



**Lancashire AP & SEND Transition Project:
Learning Sessions Resource Pack**

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Learning Session 1

Discussion topic - Parent/carer engagement in the school to post-16 transition process

“Good careers guidance cannot be delivered in isolation from young people’s families. Parents are widely accepted as an influential force on young people’s decision-making, as are extended members of their family and other people within their network”.*

Talking Futures: Toolkit for Educators

*The term “parents” will be used throughout this discussion to refer to all parents, carers, guardians and other supportive adults



Welcome

Time	Agenda Item	Facilitator
4.00 – 4.10pm	Welcome, introductions and objectives Where are we now?	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)
4.10 – 4.20pm	Our journey with parent/carers engagement	Viv Counsell-Thomas (Educational Diversity)
4.20 – 4.30pm	Open floor – Q+A	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)
4.30 – 4.50pm	Discussion - Best practice and challenges within Lancashire schools	Right to Succeed staff (various)
4.50 – 5.00pm	Close	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)

Session objectives

- To identify challenges with parent/carer engagement within the transition process
- To share best practice for parent/carer engagement within the transition process
- To leave the session with (at least) one tangible next step to improve transition for young people





Challenges for Ed Diversity in Transition Planning

- Parents have a historic negative experience of careers guidance and the education system
- Contact with school is often associated with behaviour
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of the post 16 offer
- Transport issues (no money for travel, banned from taxi firms)
- Financial concerns
- Employment commitments
- Stereotyping of agency involvement not directly linked to teaching or support



Engagement Coach Delivery: Key Strategies

- Recognising transition can be challenging for all parties involved
- The young person and the parent have the same information
- Show and explain the options - they have choice!
- Show parents there is a decision to make and involve them on the journey
- Having the time to talk to parents
- Working **with** parents, not doing things for them or to them



Engagement Coach Delivery: Practical Tips

- Make phone calls and home visits and find the setting that feels most comfortable
- Find preferred contact to maintain communication (text, email)
- Invite family members on tours of providers when possible
- Introduce professionals to parents with your support
- Share knowledge of application processes
- Travel with/transport parents - a good opportunity to discuss a range of topics



talking
futures
Engaging parents in
young people's choices

TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS

ENTER 

SUPPORTED BY



WELCOME TO TALKING FUTURES



Talking Futures is a suite of resources designed by the Gatsby Foundation, to help educators in England support parents to have constructive careers and education conversations with their children.*

A fundamental principle of *Talking Futures* is that good careers guidance is the key to social mobility. It provides young people – whatever their social and family background – with the skills and information they need to make empowered and positive decisions about their future education and careers options.

But good careers guidance cannot be delivered in isolation from young people's families. Parents are widely accepted as an influential force on young people's decision-making, as are extended members of their family and other people within their network.

Through your own experiences, you will be aware that engaging parents in any area of school or college life is not always straightforward: there is no one-size-fits-all approach. When it comes to encouraging them to engage with careers and education conversations, both with the school or college, or with their children, some may be strongly supportive of your activities and keen to explore, while others may have limited understanding about today's education options and careers pathways. Others may feel disengaged or lack confidence in having careers conversations with their children or have significant pulls on their time and resources at home to sufficiently engage.

* Throughout the *Talking Futures* materials, the word 'parent' is used to refer to parents, carers and guardians and other influencers you may want to involve.

WELCOME TO TALKING FUTURES

The content is based on research commissioned by Gatsby to explore how best to provide information and support to parents via schools and colleges, to help young people make informed careers and education decisions.

About this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help schools and colleges maximise the effectiveness of their parental engagement around careers and education decision making, and increase participation from parents.

The toolkit is primarily aimed at Careers Leaders in schools and colleges, as well as those that support them, such as the wider Senior Leadership team, careers professionals, subject department leads and SENCOs.

Talking Futures' suite of resources include; ideas for CPD, tools and activities for use at parents' evenings, tailored family learning events, and other opportunities both remotely and in person. Schools and colleges can choose activities that will complement their existing provision to ensure every young person, supported by their parents, has the tools they need to make informed choices to unlock their future. An overview of the activities available is included in this toolkit and more detail on delivering them and all the resources required can be found on [The Careers & Enterprise Company Resource Directory](#).





THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

The Gatsby Foundation (Gatsby) is the philanthropic trust of David Sainsbury (Lord Sainsbury of Turville). The trust focuses on six areas, one of which is education: specifically, technical education.

Through its efforts to support and improve technical education, Gatsby identified that the wider career guidance system needed to be addressed to ensure that all young people are aware of, and ideally capitalise on, the range of options available and best suited to them.

Gatsby's work to identify benchmarks for what good career guidance looks like, led by Sir John Holman, has provided a much welcome framework and the trust continues to ensure that its findings underpin the national Careers Strategy and are embedded in the practice of all schools and colleges.

The eight [Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance](#), which all secondary schools and colleges in England follow are:

1. [A stable careers programme](#)
2. [Learning from career and labour market information](#)
3. [Addressing the needs of each pupil](#)
4. [Linking curriculum learning to careers](#)
5. [Encounters with employers and employees](#)
6. [Experiences of workplaces](#)
7. [Encounters with further and higher education](#)
8. [Personal guidance](#)

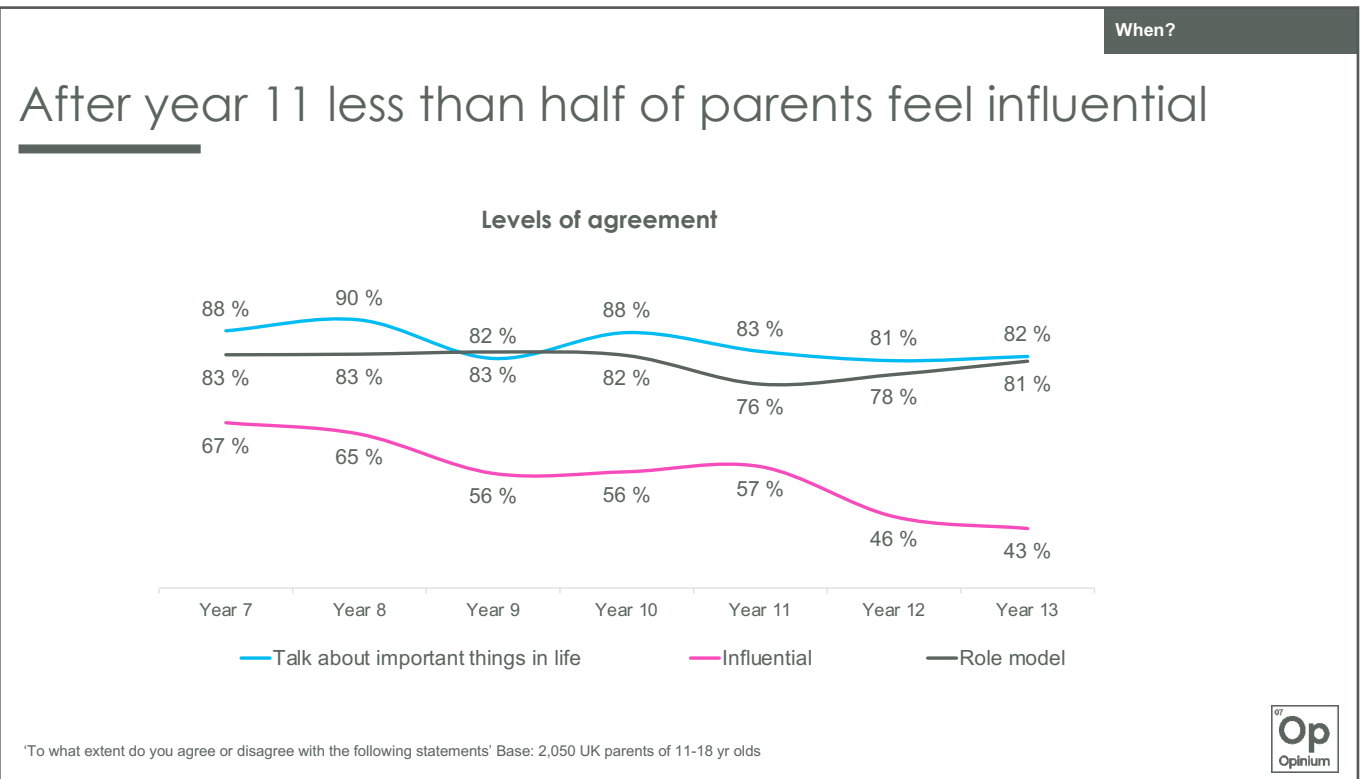
Parental involvement is explicitly referenced in the guidance for achieving several Gatsby Benchmarks, but the degree of parental engagement around careers and education options varies from one school or college to another. Along with supporting young people to make more informed choices, engaging with parents in a more strategic way could help institutions meet the eight Benchmarks.

PARENTS AND CAREERS DECISION-MAKING

Parents are well-known to have an influence on young people around careers and education decision-making.

Recent Gatsby-funded research into parents' views on careers education carried out in 2019 shows that parents believe children should take their views into account when making important decisions, however, some underestimated the influence they could have on their child's choices.

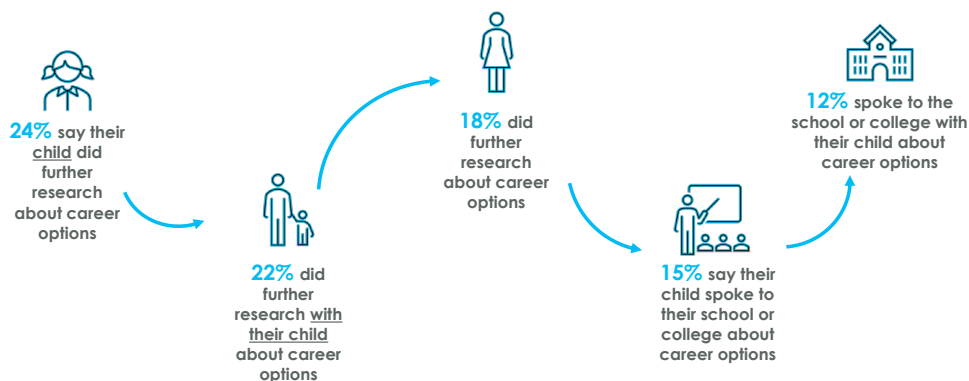
These conversations around key decisions were shown to start as early as Year 7, well before they noted receiving information on choices from their children's school or college. They like to feel involved and informed, and even as young people grow older and parental influence declines, they do continue to talk about the important things in life with their children.



