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# **London Ambitions Research: Shaping a Successful Careers Offer for all Young Londoners**

**National Foundation for Educational  
Research (NFER)**



● independent ● insights ● breadth ● connections ● outcomes

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# London Ambitions Research

## Shaping a Successful Careers Offer for all Young Londoners

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# 1. Executive summary

This research, undertaken between January and June 2017, was funded in partnership between London Councils and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). It was designed to identify emerging promising practice in the delivery of careers education and independent and impartial careers guidance through London Ambitions. Additionally, it was planned to disseminate the findings across the capital to support the further development of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for young Londoners. The London Ambitions careers offer (see Chapter 2 for more detail) was published in July 2015 to support London schools in their careers provision, following the government's transfer of the duty to schools to provide impartial careers advice and guidance in 2012. The report highlights examples of promising practices that map onto the seven key elements of London Ambitions' careers offer for young people.

## 1.1 Methodology

London Councils supplied NFER with a shortlist of schools and colleges to contact who had been identified as showing promising practice in the field of careers education and guidance. From this list, five institutions were selected so that the sample covered as wide a range of schools and colleges as possible.

Between February and May 2017, NFER researchers visited: one primary school; one special secondary school; one 11-18 secondary academy; one 11-18 secondary maintained school; and one FE College. We carried out 22 semi-structured face-to-face interviews (and one telephone interview) with school/college staff and five face-to-face focus groups with young people.

## 1.2 Key Findings

Key findings from this research are presented below:

The schools and college prepare young people well for the world of work through responsive careers provision for all their students

- The five institutions taking part in the research are outward looking and have proactively audited (either formally or informally) their careers provision in order to ensure that they prepare all their young people for the world of work.
- The institutions have an expansive interpretation of CEIAG. They have tailored their careers provision to their context and their students in order to respond to their students' needs.
- They are working towards a structured whole-school approach to CEIAG that reflects the value they place on their students' destinations.

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Senior school and college leaders value CEIAG and support its development and profile within the institutional ethos

- Senior leaders ensure that appropriate staff time is available for delivering CEIAG and for developing CEIAG frameworks to structure the delivery of CEIAG throughout the institution. They also support the use of curriculum time to support its advancement.
- There is scope for further engagement from governors, who are valuable not only for their contacts in the business world, but also for ensuring that CEIAG is delivered throughout the institution.

Engaging with employers and the world of work is seen as a priority

- All five institutions are proactively making links with the world of work in order to widen their students' horizons and provide them with multiple opportunities to interact with different types of employers.
- In addition, there is recognition that the development of transferable employability skills such as communications, problem solving skills and teamwork is important.

There is more work to be done in further raising the profile of the London Ambitions brand

- This report contains insightful examples of promising practice that map onto the seven elements of London Ambitions. The report also highlights ways to overcome key challenges faced by schools and colleges in the context of meeting their statutory responsibilities for careers provision.

### 1.3 Key recommendations

In order for CEIAG to become embedded in a school and/or college culture of learning (and to ensure young people are well qualified, well informed about the potential routes to, and ready for, the world of work), findings from these five case studies suggest that schools/colleges should:

- **Embrace a whole-school/college approach to CEIAG**, where senior leaders support and drive careers provision forward and all school staff, including teachers and support staff, fully understand its importance and its ability to transform the school ethos and the life chances of its young people. A well planned programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) that provides teachers/support staff with a good understanding of careers should be considered to achieve this understanding. One Headteacher explained the importance of prioritising CEIAG:

*Giving it [CEIAG] a priority within the structure of the school even when funding is challenging is important..... Having a structure that reaches out to all areas of the school - a staggered approach throughout the years so it's clear about what needs to be achieved every year - is important.*

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- **Ensure they provide young people with meaningful learning experiences about the world of work** to enable them to navigate their way through the choices that lie ahead of them. The world of work should permeate all types of learning in school so that young people acquire a clear sense of the purpose of the subjects they are learning and the skills they need to develop in order to progress in study or employment. One Head of Department commented: ‘Young people don’t know what a job involves. Through exposure to employers their horizons are broadened’.
  - **Engage in more dialogue about careers strategies and provision within, and between, institutions.** In order for the education sector to progress this agenda, alongside all the other demands on their time, it is important that sharing of good and/or promising practice takes place urgently.
  - **Encourage and support employers to become involved in education,** at whatever level and in whatever way suits them, to offer quality encounters of the world of work that meet students needs. Educators and employers need to value their respective roles in the development of young people. If the climate within schools and colleges is conducive to employer engagement, both young people and staff will benefit from their contribution. Employers’ input into the education of young people and the development of young people’s skills for the workplace is vital to the UK’s industrial strategy and productivity. One Headteacher explained the importance of employer engagement: ‘Our young people feel valued, feel recognised, feel part of their community, feel like they are making a difference, it [CEIAG] has a powerful effect on self-esteem’.

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## 2. London Ambitions

### The position of CEIAG in our schools today

CEIAG in schools is often described as ‘patchy’ and ‘inadequate’ (GB. Parliament. HoC, 2016). Employers frequently tell us that not enough young people leave school prepared for work and young people tell us schools do not provide enough exposure to employers or opportunities for quality experiences of the world of work.

Yet whilst there is more to be done to ensure that all young people have access to a good careers offer, the inadequate CEIAG described above is not universal.

Business and school partnerships continue to grow, providing access to valuable opportunities for young people; almost a third of secondary schools in London are registered on the London Ambitions Portal. Through the [Enterprise Adviser Network](#), business volunteers support careers leads in schools to develop careers education and business engagement strategies with over 120 schools involved in the network.

