



THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY

# Understanding the role of the Careers Leader

A guide for secondary schools

## **Publication information**

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# Introduction

The government's new Careers Strategy was published in December 2017 and followed by statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff in January 2018, and further education and sixth form colleges in February 2018. The strategy places the Gatsby Benchmarks at the heart of careers provision in schools and colleges, and formalised the expectation that all schools and colleges should have a named Careers Leader in place by September 2018. This guide is specifically aimed at secondary schools. We will be producing a separate guide for colleges.

Careers Leaders have responsibility for the delivery of a school's careers programme. They should be ensuring, among other things, that:

- 1.** The school has a good careers programme that meets the expectations set out in the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- 2.** The school has published on its website details of its careers programme and arrangements for providers of technical education or apprenticeships to talk to pupils.
- 3.** The destinations of young people from the school are tracked and that this information is used to improve the effectiveness of the school's careers programme.

This guide explains what a Careers Leader is and provides advice to schools on how best to identify someone to fill the role. The guide includes key principles and suggestions for developing the role, as well as practical case studies of Careers Leaders already working in schools.

# The Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks set out a framework for schools to deliver 'good career guidance'.

<b>1.</b> A stable careers programme	Every school should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.
<b>2.</b> Learning from career and labour market information	Every student, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.
<b>3.</b> Addressing the needs of each student	Students have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each student. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.
<b>4.</b> Linking curriculum learning to careers	All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.
<b>5.</b> Encounters with employers and employees	Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities, including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.
<b>6.</b> Experiences of workplaces	Every student should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and to expand their networks.
<b>7.</b> Encounters with further and higher education	All students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.
<b>8.</b> Personal guidance	Every student should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made.

**Note:** The term 'career guidance' is used in this document and in recent government documents to describe the full range of interventions that support young people to make choices and develop their careers. The term 'personal guidance' is used to describe the one-to-one support offered by a Careers Adviser.

Further information about the Gatsby Benchmarks can be found on the [goodcareerguidance.org.uk](https://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk) website. This site includes ideas and inspiration from schools that have already implemented the benchmarks.

In running a successful pilot of its benchmarks in the North East, the Gatsby Foundation demonstrated that it is critical for schools to identify a Careers Leader to ensure successful implementation. Gatsby's international research previously highlighted the role of the *schooldekaan* in schools in the Netherlands, a named individual responsible for leading the school's careers programme.

## What does a Careers Leader do?

'The Careers Leader... should have influence across the school and buy-in from the Governors and senior leadership team... from September 2018, every school should appoint a named person to this role.'

Department for Education statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff: January 2018

Careers Leaders are responsible and accountable for the delivery of their school's programme of career advice and guidance. It is a senior role that requires the person doing it to have a clear overview of the school's careers provision and to make sure that the school meets the Gatsby Benchmarks by the end of 2020.

Careers leadership involves: planning, implementing and quality assuring a careers programme for the school; managing the delivery of career guidance; networking with external partners, including employers; coordinating the contributions of careers teachers, subject teachers, tutors and SENCO.

### Key principle: Quality assurance

Careers Leaders are responsible for quality assuring a careers programme for the school to ensure it continuously improves and that it delivers the kinds of impacts that are needed for young people. Quality assurance mechanisms should include ensuring provision aligns with best practice (e.g. by using the Compass tool), keeping good records, seeking feedback, evaluating impact and seeking external review of your school's provision (e.g. through the Quality in Careers Standard).

The Careers Leader needs to be someone who can liaise with external partners, such as employers, learning providers and career guidance services, as well as ensure that the various elements of the school's careers provision are coordinated and managed through a stable and embedded programme.

They are also responsible for ensuring that the careers programme continuously improves and that it delivers the kinds of impacts that are needed for young people. This means paying careful attention to feedback from all stakeholders and to the destinations of pupils.

### Key principle: Thinking long term

Careers Leaders should be focused on what happens to pupils after they leave school. It is critical to have good systems to monitor intended destinations and to track pupils after they leave school. Careers Leaders should be working closely with the staff member that is responsible for this. Careers Leaders should also be familiar with the destinations measures published by the Department for Education and use this to review the impacts of the school's careers provision.

It is important that the Careers Leader is *leading* the school's career guidance activity, but this does not mean that they should be *delivering* all of it. They will be responsible for commissioning, line managing and persuading many other people to get involved in the delivery of the school's careers programme.

A Careers Leader is neither a relabelled Careers Coordinator nor a Careers Adviser. These roles are distinct but complementary and it is common for the Careers Leader to either manage or commission the Careers Adviser.

A Career Leader needs to have the confidence and authority to lead their colleagues, make decisions, enact reforms and ensure the school is reaching the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Key Roles	
Role	Responsibilities
Careers Leader	Leading a school's careers provision.
Careers Coordinator	Coordinating a school's careers provision. We anticipate that the role of Careers Coordinator will be replaced by that of a Careers Leader.
Careers Adviser	Providing information, advice and guidance to pupils one-to-one and in groups.
Careers Administrator	Supporting the Careers Leader by undertaking a range of administrative and logistical tasks.
Enterprise Adviser	A volunteer from business who will work with the Careers Leader and the senior leadership team to drive improvements in the school's careers provision.
Enterprise Coordinator	Providing schools with a local source of expertise and support for their careers provision.