PARENTS AND CAREERS DECISION-MAKING

Four in five parents note actions taken as a result of conversations with their child about career options

Conversations with children



What was the result of the last conversation you had with your child about their career options?
Base: 1,949



of Employment Research (2019), found that parental engagement is important for supporting the development of:

- **Information-seeking and research behaviours**
- **Self-efficacy, career decision-making and confidence**
- **Planning, goal-setting and creating a sense of direction**
- **(Career) adaptability, flexibility and employability skills (such as entrepreneurship and team working skills).**

There are other benefits to involving parents. Most schools and colleges will have identified that, as members of the local community, parents can be a useful resource. Gatsby Benchmarks 5 and 6 call for young people to have encounters with employers and employees, as well as experiences of workplaces. Parents may have a personal understanding of the local labour market and some may be able to provide such encounters and experiences for young people.

The impact of these conversations can be seen in new research, carried out in Autumn 2020, which indicates that four in five parents note action was taken as a result of their conversations with children about career options.

When parents are involved, the benefits of their engagement in supporting decision-making around careers and options are well-evidenced. Another piece of research supported by Gatsby, and carried out by Warwick Institute

It is also possible that improving parental engagement around careers may act as a hook for other types of parental engagement and lead to whole-school or college benefits, such as attendance and even attainment.

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

In recent years, the education and careers landscape has transformed. There is no guarantee that the stages, options and considerations that were relevant when parents left education are still the same today.

As a result, some parents may have a partial understanding of the variety of education pathways which lead to different occupations and could potentially hold misconceptions about the value of different routes and the reality of jobs and industries. Yet we know from research carried out in 2020 that parents predominantly rely on their own experiences to inform discussions about careers and options.

Therefore, as well as ensuring young people have access to accurate, up-to-date information about the careers and education options available, parents must equally be engaged and informed to enable them to provide support. Gatsby Benchmark 2 states that every pupil and their parents should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. Parents should be encouraged to use this type of information to support their children directly and generate questions to explore further with their school or college.

Parents therefore need to know:

- Each stage in brief and its decision points
- The routes available at each stage
- The implications of each route
- Historic national and institution-level data on the number of young people choosing each route
- Further career and labour market information

Explaining careers provision today

Research carried out in 2020 indicates that 40% of parents believe their experience of career guidance at school was very bad or bad, however, there have been significant positive changes in careers provision in recent years. It's worth being aware that if parents' own experience was poor, some may retain a negative attitude towards what careers teams are doing, so it is important in your work to raise the profile of your school or college careers offer.

It's strongly recommended you explain how careers provision works today and what support is offered by your school or college – both in terms of what their children will experience but also where they can go to get information. This message should be covered in early interactions with new parents and reinforced through all careers activities as a reminder of the support available.



UNDERSTANDING PARENTS

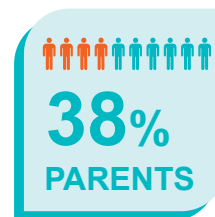
To understand parents' behaviour better and support schools and colleges to work with those in most need of support, Gatsby's 2019 research identified several different groups of parents based on a number of measures, including their attitude towards school and college careers provision. Follow up research in 2020 highlighted some variations in these groups, likely to be as a result of the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

While most schools and colleges will see every type of parent the research identified, socio-economic factors mean that some parent groups may be concentrated in certain areas.

The activities and ideas offered as part of *Talking Futures* can be added to institutions' existing parental engagement provision and tailored to different parent groups. Through a mixture of broad and targeted interventions, an institution's parental engagement strategy can effectively be developed to meet the nuanced needs of its parent community.

Parent Group 1

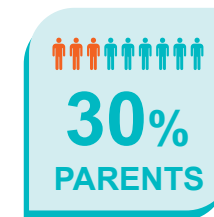
Around four out of 10 parents identified in Gatsby's 2019 and 2020 research are content to take a backseat in decision-making, but would be happy to be involved by schools and colleges. They often have strong relationships with their children and their faith in the system or their children means that they trust that the right choices about their children's future will be made.



Given the influence they have on their children and the ease of reaching them, schools and colleges may be able to have a significant positive impact on this group by encouraging them to understand the value of their role in helping young people make decisions.

Parent Group 2

Around a third of parents are highly engaged in their children's decision-making. They tend to be educated to A level or degree-level themselves, they talk to their children regularly about careers and they have high expectations of them. However, some may have misconceptions or a limited understanding of the choices available to young people today, especially around technical education and careers.



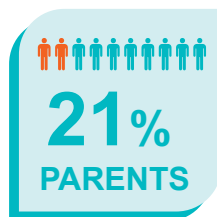
This group of parents are very open to what schools and colleges offer them. Subject – or interest – specific events may provide food for thought and serve to dispel myths about particular routes.

UNDERSTANDING PARENTS



Parent Group 3

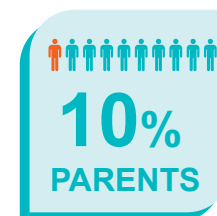
One group of parents in need of particular support from schools and colleges are those who have quite a distant relationship with their children and/or minimal engagement with the school or college. They may lack confidence and knowledge, and their communication skills, coupled with fear, may hold them back from seeking help. This group made up just over 10% of parents in the 2019 research and 21% of parents in 2020.



Personalised activities tailored to their needs may overcome many of these barriers, such as preparation workshops in advance of whole-year careers evenings to give them confidence to talk about options and ask questions. Collaborative learning events may serve as safe and supportive spaces where young people and their parents can explore different routes together.

Parent Group 4

Another group in need of support are those who are highly anxious about their children's future. They are receptive to engagement from schools and colleges, but the format or frequency of current careers and option provision may not be appropriate for them. This may be compounded if they or their children have additional needs. This group made up around 10% parents in the research.



This group will respond well to small-group activities which provide an opportunity to voice their concerns and tackle the specific issues their children face. As well as personalised events, follow-up sessions with careers advisers may be useful, where possible, to provide relevant support.

GOOD PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Research carried out by the [Warwick Institute of Employment Research \(2019\)](#) explored how best to provide information and support to parents via schools and colleges to help young people make decisions.

This research, combined with the findings on different parent groups and their needs, has been translated into 11 practical recommendations. These recommendations can be used by Careers Leaders and SLT to reflect on your institution's current parental engagement activities to explore how potentially small adjustments can be made to maximise impact. For schools and colleges wanting to create a parental engagement strategy for your work in careers, these can act as a structure to follow.

Support with implementing these recommendations can be found through the activities and resources provided as part of the *Talking Futures* materials. They are specifically designed to address these recommendations and the needs of the different parent groups identified in the research. All materials include guidance for virtual delivery too.

1. Provide timely careers information

Evidence shows parents begin conversations with their children on careers choices early. For example, in schools this can be from Year 7. This highlights the need to provide supporting information to parents as soon as a student joins a school or college. Signposting to the support a school or college can offer to parents around career guidance during the student transition process is important, and should be reiterated frequently.

2. Build on current parental engagement

The research found that it is highly effective, in developing a parental engagement strategy around careers, to make use of and extend existing communication channels between parents and the school or college. Parents' forums, links with parent governors and other parental involvement activities can all be developed to engage parents in young people's careers and education choices, and share success stories about careers provision.

3. Co-create with parents

If you don't already consult parents and shape your careers activities around their needs and concerns, you may find this drives informed and supportive interest. The most effective parental engagement strategies involve planning, collaboration and continuous improvement using parent feedback. This supports Gatsby Benchmark 1 in which a stable careers programme is developed through evaluation and improvement.

4. Create a parent-friendly environment

Consider organising smaller group activities in different locations and at times of the day when parents are likely to be available, such as breakfast meetings, evening careers guidance sessions or coffee clubs. These can increase engagement by making parents feel more welcome at school or college.

5. Build trust with socially-disadvantaged families

When planning activities, think about different parent groups and how to reach them. The research found that communication with the hardest-to-reach parents needs to be targeted, personalised in terms of their needs and their children's interests and appropriate in terms of content and timing. Workshops with small numbers offer more opportunity for tailored support. You may want to consider specific aspiration raising activities that cover educational and personal development, such as those offered by third-sector organisations and charities.

GOOD PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

6. Refocus careers activities to involve parents

It's good practice to invite parents to existing activities such as careers fairs, open days and where appropriate their child's personal guidance session. You may also want to design new activities that engage parents, employers and the local community, such as 'meet the employer events', 'guess my job' and informational events on topics requested by parents. Section 5 of this toolkit provides an overview of the activities developed as part of *Talking Futures* which are all available online and can be used as a starting point for refocusing your provision.

7. Stimulate family conversations

Research shows that a shared understanding between parents and young people of young people's career direction is essential for progressing thinking and career development. Prompt students to discuss their careers and options choices with their parents. Workshops involving both parents and young people create a shared careers-related experience and can support future dialogue between the institution and the family.

8. Combine home and school or college

Starting activities in institutions which they then take home to complete has been effective at encouraging parents to get involved. Classroom teachers can play a key role by designing classroom and homework activities that promote careers discussions, particularly related to their subject areas. It also works well to target careers presentations from employers and education providers by subject, and involve the relevant teaching staff, as we know from the research that parents often prefer to speak to subject staff who know their child well, about their child's aspirations.

9. Offer a blended delivery

A combination of online and face-to-face activities have been found effective in reaching parents because the engagement takes place at a time in a form that suits parents. Technology can also be used to monitor engagement and determine what support is needed. The use of virtual support has been increased extensively over the past year with parents and students engaging via new channels, and learnings from what worked with your parent community for maintaining contact can be applied to your careers provision where needed.

10. Draw on parents as a resource

The research found that it's highly effective to involve parents in helping to deliver careers activities. Many will be employed, have good links to employers or run their own companies. If you don't make use of parents' expertise and experience in this way already, you may want to involve parents in targeted presentations, group discussions, or careers club activities to develop students' insights into the world of work. It's a good idea to keep renewing links with parents as each cohort goes through the school or college.