The importance of contact with employers and the world of work, in varied forms, is better understood by schools and many more schools now take advantage of national opportunities such as [Inspiring the Future; Career Ready; Step Up To Serve](#).

Locally, schools together with colleges, universities and employers, benefit from sharing of practice and in some cases resources through clustering arrangements.

### What is London Ambitions?

Supported by London Councils, the Greater London Authority, the Mayor of London and the London Economic Action Partnership, '[London Ambitions: Shaping a Successful Careers Offer for all Young Londoners](#)', sets out seven recommendations for the London Ambitions careers offer to transform the landscape of careers and employment support for young people across London, regardless of the particular school or college they attend. The recommended seven elements are:

- Access to impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- At least 100 hours of experiences of the world of work for all young Londoners and a personalised digital portfolio.
- An explicit publicised careers policy and careers curriculum in every secondary school and college.
- A governor with oversight for ensuring the institution supports all students to relate their learning to careers and the world of work from an early age.
- Up-to-date, user-friendly labour market intelligence/information.
- Formation and development of ‘careers clusters’ across London.
- Use of the London Ambitions Portal.

The distinctive features of London mean there is a compelling case for London to have its own unique careers offer for young people. London’s youthful, expanding

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and entrepreneurial population needs to know where there will be work opportunities and they must be equipped with relevant experiences, skills and qualifications to take advantage of them from an early age.

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## 3. London Ambitions Elements

### 3.1 Impartial, independent and personalised CEIAG and face-to-face guidance in the local community

London Ambitions Element 1: *'Every young Londoner should have access to impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and face-to-face guidance in their local community'*.

The key way in which the schools and college, in our case-study sample, reported that they are currently providing impartial CEIAG is through **online resources**. Additionally, there was some evidence of the provision of **face-to-face guidance through external sources** or through school/college staff.

There was evidence that impartial information is provided to students through ready-made resources. For example, the college's students have access to the onsite careers service which is centrally located within the college where they can find a selection of information about a range of courses and jobs.

In terms of face-to-face guidance, one school described how they offer a series of universal assemblies, group offsite taster days and individual activities, such as one-to-one careers appointments, to provide personalised information to pupils, whereas another buys in services for all pupils. The college was particularly advanced in this element, which it implements through its home-grown tutor system [see Box 1].

Additionally, the college has special careers provision for learners with mental health needs, who are supported by a designated trained mental health careers professional. This staff member provides impartial advice both within the college and in local NHS settings. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), and those at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET), are also offered specialist face-to-face support with professionals who have undertaken training on meeting their particular needs. One-to-one careers guidance with trained professionals can also be accessed by all students and students can still use this service for another six months after they finish their course.

One school buys-in a careers advisor from a careers advice provider for three days per week mainly to provide one-to-one careers advice for Year 11 pupils who are not aiming for university and whose grades mean they are unlikely to continue to the school's sixth form. External careers advisors in three institutions also support young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and play a role in their annual reviews, often attending the meetings.

Young people reported that they value one-to-one support from staff members, but this did not necessarily have to come from a careers advisor. One student who has received support from their head of year on applying for university, remarked that before this: 'I didn't have the confidence because of my grades but my head of year made me realise I was getting better.' This student reported routinely returning to that staff member for support and guidance. Other students also noted that they

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found one-to-one meetings especially helpful because they helped them to formulate their goals and strategies in a safe non-judgemental space.

#### **Box 1: Tutor system in the college**

Every student is assigned a tutor on entering the college, who is usually the student's course teacher. The young person meets this tutor for one-to-one sessions regularly throughout their programme of study. These sessions include embedded careers-related activities at key points in the student's journey. Tutors provide students with a range of information/resources e.g. [Not Going to Uni](#), [Creative Skillset](#) (often with embedded Labour Market Information) to inform them about their future options and the job market. Additionally, these sessions provide a platform for tutors and students to identify what skills, e.g. CV writing and interview techniques, the student wants to improve. This allows the staff member to signpost the student to the relevant resource or person within the careers centre.

The information given to students is provided to staff by the careers service and, for some departments, through the teacher's work with the local careers cluster (groups of schools and colleges). How to tutor students is covered comprehensively in the staff induction and careers staff regularly run training sessions for teaching staff to keep them up-to-date on best practice. Staff reported that an advantage of these tutor sessions is that they help the student to stay 'on track' with their course and ensure the course is the right fit for the student.

The college has also created a rigorous student induction programme run by tutors in the student's first six weeks. This process of making sure the course is the correct fit for the students is seen as vitally important as illustrated by one head of department: 'If we don't get that right we lose the student's motivation. Once the students have a clear goal it is much easier to motivate them'.

All the college students interviewed had a clear vision of their next steps and how they were going to achieve them which they said was highly motivating. One student explained: 'If you have a goal you can work toward it but if you don't [have a goal] you're kinda all over the place'.

