Centre: [Provider Access Legislation \(PAL\) guidance](#).

7.1 By the time they leave school, approximately what proportion of learners, for whom it is deemed appropriate, have had the following experiences:

For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Sixth Form Colleges?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

7.2 For whom it is deemed appropriate, information about the full range of supported internships, internships, traineeships and supported or inclusive apprenticeships, apprenticeships (including higher level apprenticeships)?

None
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
All
Don't know

7.3 For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Further Education Providers (including land based colleges where appropriate)?

None
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
All
Don't know

7.4 For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Independent Training Providers (ITPs) or other progression providers?

None
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
All
Don't know

IF NO entered for Introduction questions: skip to 7.7

IF YES entered for Introduction questions and you have learner numbers for Year 12, 13 or Above Year 13: complete 7.5

7.5 For whom it is deemed appropriate, meaningful encounters with Higher Education providers?

- None (of the learners who can access HE)
- A few of the learners who can access HE (1-25%)
- Some of the learners who can access HE (26-50%)
- Most of the learners who can access HE (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority of the learners who can access HE (76-99%)
- All of the learners who can access HE
- Don't know

IF pupil numbers entered for Year 12, 13 or Above Year 13:

7.6 For whom it is deemed appropriate, at least two visits to a Higher Education provider?

- None (of the learners who can access HE)
- A few of the learners who can access HE (1-25%)
- Some of the learners who can access HE (26-50%)
- Most of the learners who can access HE (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority of the learners who can access HE (76-99%)
- All of the learners who can access HE
- Don't know

7.7 What proportion of learners in Year 8/9 have had at least two meaningful encounters with providers of apprenticeships and technical education during KS3 study that meet the requirements of PAL?

The answer to this question does not count towards your score for Gatsby Benchmark 7.

- None (0%)
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-90%)
- All or nearly all (91 - 100%)

7.8 What proportion of learners in Year 10/11 have had at least two meaningful encounters with providers of apprenticeships and technical education during KS4 study that meet the requirements of PAL?

The answer to this question does not count towards your score for Gatsby Benchmark 7.

None (0%)
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-90%)
All or nearly all (91 - 100%)

7.9 What proportion of students in Year 12/13 have been offered at least two meaningful encounters with providers of apprenticeships and technical education during Post 16 study that meet the requirements of PAL?

The answer to this question does not count towards your score for Gatsby Benchmark 7.

None (0%)
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-90%)
All or nearly all (91 - 100%)

7.10 What proportion of learners in Year 12/13 have attended at least two meaningful encounters with providers of apprenticeships and technical education during Post 16 study that meet the requirements of PAL?

The answer to this question does not count towards your score for Gatsby Benchmark 7.

None (0%)
A few (1-25%)
Some (26-50%)
Most (51-75%)
Overwhelming majority (76-90%)
All or nearly all (91 - 100%)

7.11 Please list the providers who conducted these encounters:

The answer to this question does not count towards your score got Gatsby Benchmark 7

Benchmark 8 – Personal guidance

These questions are about the Gatsby Benchmark around the need for 'Personal guidance' for learners.

Every learner 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 learners, but should be timed to meet their individual needs. The arrangements for personal guidance meetings for learners with SEND should reflect their individual needs.

Personal guidance can be any meeting where a Level 6 qualified Careers Adviser is present including annual reviews, transition reviews, as well as discreet careers guidance 'interviews'. The expectation is that learners will attend with support and/or that decisions will be taken based on the ambitions of that learner whether expressed by them or on their behalf.

8.1 What proportion of learners have had an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 11?

- None
- A few (1-25%)
- Some (26-50%)
- Most (51-75%)
- Overwhelming majority (76-99%)
- All
- Don't know

IF 0 entered for Year 12-13 pupil numbers: skip 8.2

8.2 What proportion of learners have had at least two interviews with a qualified careers adviser by the end of Year 13, or for those students who stay on above Year 13, by the end of their time at your Special School?

None

A few (1-25%)

Some (26-50%)

Most (51-75%)

Overwhelming majority (76-99%)

All

Don't know

Thank you for taking the time to evaluate your careers provision.