11. Involve the senior leadership team

If you're making changes to your careers provision, it's good practice to involve senior leadership and management in the design and planning of your activities, and, where possible, governors. Pulling together evidence for the impact of increased parental engagement in careers could help to secure buy in and potentially resource for interventions and activities. From taking a whole school/college approach, opportunities and efficiencies may be found where other parental engagement work is happening and support for family careers conversations could complement this without adding to staff workload.

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES



As part of *Talking Futures* there are a range of activities available to support your school or college deliver on the recommendations from research. These fall into the following categories:

- **Getting started** – support for Careers Leaders in engaging SLT to audit your current provision and deciding on which activities will complement it, plus CPD materials to upskill your whole staff team in parental engagement in careers.
- **Parent facing activities** – a variety of broad and tailored activity plans for events you can run in person or remotely to support your parent community. All resources needed and tips for delivery are included – as well as links to the [good parental engagement principles](#).
- **Student facing activities** – a selection of short activities that can complement your existing careers programme that specifically reinforce the role their parent can play in their decision making and encourage them to seek out that support and initiate family conversations.

In addition, there are resources on the site to support educators and parents feel prepared and get the most out of the activities run by the school or college:

- **Information resources for educators and parents** – these include films and other content explaining the choices available plus signposting to external sources to find out more about education pathways and specific careers, further and higher education.
- **'At home' activities** – a selection of tools, tips and conversation starters for parents to support them improve the quality of their careers conversations with their children – these can be signposted to by the school or college before or after running events to encourage efforts to continue at home or used independently by families at their own pace.

Once you have decided which resources and activities to use to complement your existing provision, remember to make your careers programme available on your website. As part of meeting Gatsby Benchmark 1, your institution's whole careers programme should be available for parents to refer to, including the detail of what you offer each year group and how you incorporate student and parent feedback. You can find out more in the Gatsby Benchmark Toolkits for schools, colleges and SEND [here](#).

DELIVERY GUIDANCE

The activities on the Talking Futures site are designed for different scenarios. Once you have considered the needs of your student and parent community and identified any gaps in your existing provision, it is important to think about what type of event and method of delivery would be most appropriate.

- **For example, our family learning activities, such as the [Teamwork Challenge](#) that focuses on building skills together; might be most suitable for groups of parents where students have additional needs.**
- **You could choose a more information led activity such as the [Employer Panel](#) or [Parents Evening Presentation](#) to challenge parents who have biases about careers options that may be unhelpful.**

In person or virtual?

All the activities can be held virtually or in person. There is specific guidance for each activity, as appropriate.

Virtual meeting platforms might enable more parents to attend more sessions. It also means that they can revisit the recording at a time that suits them. However, it's important to consider literacy levels and the technology available to your parent audience.

It is best to keep functionality simple and use a platform that parents are familiar with through other school or college activities. Ensure a member of staff is in each breakout room to facilitate discussions and troubleshoot.

When you are carrying out activities in person, you can alleviate limited resources and resource-sharing restrictions through tech-based solutions such as software like Mentimeter or Kahoot. This allows families to use their phones to contribute their questions and feed back.

Communicating with parents in advance

You will need to communicate with parents several times about your activities to ensure maximum awareness. Research in 2020 identified that school/college websites, emails to parents, and children themselves are how

most parents expect to find out about careers guidance activities. After year 10, children themselves become the most common channel, making it critical that the information they receive is accurate and easily sharable with their parents.

It's best practice to use a combination of different communication channels, for example, a save-the-date communication could be sent via children and by email well in advance of the event to help increase the number of attendees.

Your next communication should help everyone get the most out of the event – as well as including date, timing and registration details. You could include detailed information to attract parents, such as employers who might be attending an event, or set some research activities for parents and children to do together in advance. Tailor information to suit the age and stage of the students.

We also suggest a reminder communication a day before the event to boost attendance. If the event is virtual, it's a good idea to give instructions about how to attend remotely, as well as information about how to use specific functionality.

DELIVERY GUIDANCE



Engaging with hard-to-reach parents

Some parent groups may be particularly hard to reach because they avoid social interactions and engagement with the school or college. They may also prefer not to speak on the phone and struggle to absorb large amounts of information. Some ideas to boost their engagement:

1. **Emails and communication via students are likely to be the most effective way of reaching these parents. It's useful to include messages about how much of a difference they can make and to be empathic about the issues they may be facing.**
2. **You may want to draw upon existing relationships between them and the school/college – such as the SEND department or pastoral teams – and get them to send the invitation.**
3. **Where appropriate consider inviting the whole household, including grandparents and younger and older siblings, to ensure families feel comfortable attending and to reduce barriers such as childcare.**
4. **You may want to use people they trust to facilitate activities with them, such as older students, school or college alumni, local community leaders or representatives from cultural or religious groups.**

Ensuring the visibility of the careers programme

Gatsby's 2020 research indicates that there has been a significant fall in how satisfied parents are with the support they receive from schools and colleges about students' careers and education options – with only 51% now feeling satisfied, compared to 60% in 2019. Parents also say they feel less informed than in the past.

Given the importance of parental influence on young people, here are some suggestions to increase the visibility of your careers programme:

1. **A logo to badge all careers and options related information to parents can help it stand out from other school/college-parent communication and regular recaps/updates on all activity that has taken place.**
2. **Ensure careers-related information arrives on a different day from other communications home.**
3. **Share images and stories of past careers events to celebrate success. You could post them on your institution's social media feed or even involve local media, as there will be an appetite for local good news.**
4. **If you do share images of parents and students or quotes, make sure you have the relevant permissions in place.**
5. **Follow up events with an email or article in your newsletter. Encourage families to continue careers conversations between events by setting mini activities and signposting them to additional resources.**

EVALUATING YOUR DELIVERY

Throughout the year, it's important to evaluate whether the Talking Futures activities have made a difference. You'll want to look at whether parental engagement with your institution has changed and at the support parents are providing their children.

Why collect evidence of parental engagement?

You know when something's gone well or badly, but would you be able to demonstrate that to someone else? And how do you make sure your judgement is objective? There are several reasons to collect evidence of work done to engage parents in your careers programmes.

- **Increasing impact:** understanding and demonstrating what is and is not working in order to change and improve
- **Internal monitoring and accountability:** reporting to the school/college's senior leadership team or the governing body and making it part of school/college improvement and leadership agenda

This detail can also be used in case studies to demonstrate your successes to others in your school/college

Two-stage evidence gathering

Many evaluations take a measure at the start of a programme of activity and again at the end. You can think of this as an audit carried out before and after a programme of activities are introduced.

Pre-measures: This involves taking a measure of whether your approach to engaging parents in careers is working, how well and what changes might be needed. It's worth considering it from two points of view: how are parents engaging with the school/college careers activities, and how are they supporting their children's decision making about careers and pathways:

- **Parental engagement with school/college:** For example, do parents know what information and support mechanisms are provided by the school/college, can and do they access this information and support, and are there effective ways to update them on any changes or developments and mechanisms for them to seek additional inputs and support, if required?
- **Parental engagement in their children's decision-making:** How, when and why do parents get involved and does this reflect what they would like? What support and information do they need to help their children's decision-making and how can they get this from the school/college?

Post-measures: After the activities have taken place you could take a repeat measure of how things are and what is/isn't working as a result of new approaches or strategies. You can also capture parents' feedback about the activities they have engaged in.

We also recommend that you do some ongoing evidence collection which would enable you to gain much more fine-grained information about what does and doesn't work as you implement new activities and strategies. This detail can also be used in case studies to demonstrate your successes to others in your school/college.

EVALUATING YOUR DELIVERY

Possible evidence-gathering activities

In this section we have set out some evidence-gathering approaches that you might consider.

- A parental survey might be the most efficient way of capturing insight before and after your programme of activities. Examples of some questions you might want to include to assess the role parents play in their children's decision making and what this is influenced by are provided in the [Whole programme survey template download](#). CEC also has a suggested [survey template](#) for capturing parents' views of the school or college's careers programme.
- Capturing parental feedback on specific activities - this could be done using a short online survey of participants or paper-based feedback forms (see the [Activity survey template download](#) for some suggestions), but this needn't always be the case. A voting/exit-poll type activity at the end of the event can often be sufficient, particularly if combined with briefly interviewing a small selection of parents.

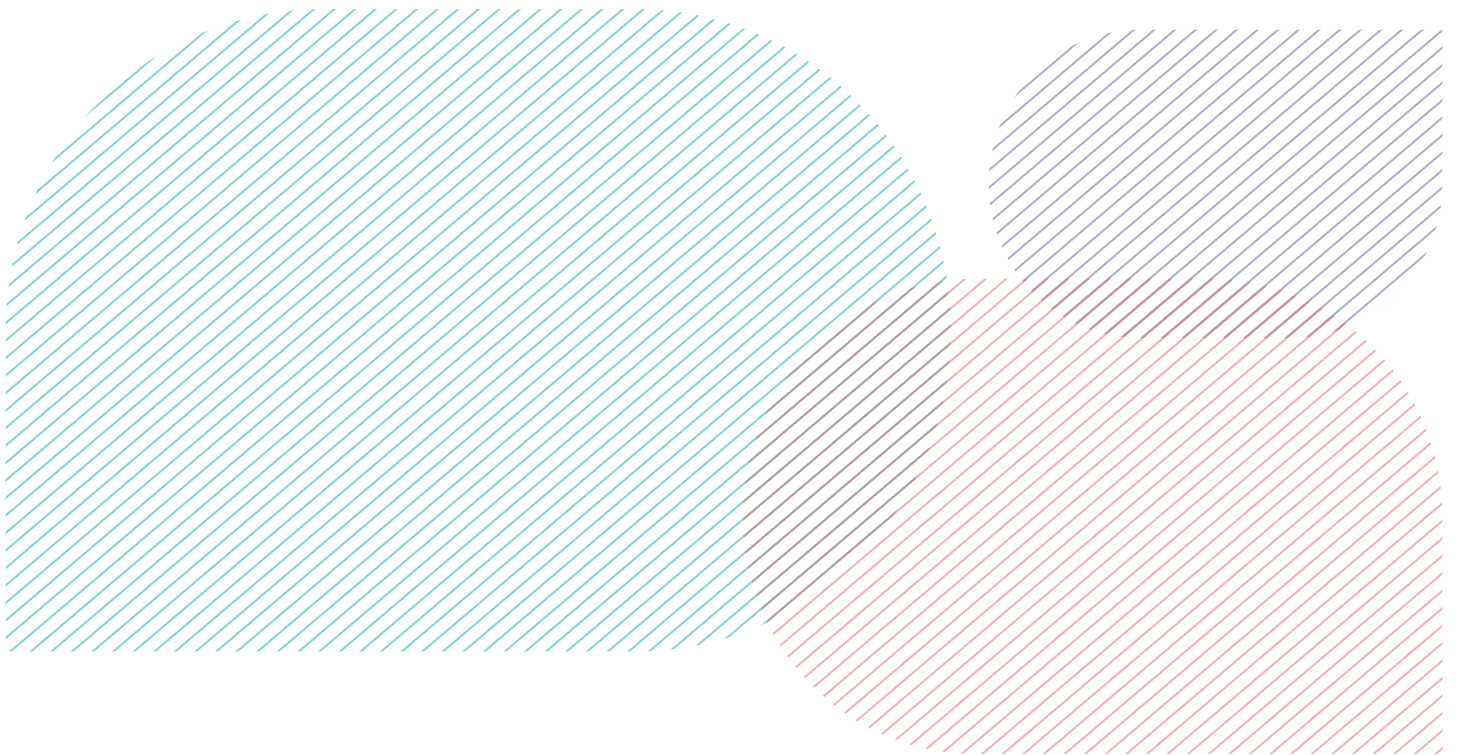
- Consulting with an advisory group of parents on a regular basis – this group should comprise a range of parents that reflect the profile of your students. You might also want to target particular groups, such as EAL parents or those with SEND children. Existing channels, such as PTA or parent governors, may also be of value here, but it will be important to reach out to new parents who have not been involved before.
- Gathering student views (e.g. via surveys, individual and group discussions) can provide insight into the support students receive, or would like to receive, from parents.
- Making use of your existing evidence, data and observations which could include:
 - parental evenings' attendance data, which could include analytics data from the careers pages on the school or college's website
 - observations from staff offering additional support to specific students
 - instances of misconceptions, stereotypes or lack of information having negative effects on students highlighted by form tutors or careers advisers.