### **3.2 At least 100 hours' experience of the world of work by age 16**

London Ambitions Element 2: *'Every young Londoner should have completed at least 100 hours experience of the world of work, in some form, by the time they reach the age of 16. This may include career insights from industry experts, work tasters, coaching, mentoring, enterprise activities, part-time work, participation in Skills London and The Big Bang Event, work shadowing, work experience/supported work experience and other relevant activities. Lessons from this and other elements of a young Londoner's employability journey should be captured in a personalised digital portfolio. This will provide a strong foundation for London's young people to*

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*take responsibility for capturing learning and experiences from an early age (and beyond the age of 16) and support their careers activities with employers’.*

There was considerable evidence that all the schools and the college are working towards achieving the goal of 100 hours’ experience of the world of work as would be expected from our sample. They are doing this in diverse ways including:

- organising **external speakers** to come in and speak to young people about their job, company and/or sector
- running on-site **careers events and workshops**, e.g. careers fairs, careers speed dating, enterprise activities, Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) sessions
- **external visits and taster days to workplaces and places of further study**
- providing **work experience and work placements** in community settings
- providing **mentoring**, especially for more vulnerable pupils
- providing insights and tasters for **apprenticeships**
- providing **in-class careers-related activities** which link the world of work to subject content
- developing a **personalised digital portfolio** to enable students to reflect on experiences and document their achievements.

## External speakers

Staff in three of the five institutions visited reported that they are widening pupils’ horizons through regularly bringing a diverse range of professionals into their establishments. Examples given included: a radiographer, chef, musician, professional cyclist, artist, accountant, computer programmer. These talks can be for one year group, class or as part of a whole school assembly. The primary school also organises a Family Careers Day, which both staff and pupils reported to be a success [see Box 2].

To achieve this, staff are using several different sources including the [London Ambitions portal](#), the [Primary Futures](#) tool, [Business in the Community](#), and contacts of staff, governors and parents and established business connections. Staff in all schools claimed personal contacts are best in securing speakers, as they are more willing to be flexible on dates and times if they have a personal connection to the school.

One Key Stage 2 student explained: ‘I like having the professionals come to our school and talk about it [their job],’ because she can then ask them questions. Another said: ‘I kind of felt excited learning about jobs, because some of them I didn’t really know about’. Staff members similarly felt that external speaker talks are valuable. For example, a headteacher stated: ‘The visitors are great. Wherever we can get real life people that do various things is wonderful because children are actually so fascinated, they are buzzing with questions’. A class teacher also commented that talks are useful as: ‘They place something in context for them

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[pupils] so that they are motivated to learn'. This teacher also believed that talks help staff teach better, as they enable them to better understand the importance of why they're teaching a topic: 'If you think, I'm teaching this but really when are the children ever going to use this again, you don't teach it with that enthusiasm'.

Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students felt that smaller group talks, rather than whole year assemblies, were best, as they are often more closely aligned to the students' interests. One student remarked that the whole school/year assembly talks in the sixth form were not very useful as: 'Most people had already made up their minds by now' and 'you just sit there and think this is not what I'm interested in'.

### **Box 2: Family Careers Day in the primary school**

To engage pupils and parents the school runs a school-wide annual Family Careers Day. All parents are invited to spend the day with their children attending a series of workshops and talks about different jobs from external speakers from a variety of sectors. A staff member said: 'It's about breaking down those boundaries and giving them [pupils and parents] an insight into all the different types of careers'. It's about: 'Empowering them with knowledge'.

Staff engage pupils by asking them about what sorts of jobs they want to hear about. This is done through a pupil survey and discussions with the student council. In cross-phase teams, staff then plan the day so that each year group has different and engaging speakers which relate to the pupils' requests. This planning has been made possible by senior leadership actively supporting a whole-school structure to careers education.

Pupils spoke positively about the day. One said: 'On [Family] Careers Day there was a lady who came to our class, she worked on an aeroplane and she talked about it and it made me more interested in being a pilot. It sounded fun and adventurous'. Another remarked: 'I like it because we learn a lot of things [about jobs] we don't know'.

## Careers events and workshops

All the schools and the college, in our case-study sample, reported that they run some careers events and workshops for students including: CV building; getting into university sessions; employment skills workshops; apprenticeship talks; on-site career fairs; enterprise activities; and one school runs an in-house careers week for Year 10 pupils including a career speed-dating event (short sessions where students can meet and question employers on what their careers entailed). These events and workshops are often organised by designated careers staff. In the three 11-18 schools, attendance for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 pupils is mandatory but Key Stage 5 students in the college often had to be proactive and book their preferred activities in advance or places were not available.

One school also runs a Community Day in Year 8. Here, staff organise an on-site careers fair for parents and young people and a large number of local employers attend and set up information stands. This enables parents and pupils to have the opportunity to talk to employers to inform their GCSE choices. Staff also see this as a valuable way to engage parents with careers education and dispel common

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misconceptions about what subjects students need to study for particular university courses.

Although students mentioned these events, these were often not the ones they were most animated by (such events included external speakers, visits to employers and work experience for example) and they did not talk about them extensively.

### External visits and taster days to workplaces and places of further study

All of the institutions arranged visits, where possible, to places of work or further study for their young people. Examples of visits included: nature reserves; [Women in Science](#) events; Transport for London transport museum; Kew Gardens; a range of universities; 16+ careers fairs; [Kidzania](#); building sites; hotels; care homes; city firms; and restaurants.

Staff arranged these visits in similar ways to how they organise external speakers, i.e. using several different sources (online resources, personal contacts, business contacts) to enable these trips to happen. Two of the five institutions have a full-time member of staff entirely dedicated to facilitating and building links with professionals, the community and employers. In one of these, a further member of staff was given protected time to organise work placements. One remarked he was able: 'to make the deepest inroads' when he spends a significant amount of his time working in/with the community/group or employer. In the remaining institutions, this role was fulfilled by multiple staff members, who are given protected time to facilitate links. Students often mentioned these trips when discussing careers activities they have taken part in. They frequently said that they were: 'Inspiring'. One mentioned that exposure to different work places was: 'Extremely important as it shows you different job opportunities. There are so many jobs that we don't know about'.