A template for evidence collection

It's not necessary to measure before and after every single activity. However, it is useful to take a systematic approach to capturing data against a specific event. We would suggest that capturing evidence related to specific activities covers:

- **Reach:** how many parents participated in the activity and what was the profile of the parents taking part? How does this compare with previous activity? Were you able to involve more or different types of parents with the activity? Are there some groups of parents who don't engage and can you understand why?
- **Engagement:** how did parents respond to the activity? Were they engaged and active participants? Did they value content and did the format help or hinder their experience?
- **Outcomes:** what did participants learn? How do they intend to use the information from the session and how is this likely to impact on their child's decision making?
- **Improvements:** what changes would participants like to see and how would these help?

Talking Futures Toolkit



Welcome to Talking Futures



Talking Futures is a suite of resources originally designed by The Gatsby Foundation and built on and developed by The Careers & Enterprise Company, to help schools and colleges support families, parents and carers to have constructive careers and education conversations with their children.*

This toolkit is designed to help you begin or develop work, to engage parents in careers education and to navigate your way through the Talking Futures resources. Choose activities to complement or develop existing provision to ensure every young person, supported by their parents, has the tools they need to make informed choices to unlock their future.

An overview of the activities available is included in this toolkit and more detail on delivering them and all the resources required can be found on The Careers & Enterprise Company [Resource Directory](#).

Talking Futures follows these guiding principles:

- Good careers guidance is the key to social mobility
- Good careers guidance cannot be delivered in isolation from young people's families
- Parents are an influential force on young people's decision making
- Parents do not all engage in the same way

*Throughout the Talking Futures materials, the word 'parent' is used to refer to parents, carers and guardians and other influencers you may want to involve.

Aims of the toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help schools and colleges to:

1. Maximise the effectiveness of parental engagement around careers
2. Support parents in education decision making
3. Increase participation from parents



Audience

The toolkit is primarily aimed at Careers Leaders, as well as those that support them, such as the wider senior leadership team, careers professionals, department leads and SENCOs.

Where are you on your parental engagement journey? Use these colour coded identifiers to find the right support.

New to Parental Engagement in Careers

Tips, resource and support to get you started

Research to evidence the impact of Parental Engagement

Comms to parents is the main focus of my Parental Engagement

Principles for developing your provision to increase its impact

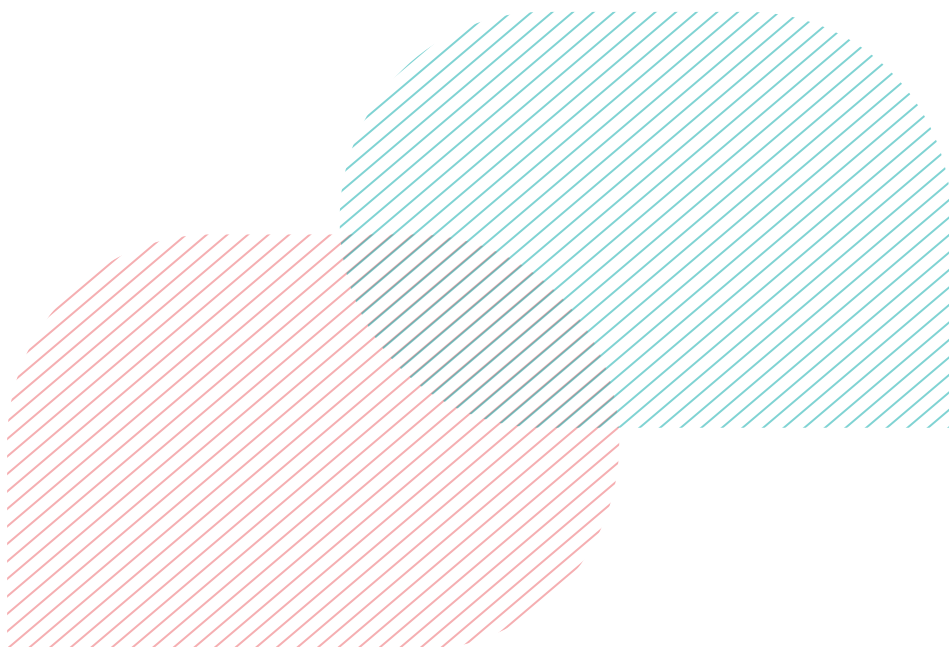
Support for embedding Parental Engagement across all your careers activities

Parental Engagement is embedded throughout the whole progressive careers programme and tailored to the needs of your parental community

New insights and prompts to help you audit and reflect on your provision as part of your continuous improvement cycle

What does this resource cover?

- 1** **Why does parental engagement matter?**
p5
- 2** **Principles of effective parental engagement**
p6
- 3** **Equipping parents with the information they need**
p10
- 4** **Meeting the needs of your parental body**
p12
- 5** **Delivery guidance**
p13
- 6** **Activities and resources**
p14
- 7** **Evaluating delivery**
p15



Why does parental engagement in careers matter?

It is well understood that parents have a major influence on young people around careers and education decision-making.

Key research findings:



Parents believe children should take their views into account when making important decisions



Some parents underestimate the influence they could have on their child's choices



Conversations around key decisions start as early as Year 7, before parents note receiving information from their school or college



Four in five parents note action was taken as a result of their conversations with children about careers options

Parental engagement is important for supporting the development of:

1. Information-seeking and research behaviours
2. Self-efficacy, career decision-making and confidence
3. Planning, goal setting and creating a sense of direction
4. (Career) adaptability, flexibility and employability skills (such as entrepreneurship and team working skills)

It is also possible that improving parental engagement around careers may act as a hook for other types of parental engagement and lead to whole-school or college benefits, such as attendance and even attainment.



Principles of effective parental participation

Parental participation Strategy – School/College wide

As a national charity, [Parentkind](#) give those with a parenting role a voice in education. Parentkind invest substantial resources in representing parent views on their child's learning to local, regional and national governments and agencies because evidence tells parental participation in education benefits all children in all schools and society as a whole. Parentkind is the network of PTA fundraisers in the UK, bringing specialist fundraising support and advice to parent volunteers so that every school can benefit from a successful PTA. Parentkind's 13,000 PTA members raise over £120+ million per year, placing them alongside some of the largest charities in the UK.

Parentkind's [research](#) on the relationships between parents and schools has shown that parents want to play an active role in their children's education and make a meaningful contribution to school life. Harnessing parent voice and power represents huge benefits for children's outcomes, the effectiveness and capabilities of schools and the community beyond. In response to an annual survey of parents, Parentkind's Parent Voice Report 2021 noted that a large majority (85%) of parents said that it is important for them to support their child's education by helping with their career choices.

In response to schools' needs for a workable model, Parentkind commissioned extensive research into how schools can embed parental participation and this has led to the creation of an evidence-based foundation for schools to maximise parents' contributions – [The Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools](#).

Built on five key drivers, reinforced with three guiding principles – written plans, time to reflect and adequate funds - and a shared common language, the Blueprint supports the overcoming of challenges and formalises a whole school approach to parental participation with a clear and effective framework.



Parentkind



The Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools - Five key drivers

Driver One: Leadership, Ethos and Resources

Senior leadership is key to developing effective parental participation across a school and allowing it to thrive.

- Appoint a dedicated staff member to liaise with parents, develop a written plan and measure successes
- Set a direction, focus and a culture that values parental participation
- Establish clear boundaries and expectations for parents
- Provide a forum that supports consultation and shared decision making
- Monitor the training available for staff on engaging with parents

Driver Two: Effective Two-Way Communication

Effective two-way communication between schools and families is the bedrock of parental participation, providing a pathway to other aspects of effective engagement.

- Be accessible and find ways to hear from a diverse range of parents
- Gauge parents views, ideas and how best to communicate
- Actively establish and improve different channels of communication that work for all and in both directions

Driver Three: Supporting Learning at Home

Parents supporting children's learning and sharing a positive attitude towards school and education, complements the work of teachers and is related to increased achievement for young people.

- Coordinate learning activities at home that work with their experiences at school
- Help parents build their confidence and skills and empower them to take an active lead at home
- Help parents understand what their child learns and the impact they can have on their child's learning
- Work with parents to produce resources and materials together
- Provide curriculum rationale and real-life challenges, so parents see the relevance



Driver Four: Involvement in School Life

Parents want to play an active role in their children's education. This has been highlighted as important and is seen as one of the ways to reduce educational inequalities.

- Make use of parents' skills and interest and ways to make a meaningful contribution
- Ensure volunteering activities are varied, inclusive and reflect community diversity
- Allow parents to inform policies, improvement plans and decisions that affect them
- Encourage parent support groups and set up a PTA to bring parents and teachers together to raise funds to support the school – Parentkind represents over [13,000 PTAs](#) and the opportunity to link to a wider network to share views, ideas, successes and knowledge

Driver Five: Community Engagement

Strong and developed links to community groups and leaders can benefit schools in reaching those parents and families who may struggle to engage within school.

- Build a strong relationship with the local community and openly value what it can offer
- Offer a range of activities, clubs and support to pupils, parents and families
- Connect with community groups and leaders to increase your reach
- Utilise the school as a community hub by hiring out buildings, facilities, staff and expertise.

Parentkind have a range of resources to support schools:

Parental participation training: Parentkind offer CPD accredited training for school staff, including an introductory workshop, two masterclasses and bespoke training packages. The training explores Parentkind's Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools, how to overcome barriers to parental participation and how to develop a plan for your school. These can be [booked here](#) or contact schools@parentkind.org.uk for a free discovery call.

Self-assessment audit tool: Parentkind's [self-assessment audit tool](#) will allow schools to see how well they are implementing ideas and methods to maximise the benefits of parental participation in school life. At completion, schools will receive a set of results and recommendations and be sign-posted to resources. The audit tool launch is upcoming in 2022.

Resources: Parentkind's site links to [resources](#) listed under the five Key Drivers that schools can utilise to support their parental participation plans.

Schools newsletter: [Sign up](#) to receive the schools newsletter for updates about Parentkind's work, training, tools and resources.



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Parental engagement in careers education

Research carried out by the [Warwick Institute of Employment Research \(2019\)](#) explored how best to provide information and support to parents via schools and colleges to help young people make decisions.

This research, combined with the findings on different parent groups and their needs, has been translated into 11 practical recommendations. Depending on where you are in your Parental Engagement journey, these practical recommendations could help your continued progress.

The principles:

1. Provide timely careers information
2. Build on current parental engagement – colleges see this resource for further support
3. Co-create with parents
4. Create a parent friendly environment
5. Build trust with socially disadvantaged families
6. Refocus careers activities to involve parents
7. Stimulate family conversations
8. Combine home and school or college
9. Offer a blended delivery
10. Draw on parents as a resource
11. Involve the Senior Leadership Team
12. Full information on the principles is available here

These principles are also referred to in this [resource](#) to help you present to SLT about the value of parental engagement in your work.

Good to explore which of these principles you could most easily tackle first.

For example: **Principle 1- Provide timely careers information**

Evidence shows parents begin conversations with their children on careers choices early. For example, in schools this can be from Year 7. This highlights the need to provide supporting information to parents as soon as a student joins a school or college. Signposting to the support a school or college can offer to parents around career guidance during the student transition process is important and should be reiterated frequently.

Focus in on principles that could help you expand beyond comms

For example: **Principle 6- Refocus careers activities to involve parents**

It's good practice to invite parents to existing activities such as careers fairs, open days and where appropriate their child's personal guidance session. You may also want to design new activities that engage parents, employers and the local community, such as 'meet the employer events', 'guess my job' and informational events on topics requested by parents. Section 5 of this toolkit provides an overview of the activities developed as part of Talking Futures which are all available online and can be used as a starting point for refocusing your provision.

Reflect on your institutions current parental engagement strategies and identify any principles not currently covered.

For example: **Principle 3 – Co-create with parents**

If you don't already, consult parents and shape your careers activities around their needs and concerns, you may find this drives informed and supportive interest. The most effective parental engagement strategies involve planning, collaboration and continuous improvement using parent feedback. This supports Gatsby Benchmark 1 in which a stable careers programme is developed through evaluation and improvement.

Equipping parents with the information they need

The education and careers landscapes are constantly changing. Many parents are reliant on lived experience which may mean they are potentially passing on misconceptions or outdated information to their children. This is particularly concerning as research shows that parents are having key conversations with their children about careers before they have received up to date information from their children's schools.

Gatsby Benchmark 2 states that every pupil and their parents should have access to high quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. Parents should be encouraged to use this type of information to support their children directly and generate questions to explore further with their school or college.

Talking Futures can support with resources to fill potential knowledge gaps and help parents feel prepared ahead of time to support their children at key decision points.

Key decision points

Use a [parental journey visualisation](#) to show parents ahead of time, what the key decision points will be and what to expect whilst their child is in your setting. Highlight the support available, in and out of school/college, prior to key decision points. This can be shared on the parent pages of your website and displayed or distributed at events, such as parents' evenings.

For other ideas on how to engage parents from the outset, explore this [Guide to Transition from Primary to Secondary](#).

Parentkind also offer support and advice for parents, including webpages to [help parents offer careers advice](#) and to feel their children are [secondary ready](#).

Possible pathways at each stage

Helping parents to understand the merits of the full range of pathways open to their child, needs to start early, not just at the point of decision making. There are a range of resources that will help amplify messaging around a variety of pathways and keep parents up to date with further career and labour market information:

- [The Talking Futures Parent facing site](#) has been designed specifically to support parents and carers to recognise their role in career decision making, providing activities to support careers conversations. It also has video content and guidance to help parents navigate the information available.
- SEND specific [posters showing potential pathways](#) for young people with SEND who are or are not likely to take GCSEs.
- [Amazing Apprenticeships](#) – resources for parents
 - [Parent & Carers Hints & Tips](#)
 - [Parent Zone](#)
 - [Parent Podcast](#)



Meeting the needs of your parental body

Careers Leaders are unlikely to have overall responsibility for parental engagement, and so it is important to consider exiting communication routes and the current understanding of the needs of your parental body. [This resource](#) for FE may help any setting consider existing communication methods.

To understand parents' behaviour better and support schools and colleges to work with those in most need of support, Gatsby's 2019 research identified several different groups of parents based on a number of measures, including their attitude towards school and college careers provision. Follow up research in 2020 highlighted some variations in these groups, likely to be as a result of the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

Consider:

Using your knowledge of your parental body, consider their different needs, challenges and potential hooks for engagement. How can you provide the same information in a variety of ways to appeal to all?

Consider when planning your first events or communications with parents, that you will have groups with very different needs, and you will need to vary your approach.

Take the targeting further by really exploring the nuances of your different parent groups and what works. Consider expanding your targeted offer for specific groups.

Reflect on your current comms mechanisms and whether you are tailoring them to the different audience needs. Engage with teams who work closely with those facing the greatest barriers to engaging, to find out more about the most effective engagement strategies.

Delivery guidance

Communicating with parents that face the biggest barriers to engaging

Some parent groups may be particularly hard to reach because they avoid social interactions and engagement with the school or college. They may also prefer not to speak on the phone and struggle to absorb large amounts of information.

Some ideas to boost their engagement:

1. Emails and communication via students

Include messages about how much of a difference they can make and to be empathic about the issues they may be facing.

2. Build on existing relationships

Send invitations via trusted staff, such as the Learner Support/SEND department or pastoral teams.

3. Invite the whole household

Where appropriate, include grandparents, younger and older siblings, to ensure families feel comfortable attending and to reduce barriers such as childcare.

4. Use trusted people to facilitate

Older students, school or college alumni, local community leaders or representatives from cultural or religious groups may be more appropriate to host or facilitate activities.

5. Consider location

Where would make your families feel most comfortable or make them more likely to attend?

6. Consider virtual or in-person

There are pros and cons for each – where appropriate, could you offer both to engage and meet the needs of different types of parents?

Ensuring the visibility of the careers programme

Gatsby's 2020 research indicates that there has been a significant fall in how satisfied parents are with the support they receive from schools and colleges about students' careers and education options – with only 51% now feeling satisfied, compared to 60% in 2019. Parents also say they feel less informed than in the past.

Here are some suggestions to increase the visibility of your careers programme and help parents feel more informed and involved:

1. Use a logo

Badge all careers and options related information to parents to help it stand out from other parent communication and ensure regular recaps/updates on all activity that has taken place.

2. Celebrate success

Share images and stories of past careers events on your institution's social media feed or even involve local media, as there will be an appetite for local good news. [Sharing images of parents and students or quotes? Make sure you have the relevant permissions in place.]

3. Unique communications

If it is not better suited as part of existing communication mechanisms, draw attention to your communications by ensuring careers-related information arrives on a different day from other communications home.

4. Follow up on events

Follow up with an email or article in your newsletter. Encourage families to continue careers conversations between events by setting mini activities and signposting them to additional resources.



Activities and resources

As part of Talking Futures, there are a range of activities available to support your school or college deliver on the recommendations from research. These fall into the following categories:

Getting Started

Support for Careers Leaders to help you develop an effective approach to engaging parents in your careers programme, including engaging SLT and staff CPD on parental engagement in careers.

- Delivering effective parental engagement
- SLT careers meeting
- Whole staff CPD session
- Evaluating your delivery

Parents and Carers Decision Making

Information on understanding parents and the good engagement principals.

Activities

A variety of broad and tailored activity plans for events you can run in person or remotely to support your parent community. All resources needed and tips for delivery are included.

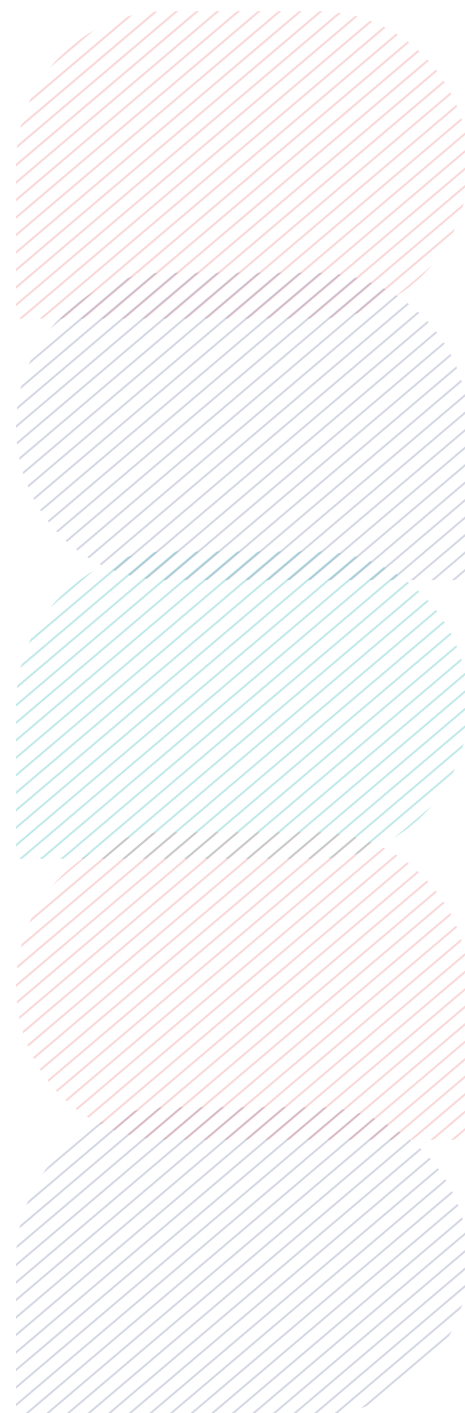
There is also a selection of short activities for students, that can complement your existing careers programme that specifically reinforce the role their parents can play in their decision making and encourage them to seek out that support and initiate family conversations.