### Work experience and work placements (secondary schools and college)

Work experience (either block or one or two days a week) and work placements (over a more extended period) were promoted in two of the three secondary schools and in the college. These extended placements were often organised by the same member of staff who organises the external visits, with the exception of the FE college. Here, developing employer links and organising work experience/placements were mainly orchestrated by course staff. For learners with LDD, work experience placements were organised by a partner charity who was partnering with the college in piloting a supported internship programme.

'Being active in the community' was reported to be the focus of the special school's sixth form provision. Here, 60-70 per cent of sixth form students' time was focused on activity in the community. Each sixth former spends at least two full days per week off-site at a range of locations such as a local care home; the local zoo, the nature reserve, a community shop, and a local housing development. On these days, students wear a special working uniform which a staff member commented makes: 'The students look fantastic, feel good and look like they are doing a proper job'. The

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emphasis on practical working stems from the school staff focusing on preparing their learners with LDD to move directly into the world of work or to go onto a supported internship programme. In this school, students said that they value the opportunity of gaining sustained work experience. One young person explained that experience of working: 'Helps me gain confidence and builds my skills'. All students believed it is important to get a job, one remarking that it is: 'Important to know about jobs because if you don't have a job how are you going to support your family'. Staff believed that working in the community gives students more confidence as they feel valued. The head of year commented: 'It drives up their desire to be independent'.

In general, young people valued work experience and sustained work opportunities:

- one student said that work experience enabled him to: 'Gain skills along the way that are much more important than sitting in a classroom for hours every day'
- students in a different school similarly said they value direct experience of the workplace the most. One Key Stage 4 student explained: 'It's better to go and experience it yourself to know what it is ....you can put your communication [skills] into practice'
- students in another institution observed that direct experience of working and activities that help them to improve the skills they will need for their future jobs are important: 'I want to get as much experience as possible before I jump into the deep end' and: 'I just want to get as much [work experience] in as possible'.

### Mentoring (secondary schools and the college)

Both mainstream secondary schools and the college offered some form of mentoring to their young people. For example, in one school, mentoring was offered by staff within a range of local, often high-profile, employers. These mentoring sessions were reported to be facilitated by the full-time member of staff dedicated to engaging employers and providing work opportunities for young people.

### Apprenticeships (secondary schools and the college)

In one school, [Barclay's life skills](#) has recently run a three-to-six month programme for pupils that are eligible for pupil premium in order to enable them to explore their career options. The headteacher described the work this organisation has done with their students as 'great'. Students indicated the sessions had made a positive impact. One student remarked: 'I did some sessions with Barclay's life skills and they sort of said it was OK to have an apprenticeship and you're not stupid if you don't go to university'. This young person then spoke with confidence about their next steps, and their intention to commence an apprenticeship.

The college employs business administration apprentices. The apprentices spoke extremely positively about their experiences: 'You learn so many skills doing an apprenticeship, like confidence and IT skills depending on what you choose'. Another agreed noting: 'Doing an apprenticeship has helped boost my confidence'.

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## In-class careers-related activities

Some of the institutions further developed their younger students' understanding of the wider world of work through in-class projects and activities e.g. enterprise challenges and through activities such as 'Foodie Friday' [see Box 3].

When teaching learners with LDD in particular, staff reported routinely using real-world examples and highlighted the benefits of accessing the wider world of work when teaching young people key subjects and skills e.g. to understand how to manage money, the students went to buy food in a shop. Staff noted that real-life examples are good as: 'You can tell they [the students] are far more involved in the learning when they see the relevance of it'.

### **Box 3: 'Foodie Friday' in the secondary special school**

On a rota every term, each Key Stage 3 tutor group spends a whole day cooking a meal together which involves them practising several different skills e.g. planning, communication, literacy and numeracy. They have to decide what they want to cook, cost up their food, write a shopping list, go out and buy the food and cook it together. Staff were enthusiastic about this project and believed the skills that the young people are learning are highly transferable to other contexts.

In the college, many of the courses were directly related to the world of work contexts so that both staff and students can see the inter-relatedness of the subjects the students are learning to the world of work.

## Personalised portfolio

Two schools said they were in the process of developing/refining platforms to enable students to reflect on their experiences and document their achievements. One was in the early stages of consulting staff about designing a careers book, which will enable students to write down the skills they have developed and the events they have attended in one place. The intention is that this book will follow the students along their school journey. The other school is in the process of developing a personalised digital portfolio. This is a current priority as senior leaders believed that as much time needs to be spent on: 'Reflecting and recording experiences of the world of work as undertaking them'.

The college reported that it has a system in place for students to reflect on their world-of-work experiences and CEIAG activities in their online learning and development plans. The software behind these development plans allows students and their tutors to set targets and track the students' course progress and engagement with careers-related activities.

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### 3.3 Explicit publicised careers policy and careers curriculum

London Ambitions Element 3: *‘Every secondary school and college should have in place an explicit publicised careers policy and Careers Curriculum on young people’s experiences of the world of work, links with business, careers provision and destination outcomes. That policy should be reviewed and approved by the governing body at least every three years. All schools and colleges should also report annually on delivery of the careers policy and curriculum’.*

All five case-study institutions said they were proactively developing a careers policy and curriculum tailored to their school/college context and the interviews demonstrated that there are some similarities in approaches between institutions. For example, all five have initially carried out audits of their students’ and staff’s needs, either formally or informally, one with support from an Enterprise Adviser and another with their London Ambitions careers cluster. The results were informing the development of their careers curriculum/framework and policies for their students, ensuring that CEIAG activities and experiences are further developed and progressed year by year.