Resources for educators and parents

There are resources to support educators and parents to feel prepared and get the most out of activities run by the school or college. These include films and signposting to external sources to find out more about education pathways and specific careers, further and higher education.

'At home' activities

A selection of tools, tips and conversation starters for parents to support them, and improve the quality of their careers conversations with their children.



Evaluating delivery

There are two aspects to evaluation of your parental engagement work to consider:

1. Parent feedback on the careers programme:
 - To improve the effectiveness of career programmes
 - To demonstrate the value of careers provision for student outcomes
 - To inform continuous improvement of careers provision
2. The impact of Talking Futures activities on:
 - Parental engagement with your institution
 - Quality of support parents provide their children

The [Impact Evaluation Toolkit](#) is designed to support you to achieve parent feedback on the careers programme, so how can you measure the impact of Talking Futures activity?

Why collect evidence of parental engagement?

- Increasing impact: understanding and demonstrating what is and is not working to change and improve
- Internal monitoring and accountability: reporting to the senior leadership team or governing body, making it part of school/college improvement and leadership agenda.

This detail can also be used in case studies to demonstrate your successes to others in your school/college.

Consider building in feedback and evaluation as you begin to plan your Parental Engagement journey. This will give you evidence to show what is working.

If you are currently only delivering comms to parents, it is important to measure the reach, engagement and impact of those comms. Once you expand your range of Parental Engagement opportunities, you can use this framework.

Your Parental Engagement strategy should be continually evolving. Monitoring and evaluation allows you to keep up with the changing needs of your parental community and ensure your activities continue to have impact.

Measure	Pre-measures	Post-measures
<p>Parental engagement with school/college:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do parents know what information and support mechanisms are provided? • Can and do parents access this information and support? • Are there effective ways to update parents on changes and developments? • Are there mechanisms to seek additional inputs and support, if required? 		
<p>Parental engagement in their children's decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How, when and why do parents get involved? • Does this reflect what parents would like? • What support and information do parents need to help their children's decision making? • How can parents get this from the school or college? 		

Systematic evidence collection

When capturing evidence following specific activity, it is important to cover:

1. Reach

- How many parents participated?
- What was the profile of the parents taking part?
- How does this compare to previous activity?
- Were you able to engage more or different types of parents with the activity?
- Are there some groups of parents who still have barriers to engaging?
- Can you identify why?

2. Engagement

- How did the parents respond to the activity?
- Were they engaged and active participants?
- Did they value the content?
- Did the format help or hinder the experience?

3. Outcomes

- What did participants learn?
- How do they intend to use the information from the session?
- How is this likely to impact on their child's decision making?

4. Improvements

- What changes would participants like to see?
- How would these help?



Evidence gathering activity ideas

Parental surveys

There are some example questions you may wish to include to assess the role parents play in their children's decision making in the [whole programme survey template](#) and in this [survey template](#).

You could also capture feedback on specific events via surveys. There are suggestions in the [activity survey template](#).

Pros	Cons
Efficient method	Only engages the already engaged
Mitigation	
Who could you involve to encourage those parents that face the biggest barriers to engaging?	

Voting or exit poll activity

Consider the main aim of each parental engagement session and ask one simple yes/no question after an event, e.g. Do you have a better understanding of the range of Post 16 pathways? Have a straightforward way to vote yes or no: counters in voting boxes or stickers on charts.

Pros	Cons
Simple method giving clear percentages	Only explores one aspect
Mitigation	
Combine this with interviewing a small selection of parents to gain wider qualitative data.	

Parents Advisory Group

Build a range of parent volunteers, representing the profile of your parent and student bodies. You may need to target specific groups to ensure balance and to reach parents who have not been involved before.

Pros	Cons
In depth information from a range of perspectives	Requires time to set up and maintain
Mitigation	
Who else may find this useful? This group could meet the needs of the wider institution parental engagement strategy.	

Gathering student views

Student surveys, individual and group discussions can provide insight into the support students receive, or would like to receive, at home.

Using existing data and evidence

What could this information tell you?

- Analytics data from careers pages on the website – any uplift after events?
- Parental careers evening attendance data
- Observations from staff offering additional support to specific students
- Reduction of instances of misconceptions, stereotypes or lack of information having negative effects on students highlighted by form tutors or careers advisors

Feedback

Take part in our parental engagement project by providing valuable feedback on this resource by [completing this short survey](#)





Learning Session 2

Discussion topic - Using data and assessment tools to support the link with post-16

*The term “parents” will be used throughout this discussion to refer to all parents, carers, guardians and other supportive adults



Welcome

Time	Agenda Item	Facilitator
4.00 – 4.05pm	Welcome, introductions and objectives Where are we now?	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)
4.05 - 4.15pm	Learning from practice	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)
4.15 - 4.35pm	Discussion - How do you connect and share information with your local post-16 providers?	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)
4.35 - 4.50pm	Using data to support your discussions with post-16 (RONI and NEET survey)	Rita Pilkington (Right to Succeed)
4.50 - 4.55pm	Next steps	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)
4.55 – 5.00pm	Close and leave	Alex Osborn (Right to Succeed)

Session objectives

- To discuss the barriers and enablers to securing strong relationships with post-16 providers
- To consider how effective data sharing can improve the transition process
- To leave the session with (at least) one tangible next step to improve transition for young people





Learning from practice (DfE, 2021)

Step 1: Getting the foundations right	Step 2: Holistic bridging support	Step 3: Supportive post-16 destinations	Step 4: Sustaining successful transitions
<p>Establishing quick and easy ways to share information</p> <p>Putting staff with the right skills in transition support roles</p> <p>Working with the young person as early as possible</p>	<p>Working on coping strategies to support the young person</p> <p>Building familiarity with new settings</p> <p>Scaffolding support of post-16 options</p>	<p>Give attention to the information provided about the young person and how to support them</p> <p>Adapt to accommodate the needs of the young person</p> <p>Undertake collaborative transition activities</p>	<p>Maintain relationships with the young person and post-16 setting</p> <p>Develop a systematic approach to monitoring the young person's progress</p> <p>Ensure that support continues to be targeted</p>



Discussion - How do you connect and share information with your local post-16 providers?

- Outside of statutory requirements, what information do you share and how?
- How do you know post-16 providers act on the information provided about the young person?
- What opportunities do young people have to build familiarity with new settings?
- Who manages the relationships with post-16 providers, and how? (individual or system)?

Successes

Barriers

Solutions

The Blackpool context - using data to support transition

Risk of NEET Indicators

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Pupil Number	School	Looked after Children	EHCP	SEN support, no EHCP	Child Protection Plan	Pupils known to Youth Offending Team	Substance Abuse	Pupils who have attended a Pupil Referral Unit	Permanent Exclusion	Fixed Term Exclusion	Missed Education	Home Instability (child in Need, Families in Need, Care/parent in the system, split families)	Mental Health and/or Wellbeing Concerns	CAMHS	Physical Health
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14 indicators

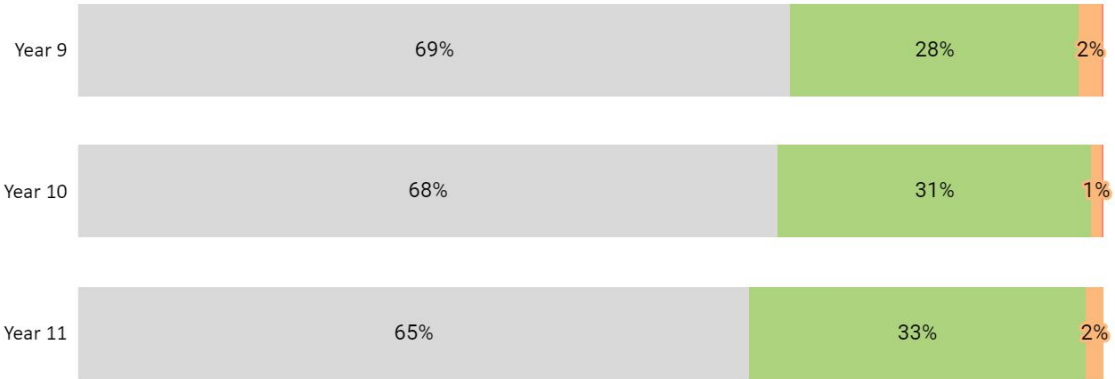


Theme	Indicator
Education	Pupils who have attended a Pupil Referral Unit
	Permanent Exclusion
	Fixed Term Exclusion
	Missed Education between schools
Educational needs	Education and Health Care Plan
	SEN support, no EHCP
Child protection	Looked after Children
	Child Protection Plan
	Home instability (Child in Need, Families in Need, carer/parent in the system, split families)
Health	Substance Abuse
	Mental Health and/or Wellbeing Concerns
	Involved with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services
	Physical Health
Crime	Pupils known to Youth Offending Team

Increased number = increased risk



Number of risk of NEET indicators (mainstreams)



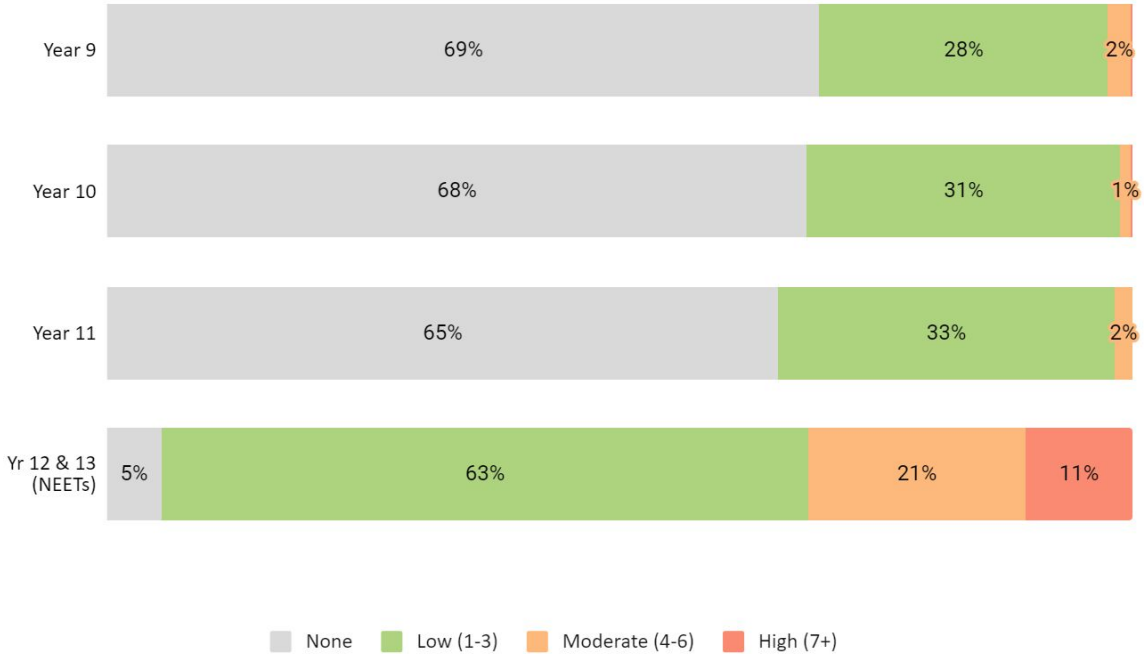
None Low (1-3) Moderate (4-6) High (7+)

Bases: 3576

Increased number = increased risk



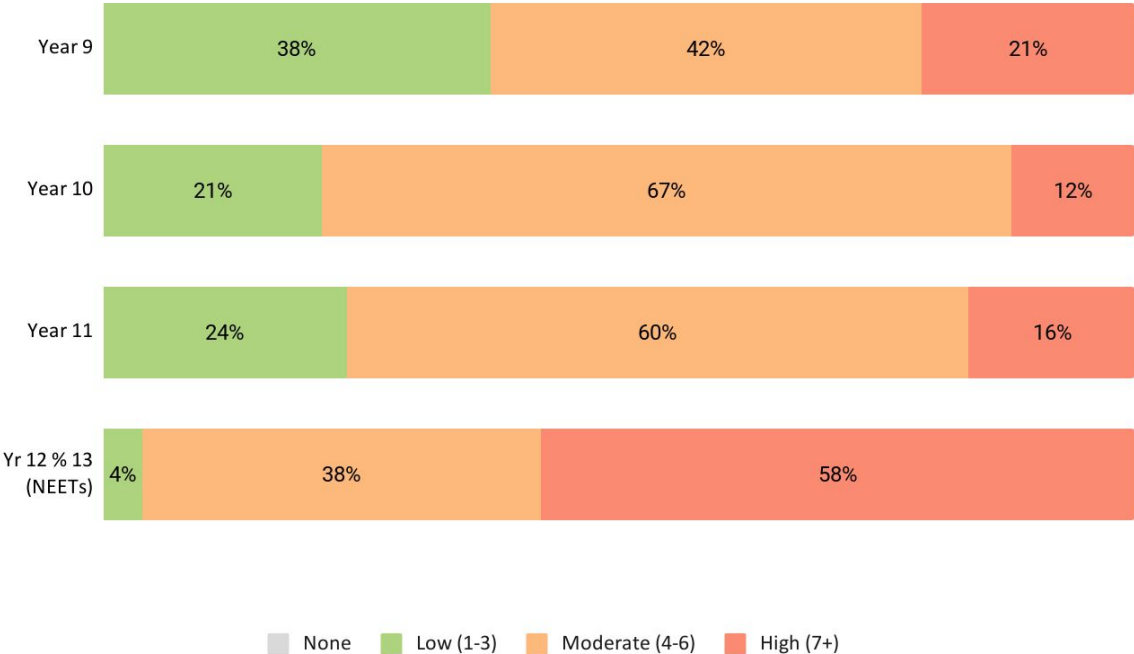
Number of risk of NEET indicators (mainstreams)



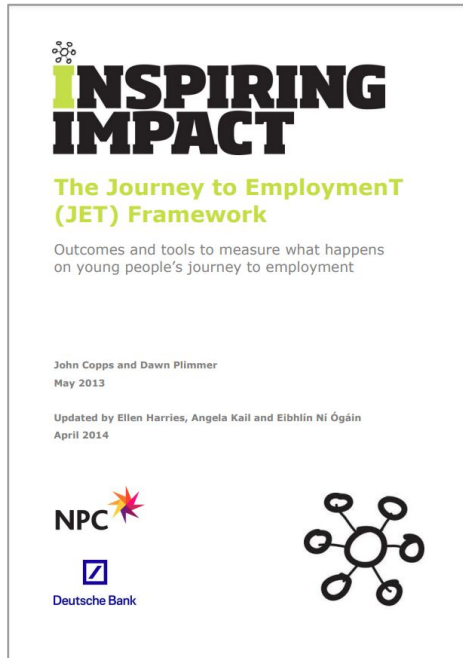
Increased number = increased risk



Number of risk of NEET indicators (PRU)



The Blackpool context - using data to support transition

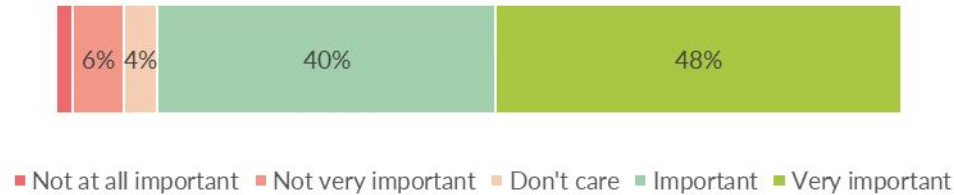


Journey to post-16 survey

- Based on the Journey to Employment (JET) Framework
- Based on 7 factors:
 - Personal circumstances
 - Emotional capabilities
 - Attitudes to learning and work
 - Employability skills
 - Qualifications, education and training
 - Experiences and involvement
 - Career management
 - Employment



How important do you think it is for you to do well in school exams or other qualifications?



No. 50



Confidence and hope for the future



No. 50

Learning from practice: Transitions to post-16 destinations from alternative provision

The Alternative Provision Innovation Fund (APIF) supported nine projects to test new approaches to improve outcomes for young people (YP) (YP hereafter used to refer to young people or young person as relevant) in alternative provision (AP). Three focused on the transition into education, employment or training (EET) after Year 11.

This paper provides practical insights into how young people can be supported in making sustained post-16 transitions from AP based on learning from the APIF projects. This learning is particularly important in the context of the impact of Covid-19 on risk of becoming NEET.

This paper will be of particular interest to those working in AP and post-16 education and training settings, as well as local authorities, employers and third sector organisations e.g. as a checklist for discussion when reviewing their provision/role in the transition of young people in AP.

The three projects were organised around multi-agency approaches characterised by:

- **Tailored support** delivered by specific transition mentors or coaches;
- **Collaborative** approaches to **governance**, including engagement of local stakeholders;
- Close **coordination with local employers and training providers**; and
- **Flexible, innovative** approaches to post-16 **curricula** and **programmes**.

The projects were designed to:

- Grow long **lasting and trusting relationships** between young people YP, their families/carers, and staff working in transition roles;
- Ensure that YP are able to make **well informed decisions** about post-16 trajectories;
- Raise **awareness** of the **specific needs** of YP leaving AP amongst post-16 providers and employers;
- Expand the range and availability of suitable post-16 destinations; and
- Extend transition **support over the summer** and into Year 12, beginning for some in Year 10.

Key outcomes

66%

APIF projects

VS

59%

AP national average

Young people achieving a sustained transition to EET at age 16¹



Stronger

partnership working between AP providers, mainstream schools and post-16 providers.



Clearer

Clearer communication, tracking and needs assessment following post-16 transition for YP

¹) Sustained transition refers to transitions sustained for at least 2 terms. The three transitions-focused APIF projects reported that 66% (n=261) of the Year 11+ pupils participating in their provision (n=395) achieved this outcome on before September 2019. National figure based on most recent available data (2017-18 academic year)

Steps towards successful transitions

Step 1: Getting foundations right in the AP setting

Ensuring strong foundations at the start of the transition journey included:

- Developing a **holistic understanding** of a YP's **individual needs** and circumstances;
- Establishing **quick and easy ways** for professionals to **share information** about the YP and their progress;
- Putting staff with the right **skills, knowledge and disposition** in transition support roles;
- Beginning **work with YP as early as possible** in order to prepare them for transition as a reality; and
- **Developing relationships with parents/carers** and ensuring that they have information about the help available, distinguishing transition support from that provided by other services.



“Our transition mentor has ... helped us to change the way we work and increase our focus - not just on the educational experience, but how that can help the future prospects of our pupils.”

[AP provider]

“[Transition mentor] has been fantastic... She speaks to him [YP] like an adult... with respect, and he likes that. She's just trying to get him on the right path... She speaks to me a lot about what I think is best for him.”

[Parent]



Step 2: Holistic, bridging support

APIF projects provided on-going support to YP throughout their transition journeys by:

- Providing continuing access to adults with whom they had built **trusting relationships** (e.g. through phone calls, texts and face to face meetings) both before and after transition;
- Developing the YP's capacity to manage change by **working on the coping strategies** needed to deal with new people, different expectations, and circumstances;
- Scaffolding YP's exploration of their post-16 options and offering **activities and experiences** that enable them to make **informed decisions**;
- Providing support with **course applications**, and interview role-play sessions;
- Maintaining relationships with parents/carers and keeping them informed via **flexible and accessible forms of communication** (e.g. meeting them face to face in familiar spaces); and
- **Building familiarity with new settings**, including by making visits to local training providers and FE colleges outside of open days as these can be overwhelming.