Staff in all five institutions recognised that placing activities in a logical order to create a ‘learning journey’ was considered a priority. The careers day in the primary school was reported to be planned across phases so that pupils receive a wide range of exposure to different speakers across the years. In the secondary schools, their careers frameworks and activities were developed so that, every year, students build on their experiences from the previous year. For example, in Year 7 they may be introduced to engineering more broadly and, in Year 9, they may focus on particular types of engineering such as chemical or mechanical. Two of the schools continuously refine these activities through consulting local businesses, staff and students. Student feedback from events was gathered from both tutor group surveys/discussions and online surveys. In the college, its tutor system and careers programme has a clear sequential structure, with key careers discussions and activities planned at particular points in the student’s course.

Another similar feature across all five institutions was that CEIAG has a clear, visible and important role in the student’s whole experience of that establishment. In two schools, CEIAG visibly links to one of the school’s main goals ‘To raise [the] aspirations’ of pupils. Multiple staff, with varying levels of seniority, in both establishments explicitly mentioned the importance of CEIAG to the school’s wider ambitions. In the three other establishments, CEIAG was clearly linked to one of their core aims: ‘To prepare students to make informed choices about their next steps and have the employability skills necessary to achieve in the workplace’. One senior leader noted: ‘We have a responsibility to get students thinking about the future’. This point was reiterated by different staff members in all three establishments. For learners with LDD in particular, the focus was on finding opportunities: ‘Geared up to the type of things they may do [when they leave school]’. The senior leader emphasised that: ‘What they [the students] really need is experience of doing the job’.

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Although it was reported that CEIAG policies, frameworks or curricula were being developed, there was no evidence of such developments on any of the schools' websites. However, two establishments have a few online pages with overview information e.g. lists of activities students can take part in, and the college has an easy-to-find CEIAG section of their website, with an overview of what they offer and the contact details of careers staff to go to for appointments and to find out more about the service.

### 3.4 Governor with oversight for Careers

London Ambitions Element 4: *'Every good institution will have a governor with oversight for ensuring the organisation supports all students to relate their learning to careers and the world of work from an early age'*.

All the case-study institutions demonstrated visible support for CEIAG at a senior level, although only the secondary academy reported established governor oversight.

The secondary academy has two very engaged, high-profile governors, who are supportive of employer engagement and provide links to the world of work for students. 'They play a big role' reported a senior staff member. Senior staff also believe the governors' support was a key success factor in the school's ability to deliver their careers offer.

A governor in charge of vocational education has recently been appointed to a governor post in another secondary school where vocational education was viewed to be intrinsically linked to CEIAG and experience of the world of work. The aim for this governor will be to focus on supporting sixth form provision initially, before contributing to the development of the pathway of vocational education throughout the school.

In the primary school staff noted that their governors support the key careers-related events e.g. Family Careers Day. Governors were also reported to have a presence in the school and help staff secure external speakers through drawing on their own personal contacts.

In the remaining secondary school and the college, although there was reported to be limited or no governor involvement with the CEIAG provision, the staff felt that senior leaders highly prioritise CEIAG. One staff member highlighted that the senior leadership team: 'Want everyone [students] to be very aware of their future options.' Several members of college staff also noted that the college's senior board is very supportive of the embedded careers policy and it being truly inclusive: 'From the top down they have supported this service over the years'.

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## 3.5 Up-to-date and user-friendly Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) / information readily accessible

London Ambitions Element 5: *‘Every secondary school and college should have up-to-date, user-friendly Labour Market Intelligence/information (LMI) readily accessible by young people, teachers and parents/carers drawing upon the Skills London Match, UKCES ‘LMI for All’, National Careers Service local LMI data and other reliable sources of information.’*

Staff stated that they are familiar with LMI, but use of LMI clearly varied between institutions. The college staff reported that they use LMI extensively. For example, one head of department described how they use it to inform curriculum design: ‘Our units we choose, in terms of curriculum design, are informed by the labour market’. Most courses teach distinct skills, so up-to-date LMI was considered important for staff. The careers coordinator also often chooses resources and websites e.g. [Creative Skillset](#) (a website to direct young people who are interested in entering the creative and digital skills industry) with LMI embedded within them, to give to students. They explained that they use LMI within the London Ambitions careers cluster to inform their understanding of the local labour market and to plan CEIAG services around this. However, they do not use LMI extensively with learners with LDD. One senior leader observed: ‘We use it to an extent but I don’t think we are making enough use of it, because the information is not as comprehensive as it is for non-disabled students’. It is worth noting that, in addition to their use of LMI, the college also co-develops courses with local providers and students to make sure they cater for all local needs.

The remaining institutions reported limited use of LMI, although some said they use ready-made resources with LMI embedded within them. Reasons for not using LMI directly included:

- The member of staff responsible for liaising with employers felt that she is so closely connected to businesses in the vicinity of the school and is aware of relevant research evidence so she does not need to use LMI to find opportunities for young people. Additionally, she noted that she knows where to find LMI if needed.
- Staff at the special school felt that LMI is not tailored sufficiently to learners with LDD: ‘I had a look at it and it seemed very mainstream’.
- The LMI on offer was considered too generic and not sufficiently locally based.

## 3.6 Careers clusters

London Ambitions Element 6: *‘The quality of careers provision should be strengthened by developing ‘careers clusters’ to share resources in improving awareness of London’s labour market and supporting school and college leaders in a whole-school approach to plan and deliver careers provision’.*

Three out of the five institutions reported that they were involved to some degree with a careers cluster. Two schools using their clusters felt that the groups are in the early

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stages of development. One headteacher used the phrase '*embryonic*' to describe their local cluster, which fits with the implementation of the London Ambitions clusters. The college, in its capacity as a lead organisation, is part of several, more established clusters.

In the careers clusters in their earlier stages of development, school staff have focused either on creating resources to be shared across schools or on finding further world of work opportunities for their young people. For example, one careers cluster has focused on creating resources, that make use of LMI information, aimed at addressing a common question pupils ask staff: 'What's the point of me doing/learning this?' The group have created a series of resources called '*What's the point?*' to help explain the importance of certain topics to students and what local jobs use those skills. Staff were hopeful that the cluster will evolve to a stage where professionals can share best practice, but noted they have not managed to do much more than create resources at this stage.

The special school has formed a cluster with the other special schools within their local authority. The headteacher remarked: 'One of the exciting things is now working with the careers cluster; it is the first time we have had an opportunity to work in partnership'. Currently, the cluster is partnering with a local Education Business Partnership (EBP) to establish many local connections. The headteacher explained: 'They [the EBP] know those contacts so well, so they know who to home in on. They have done a lot of the work that we have found quite difficult to achieve just doing it part-time from a small school'. The school felt able, with the support of the cluster, to expand the opportunities they offer to their students to experience the world of work. Using the cluster was also reported to provide more time for the member of staff responsible for community outreach, to further develop and establish existing connections. Although the cluster was in its early stages, the headteacher remarked that they are beginning to use it as a platform to share best practice.

The college explained that they are part of several careers-related clusters. They are leading a London Ambitions careers cluster working across five boroughs and are part of a single borough cluster. The London Ambitions cluster is one of three skills-specific clusters in the capital. It focuses on bringing together education and industry stakeholders from the digital skills and the creative industries as these are key local labour markets. Both careers and teaching staff pointed out that this more-established cluster helps them stay '*ahead of the curve*', in understanding industry needs and developing their students' readiness for relevant jobs. It also provides direct access to professionals so that the most up-to-date information can be provided to students.

### 3.7 London Ambitions Portal

London Ambitions Element 7: '*The London Ambitions Portal should enable more schools and colleges to easily find high-quality careers provision designed to support the career development of all young Londoners*'.

The [London Ambitions portal](#) provides schools in London with a means to connect to a vast array of external businesses within the capital. Schools can build a profile and highlight their specialist subjects to employers in order to link with businesses where they

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have common ground. Staff can also post requests for employer support such as talks, mentoring or work experience and search for opportunities advertised by employers.

Staff in one school, who have used an online platform to connect with employers, felt that the process can be time consuming compared with using personal contacts. The headteacher noted it is: '*Often tricky to get people [registered on these platforms] in but when you do get a link it's great*'. Staff also mentioned that they believed that some online platforms have some useful ideas and resources, including action plan templates to support CEIAG provision.

The other institutions reported that they do not use the London Ambitions Portal, although some said they use similar resources. Reasons for not using the portal included:

- having such good established links with a range of local employers, they did not need the portal's contacts
- preferring to cultivate their own contacts and use other websites.

## 4. Challenges

We asked interviewees to reflect on what worked less well in terms of relating teaching and learning to the world of work and how they are overcoming any challenges to securing careers provision. Table 1 outlines the challenges and strategies being used to overcome them.

Table 1 Working with employers		
Identified challenge	LA Element	Ways to overcome
<b>Engaging and maintaining employers,</b> organising external visits and speakers.	2,7	<p><b>Use personal contacts of staff, governors and parents</b> to make contacts and arrange talks and visits. This is the least time consuming way of organising an opportunity.</p> <p><b>Protect time for a member of staff to network locally,</b> using websites, knocking on doors and attending events.</p> <p><b>Explain to employers that they can be change-makers for young people:</b> 'Explain to employers that they can make that difference' and for their business, this: 'Is a powerful message' for them to hear.</p> <p><b>Treat and nurture employers as clients:</b> 'I presented at a conference with an employer, and when I said that we treated employers as clients [in my presentation] an employer said on the strength of that "I will work with you as, I [employer] am so fed up of being let down by schools".'</p> <p><b>Start small, build solid links with one or two employers</b> first before finding further partners.</p> <p><b>Thank employers, appreciate them and show them what they have done has made a difference.</b> For example, one school provided feedback to an employer highlighting how they had helped a young person into medical school.</p>
<b>Securing world of work experiences for students.</b> This was especially true for learners with LDD.	2,7,6	<p><b>Once engaged, invest in mutually beneficial arrangements with employers.</b> Relationships work best when educators and employers meet together and make sure that the employers' needs are met. Through work experience young people gain experience and employers can review their talent pipeline. Consider a skills swap. In one school, a staff member provided mental health training to city firms in exchange for work experience placements for their young people.</p> <p><b>Use the learning from the clusters; tap into resources</b> [e.g. Education Business Partnership staff] that have the personal connections to arrange work experience placements.</p>
<b>Preparing external speakers/employers</b> to pitch at right level for pupils/students.	2	<p><b>Have formal and/or informal systems to prepare and follow up on employer visits.</b> As well as thanking employers for their time, request feedback to monitor how teachers can support employers and improve the experience.</p> <p><b>Factor in time before a presentation/talk for a teacher to brief the speaker about how to engage young people at the appropriate level.</b> One member of staff noted that if speakers are unfamiliar with the age group: 'They get overwhelmed by the energy and enthusiasm of the children and don't know how to re-direct it'.</p>