Step 3: Supportive and connected post-16 destinations

APIF projects highlighted the need for:

- Post-16 providers to **adapt** in order to **accommodate** the particular needs of AP leavers;
- A physical **space or base** for transition workers **in destination settings**, making them more accessible and 'on hand' for YP while settling in;
- Continuing **attention to** be given to the information provided about YP, **their needs** and how to address and support them;
- Facilitating access to college **bursaries, equipment and suitable clothing**; and
- Contributing to transition support by offering a programme of **activities during the summer** and keeping the relationship with the YP 'warm'.

“[the college] has really put their hand up to acknowledging their responsibility to support vulnerable young people. In the past they didn't do that...we've worked very closely with them to support the young people...they are recognising that need to do more nurture-type stuff.”

[APIF project lead]



Step 4: Sustaining successful transitions

Successful transitions are sustained through:

- Developing a regular and **systematic approach to monitoring** YP's progress in collaboration with the different stakeholders who can enable access to the relevant data;
- **Maintaining relationships** – with YP, stakeholders in AP and post-16 settings and transition workers – **well into Year 12**;
- Ensuring that **support continues to be targeted** where needed and appropriately;
- Developing mechanisms to **ensure destinations are tracked** and known; and
- Learning from the data and from experience how to **continue to develop the AP offer** for future cohorts by understanding where gaps and weaknesses lie.



Focus on practice examples

What did staff in key transition roles do?

Typically, transition support roles included:

- 1-1, wrap-around mentoring support including tailored Information, Advice and Guidance on post-16 choices;
- Exploring barriers to learning;
- Coordinating approaches to transition;
- Advocating for the YP and providing practical help to for YP to attend meetings with education and support providers;
- Supporting parents and carers;
- Making referrals to other services and working with professionals like social workers, schools, colleges/training providers and health professionals;
- Helping to access bursaries or funding to cover costs of equipment; and
- Maintaining contact after transition.

All three projects saw benefits including sustained engagement with projects and improved progression to post-16. During the Covid-19 lockdown, transition workers have been vital for maintaining contact with YP. Projects reported better communication with YP who had transition workers than those who did not.

Adapting an FE offer for AP leavers

One APIF project has worked with a local college to design programmes bridging the move to FE by mirroring an AP approach in the college. Individual needs are shared before the course starts, allowing staff to find the best route for the YP and feed them gradually into it. The courses have:

smaller groups

one lead member of staff

a holistic approach to YP's needs.

There have been a number of benefits arising from this approach.

- Working closely with the college has increased awareness of the needs of YP coming from an AP setting.
- Retention in FE has been improved by pairing better information sharing with continued support from a transition mentor.
- YP can return to the introductory course if the transition to a standard course falters, which has also supported retention.

The APIF transitions projects

Cognus Ltd worked alongside five partners to offer a wide package of support for YP, including transition coaches, readiness activities, contacts and workshops over the summer holidays, resilience training, support for parents, and training for post-16 providers to support how they engage and retain YP.

Futures Advice, Skills and Employment Ltd worked with local authorities, AP providers and employers to provide careers advice and engagement to YP. The programme included employability and careers related activities such as supported work placements, workplace visits and individual coaching.

Salford City Council, working with partners including the Build Salford Consortium, offered provision to improve YP skills and prepare them for post-16 destinations. Activities included support from a transition mentor, access to work and industry-led experiences, and close liaison with FE destinations to improve transition.



Learning Session 3

Discussion topic - Linking with community and business expertise

Welcome

Time	Agenda Item	Facilitator
4.00 – 4.05pm	Welcome, introductions and objectives Where are we now?	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)
4.05 - 4.25pm	Discussion - Connecting with business and community enterprise	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)
4.25 - 4.40pm	Working effectively with employers - an example	Hayley Gregory (Blackpool Transport)
4.40 - 4.50pm	Open floor - Q&A	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)
4.50 – 5.00pm	Close and leave	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)

Session objectives

- To identify the positives and challenges of connecting with business and community partners
- To consider *how* to engage with local employers and community groups to enhance your transition offer
- To leave the session with (at least) one tangible next step to improve transition for young people





Discussion - How do you connect and share information with local businesses and community partners to support your transition offer?

- Give examples of business and/or community partners that you work with regularly
- What type of 'offer' do they bring to your school and young people (e.g. work experience, preparation for adulthood, travel training etc.)
- What works well with your existing relationships?
- What could be better? - What would you like to see and how could this be achieved?

Right To Succeed Transition Event

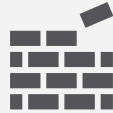
Hayley Gregory
Marketing Officer
Blackpool Transport



Our Role as a Cornerstone Employer



Influence and inspire more young people to enter the bus industry



Build a future diverse talent pipeline



Increase employee engagement



Back social mobility in the local area



Our Role as a Cornerstone Employer



To **educate** and **inspire** young people about the great jobs we have in Blackpool

We **showcase** our roles as a way to inspire young people about the **opportunities** and jobs that will be available to them, and **how to access** these roles



What Can We Offer Special and AP Schools in the Area?



Interactive, engaging sessions



Mock job interviews



Employee expectation talks



Tour of Blackpool Transport



Independent travel training



How Can We Flex Our Offer to Suit the Needs of the School?



The best thing to do is ask and we will do our best to support

- When we know what we're working with we know what to flex
- Can flex our offering dependant on **class size, school needs, skills/ tools needed**
- Our delivery of sessions can be tailored to what the school require or what they need from us and the workshops we provide



An Example of Our Work in Action



I want to tell you a story about our approach to Educational Diversity and how it has developed to create more open conversations about our company values and employment opportunities



Inspiring young people in the community to be empowered to speak up and make a difference now and in the future both for themselves but also for other young people like them



Thankyou

Feel free to contact me:

Hayley.Gregory@BlackpoolTransport.com





Learning Session 4

Discussion topic - Sustainability and Implementing the
Discussion Booklet



Welcome

Time	Agenda Item	Facilitator
4.00 – 4.05pm	Welcome, introductions and objectives Where are we now?	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)
4.05 - 4.15pm	Discussion - What have you taken away from the learning sessions	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)
4.15 - 4.30pm	The Transition Booklet	Jo McNulty (The Speech Bubble)
4:30pm - 4:40pm	Open floor - Q&A	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)
4.40 - 4.50pm	Implementing the Transition Booklet	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)
4.50 – 5.00pm	Close and leave	Annie Hinton (Right to Succeed)

Session objectives

- To identify the the key outcomes from this series of learning sessions
- To understand what the transition booklet is and how it can be used
- To consider how the learning from this series can be implemented to support long-term changes
- To leave the session with (at least) one tangible next step to improve transition for young people





Discussion - Review of Learning Sessions to Date

- Give examples of some of the key things you have taken away from the learning sessions to date
- What have you changed in terms of your practice, your transition offer as a result from this learning?
- Have any lessons learnt been embedded into your careers plans for next year?
- Are there things you would like to explore further with your peers in future similar sessions?



The Transition Booklet

Jo McNulty, The Speech Bubble



Implementing the Transition Booklet

- How do you see yourself using the Transition Booklet in your setting?
- What support or planning might you need to embed this as part of the transition process?
- How will you support staff, young people and their families/carers to use the transition booklet?



Lancashire AP & SEND Transition Project: Learning Sessions
Summary of Group Discussions

1. Learning Session 1: Best practice and challenges for parental engagement within your setting

Examples of best practice focused on developing strong communication and building trusting relationships with parents by providing regular updates and discussing next steps in-person, as well as having a clear engagement strategy, understanding what works for different parents and pupils, being able to offer support in a variety of ways and the role of engagement coaches.

Challenges identified included developing links with all of the different programmes and finding the right course or setting to match pupil needs. Suggested solutions focused on keeping track of provision through communicating information and needs, having a central person to hold all relevant information and the need for providers to upskill themselves on how they can support more complex learners.

2. Learning Session 2: How do you connect and share information with your local post-16 providers?

Examples of information shared included individual student learning plans, accreditation pathways and one-page profiles. Challenges raised focused on a lack of engagement or communication from providers and not knowing how the information has been used, whilst suggested solutions looked at more parental engagement, bringing pupils to see providers, building relationships, and the need for continuous communication and wrap-around support.

Opportunities for students to build familiarity with new settings included meetings with colleges, conversations about the transition process, exploring different options, independent travel sessions and a careers week, whilst the importance of starting the process early to build familiarity was also highlighted. Challenges identified included the impact of Covid on visits to settings, late decision-making from students and the fact that some are not placed until much further down the line.

3. How do you connect and share information with local businesses and community partners to support your transition offer?

Asked what works well in existing relationships with local businesses and community partners, attendees identified the importance of linked funding opportunities, finding the provision and giving young people the vision beyond school, making these experiences part of the timetable and developing links with inclusive employers such as the Co-Op.

Examples of what could be better included more exposure to these experiences, finding a variety of businesses that are able to consistently support this process, issues around group behaviour, and the preparedness and readiness of young people.

Examples of businesses and community partners that attendees regularly work with included Blackpool Transport, gardening group Chorley in Bloom, Lancashire County Council and local arts charity, We Are Noise. A number of construction companies were also mentioned: Conlon Construction, Lotus Build, Parkinson, Permission Homes and Wilmot Dixon.



4. Key takeaways from the learning sessions and implementing the Transition Booklet

Attendees highlighted how the learning sessions had been useful for hearing about the challenges that peers were facing and learning from their different experiences. This was especially true for sessions 2 and 3, where attendees found it useful to discover which organisations or settings their peers were connecting with and how, to help them better prioritise and build these relationships going forward.

In the discussion on implementing the transition booklet, it was suggested that the booklet be used in one-to-one sessions or in small groups, and, more specifically, in sessions with year 11s or by the school's intervention staff. Asked how they will support staff, young people and families/carers to use the booklet, attendees suggested having parents use the booklet as a homework activity, so that they can work on it alongside the school. It was also suggested that the booklet be introduced by KS4 teachers during annual reviews for year 9s and that school staff keep revisiting it in lessons.

Overall, it was seen as really useful to discuss how other settings were planning to use the booklet and to see the first draft. It was also agreed that a follow-up session (scheduled for 3rd November) would be useful to learn more about how the schools are using the booklet and to share best practice.