<p><b>Finding time for the students to be prepared before an activity and to follow up/reflect afterwards.</b></p>	<p>2,3</p>	<p><b>Use tutor time slots</b> to prepare young people for, or to reflect on, world of work activities. Consider using discussions, surveys or log books, to encourage young people to plan prior to an experience and to reflect on what they have learnt after an experience.</p> <p><b>Consider subsuming careers education within Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) lessons.</b> This enables extra time to be devoted to CEIAG and for planning and reflecting on opportunities/experiences.</p>
<p><b>Creating a whole-school approach</b></p>		
<p><b>Identified challenge</b></p>	<p><b>LA Element</b></p>	<p><b>Ways to overcome</b></p>
<p><b>Achieving a school-wide framework, understood by all stakeholders</b> that works for every young person, and is embedded in each year group with no overlapping experiences.</p>	<p>1,3,4,6</p>	<p><b>Carry out an audit to identify: students’ needs; current careers provision; challenges and areas for development.</b> One school used support from their local authority to achieve this and another had recently undertaken a cluster audit.</p> <p><b>Prioritise group planning time and cross-key stage meetings.</b> One senior leader suggested that heads of year are given: ‘Proper time and resource to lead it [CEIAG]. If you value it, give it time’.</p> <p><b>Consult heads of year when careers staff/SLT are constructing the CEIAG framework/strategy.</b> Encourage staff to engage with the strategy, comment on the proposed plan and inform its design. Additionally, consult employers and young people in devising the final framework.</p> <p><b>Build incremental experiences so there is logical progression year on year.</b> This should also be documented on the school/college website to ensure all stakeholders have buy in.</p> <p><b>Use the London Ambitions Careers Curriculum to support the schools careers strategy.</b> The London Ambitions Careers Curriculum is a practical resource designed to support teachers and governors to feel confident and well equipped in delivering careers in the curriculum and preparing for a review of careers in the curriculum, including dialogue with Ofsted.</p>
<p><b>Meeting the needs of each learner with limited funding.</b></p>	<p>1,2,3,4</p>	<p><b>Consider using alternative funding sources.</b> One school used pupil premium money to fund staff time for CEIAG trips and activities and employer engagement.</p> <p><b>Collaborate with stakeholders to secure additional resources and/or funding.</b> For example, consider research projects/funds, and technology resources to support CEIAG work. One school was working collaboratively with their local authority and NHS trust to fund a staff post and provide work experience for their learners with LDD.</p> <p><b>Explore existing cluster resources.</b> One school was using cluster resources to access experienced professionals to arrange work experience opportunities for learners with LDD.</p> <p><b>Provide more in-house opportunities to minimise costs of external trips and target activities to students that need them the most.</b> For example, one school prioritised practical experiences and one-to-one careers advice for their ‘at risk’ young people. Other students were provided with more on-site activities and careers discussions in groups.</p>
<p><b>Securing the release of students from</b></p>	<p>2</p>	<p><b>Secure all-school buy in to the importance of young people engaging with the world of work.</b> Where possible, consider using</p>

<b>lessons for world-of-work activities.</b>		non-teaching staff to accompany young people. One headteacher commented: 'Where possible we send teachers out on these experiences with the children, as it is as important for them to hear these messages, but then you have the issue of covering classes whereas if we send [member of staff responsible for employer engagement] then we have no cover issues. It's a balance'.
<b>Funding the release of staff to engage</b> in training so they can relate teaching and learning more holistically to the world of work.	2,6	<b>Train staff about CEIAG as part of new staff induction.</b> Provide staff with resources and clear signposts to engage staff early on and minimise the release of staff later on. <b>Use the cluster to provide opportunities for career staff CPD and networking. Disseminate to teaching staff.</b>
<b>Other challenges include:</b>		
<b>Specific challenge</b>	<b>LA Element</b>	<b>Ways to overcome:</b>
<b>Motivating demotivated or undecided learners</b> to think about their future options.	Linked to all elements.	<b>Enable young people to develop informed goals</b> One young person commented: 'If you have a goal and you know where you are going to end up after doing your qualifications and you're happy with that, it's like a whole new life really'. Similarly, a senior leader highlighted the importance of young people having a target: 'I can think of a couple of students who have been below with their attainment and, as soon as they have decided what they want to do and can visualise it and can go and see it, it gives them the drive and motivation to raise their work level which means they attain higher'. Methods to motivate include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>take young people into the community to try new experiences.</b> For example, one school has taken a group of young people to a building site for a 'have a go day', hosted by one of their employer partners</li> <li>• <b>create a culture of forward thinking/outward looking post 16.</b> For example, staff talking to pupils about their future options informally or through more formal processes, such as the college's tutor system</li> <li>• <b>work with parents to support their child and help them develop informed, realistic options</b></li> <li>• <b>consider developing a specialist induction programme for potential NEETs</b> such as a trained '<i>course information team</i>' who use motivational dialogue to encourage the young people to re-engage with education. These young people can also meet with the careers staff to discuss other options and they can be offered a range of courses, including some with January start dates to ensure the inclusion of all learners.</li> </ul>
<b>Engaging schools in clusters.</b>	6	Staff in one school explained attendance at cluster meetings was a challenge: 'The main reason to be [that] schools don't attend'.

		Consider ways to encourage attendance such as highlighting the benefits and working with participants to ensure that meetings are held at convenient locations and times.
<p><b>Parents having unrealistic (too high or too low) aspirations</b> for their children.</p>	<p>Linked to all strands.</p>	<p><b>Engage parents through regular meetings</b>, especially for learners with LDD. One senior leader noted with regard to learners with LDD: ‘It is our duty to make them [students] as successful for employment as possible and also to help their parents to understand that it [employment] is possible’. This school organised termly 45-minute meetings for every parent with the young person’s tutor. They used a ‘structured learning conversation’ to have the discussion with the parent about their child’s next steps. The tutor stays with the young person throughout their time at the school, allowing for trust to build up between parents and staff. Staff remarked that this allows them to more easily have difficult conversations with parents, when needed.</p> <p><b>Clarify parents’ expectations early on.</b> The special school has recently started organising individual meetings with every parent/carer of learners with LDD when their child enters Year 7. The form tutor, class teachers, the head teacher and the learning disability behavioural nurses all attend this meeting. At the meeting, they establish what the parent and child wants and come up with a joint plan of how the school will help the parents get there. Employment often comes up in these conversations.</p> <p><b>Provide opportunities for parents to see their children’s capabilities with their own eyes.</b> Interviewees commented that this was the most powerful way to alter perceptions. Staff in the college invite parents to eat in the canteen staffed entirely by learners with LDD.</p> <p><b>Create events which involve parents</b> such as the Family Careers Day in the primary school, Year 8 careers fairs or enterprise activities. Staff in one school noted these events were good as: ‘A way of getting the conversation [about careers] going but also it’s a way of encouraging that conversation in the playground...that’s what we’ve noticed, it’s that snowball-effect about getting that dialogue going’.</p>

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## References

Great Britain. House of Commons. Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees. Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy (2016). *Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. First Joint Report of the Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees of Session 2016–17* (HC 205). London: TSO [online]. Available: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmese/205/205.pdf> [26 September, 2017].

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## Appendix A: Methodology

London Councils supplied NFER with a shortlist of schools and colleges who they had identified as showing promising practice in the field of careers education and guidance. From this list, five institutions were selected so that the sample covered as wide a range of schools and colleges as possible. Some schools/colleges from the original list were unable to participate within the timescale and similar replacements, in terms of phase, pupil characteristics, and funding type were then suggested by London Councils. Four schools and one further education college in Greater London made up the final case-study sample.

Between February and May 2017, NFER researchers visited: one primary school; one special secondary school; one 11-18 secondary academy; one 11-18 secondary maintained school; and one FE College. We carried out 22 semi-structured face-to-face interviews, and one telephone interview, with school/college staff using interview schedules tailored to their specific areas of expertise and experience to ensure that individuals could comment appropriately and meaningfully on careers education and guidance. Topics discussed included:

- their careers education and guidance strategy, how it was implemented and how, if at all, the London Ambitions careers offer was implemented
- an operational perspective at school/college level on what was perceived to work well and why and the challenges faced and how these had been addressed
- how embedded careers education and guidance and London Ambitions was in the school/college culture, the education offer and the approach to teaching and learning and the perceptions of the effect on pupils' aspirations, development and learning
- the degree of school/college involvement and engagement with employers and governance oversight of linking school activities to the world of work.

In addition, we carried out five face-to-face focus groups with young people to discuss their views on the careers education and guidance they receive, their encounters with employers and the world of work and their views on the impact of this activity on their development and readiness for future employment.

More specifically, interviews were undertaken with:

- five Headteachers or Deputy/Assistant Headteachers
- five further senior leaders with responsibility for careers education and/or employer engagement
- nine members of teaching staff, including four heads of year and/or department
- three careers coordinators, where the post existed
- five focus groups of young people, including six primary-aged children, 11 secondary aged pupils and 17 students aged between 16 and 19 years old.

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Interviewees were told that NFER and London Councils were working in partnership on the project to identify emerging promising practice in the field of careers education and guidance. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and an hour, depending upon the interviewee's role. The interviews were recorded with the interviewee's permission. NFER researchers analysed the findings and wrote the report.

This was a small, qualitative study designed to explore, and identify promising examples of, the strategic planning and delivery of careers education and guidance, and its implementation as defined in the seven key elements of the London Ambitions careers offer. A specific aim was to produce an accessible guide for school and college senior leaders and teachers which provides evidence-based promising examples of careers education and guidance outlined in the London Ambitions careers offer.

We would like to thank the five institutions for their valuable input into this study:

Pimlico Academy

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Hackney Community College

Belvue School, Northolt

Stanhope Primary School, Greenford.

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## Appendix B: Resources

### Staff recommended resources

- [Creative Skillset](#): useful website to direct young people who are interested in entering the creative and digital skills industry.
- [Not going to Uni](#): platform to find apprenticeships and further opportunities for young people.
- [London ambitions portal](#): website linking schools and employers.
- [London Enterprise Adviser Network](#): connecting careers leads with senior business volunteers to develop a careers and business engagement strategy.
- [Business in the Community](#): platform linking schools and employers.
- [Inspiring the Future](#): includes Primary Futures and Women in Science. Platform linking employers, professionals and schools. The site also includes useful resources, according to staff interviewed.
- [Supported Internships](#): a type of study programme aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who have an education, health and care plan who want to move into employment.
- [Project Search](#): part of 'preparing for adulthood', a supported internship project for young learners with LDD.
- [Barclay's Life Skills](#): programme with a diverse offer for schools.
- [London Ambitions Career Clusters](#): provides information on the 12 geographic or sector-specific careers clusters.

### Other resources

In December 2016, London Ambitions published [a Careers Curriculum](#) for Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 5, within which there are numerous links to useful websites and resources.

[Careers engagement: A good practice brief for leaders of schools and colleges](#) (April 2014). Published by NFER, ASCL, ATL and the 157 Group of Colleges, this good practice brief highlights the principles of effective careers education, information advice and guidance in schools.

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