**Key principle: Authority**

A Careers Leader needs to have the authority to influence the development of strategy and implement the programme. Careers leadership is most effective where the Careers Leader is on the senior leadership team or has a clear reporting line to the senior leadership team. He or she should also have a link governor and report regularly to the governing body.

The governing body has ultimate accountability for the school's careers programme. One way to manage this is for the governing body to identify a Careers Governor who may work closely with the Careers Leader.

**How it works in practice: Leanne Johnston, The King Edward VI School**

Leanne Johnston is the Careers Leader at The King Edward VI School, a 13-18 academy in Morpeth, Northumberland and one of the schools participating in the pilot of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Leanne's focus on careers and her capacity to lead activity within the school was critical in ensuring that the school made rapid progress in meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Leanne is one of the academy's assistant headteachers and is responsible for careers across all five year groups, including the sixth form. She leads on all aspects of provision, although shares responsibility for planning the schemes of work for career guidance, and for monitoring teaching and learning in career guidance with the PSHE lead, whom she line-manages.

The school's approach to providing impartial career guidance is to employ a team of non-teaching mentors who are working towards qualifications in advice and guidance. All members of the senior leadership team interview pupils about option choices but, apart from those interviews, Leanne is not involved in the delivery of careers: her role is to focus on leadership.

The school made a deliberate decision to position the careers leadership with a senior leader. Prior to that, pupils had careers lessons within the PSHE programme and access to interviews from the local service. The programme lacked coherence without anyone driving it forward. The chair of governors is passionate about young people's futures and has become the link governor for careers. Leanne reports to the governors and is line managed by the headteacher.

# Responsibilities of the Careers Leader

The responsibilities of a Careers Leader can be collated and summarised under four main headings: leadership, management, coordination, and networking.

## Leadership

- Leading the team of teachers, administrators, external partners and others who deliver career guidance.
- Advising the senior leadership team on policy, strategy and resources for career guidance and showing how they meet the Gatsby Benchmarks.
- Reporting to senior leaders and governors.
- Reviewing and evaluating career guidance and providing information for school development planning, Ofsted and other purposes.
- Preparing and implementing a career guidance development plan and ensuring that details of the careers programme are published on the school's website.
- Understanding the implications of a changing education landscape for career guidance, e.g. technical education reform.
- Ensuring compliance with the legal requirements to provide independent career guidance and give access to providers of technical education or apprenticeships, to pupils in schools, including the publication of the policy statement of provider access on their website.

## Management

- Planning the programme of activity in career guidance.
- Briefing and supporting teachers involved in career guidance.
- Monitoring delivery of career guidance across the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, using the Compass evaluation tool.
- Supporting tutors, providing initial information and advice.
- Managing the work of others e.g. Careers Advisers and administrative and other staff involved in the delivery of career guidance.
- Monitoring access to, and take up of, guidance.
- Ensuring colleges and apprenticeship providers have access to the school to share opportunities with all pupils.
- Managing the careers budget as appropriate.
- Managing their own CPD and supporting the ongoing CPD of colleagues in the careers team.



### **Coordination**

- Managing the provision of career and labour market information.
- Managing the careers section of the school's website, ensuring information is accurate and up to date.
- Liaising with the PSHE leader and other subject leaders to plan their contribution to career guidance.
- Liaising with tutors, mentors, SENCO and heads of year to identify pupils needing guidance.
- Referring pupils to Careers Advisers.
- Coordinating encounters with employers and work experience.
- Communicating with pupils and their parents.

### **Networking**

- Establishing and developing links with FE colleges, apprenticeship providers, University Technical Colleges and universities.
- Establishing and developing links with employers.
- Negotiating a service level agreement with the local authority as appropriate.
- Commissioning career guidance services where appropriate.
- Managing links with the LEP and other external organisations.
- Securing funding for careers related projects.
- Building a network of alumni who can help with the career guidance programme.

#### **Key principle: Clarity**

Careers Leaders need to be absolutely clear about what is expected of them. The senior leadership of the school needs to have the same level of clarity about the role. All staff members with whom the Careers Leader works on the programme need to be aware of the role and its implications for their subjects.

## How should schools organise careers leadership?

Schools may choose to structure and organise the Careers Leader role in a range of different ways. Existing best practice indicates that the three most effective ways to do so are as follows:

- 1. Middle Careers Leader reporting to the senior leadership team**  
A teacher, or non-teaching member of staff, is appointed to a middle leadership role, with line management support from a senior leader with overall responsibility for careers. The role is combined with other responsibilities, as a teacher, a non-teaching member of staff or a Careers Adviser.
- 2. Senior Careers Leader**  
A member of the school's senior leadership team, who may be a teacher or a non-teaching member of staff, is given direct responsibility for the leadership of careers. Typically, such a senior leader will need an assistant or to be able to delegate some jobs to more junior staff in the school, particularly where the role is combined with other responsibilities as a senior leader.
- 3. Multi-school leadership**  
An individual is the Careers Leader for more than one school.

What these models have in common is that they all create a single and unified point of responsibility and accountability for careers provision. This has significant advantages over alternative models where responsibility for careers is distributed around the school or outsourced to third party providers.

## Model 1: Middle Careers Leader reporting to the senior leadership team

The most common model of careers leadership is to assign the role to a middle leader, line managed and supported by a senior leader in the school. The senior leader can contribute to strategy and provide back-up to the middle leader where needed to implement a careers programme.

However, if senior leadership support is not in place, middle Careers Leaders can struggle to drive school-level change and successfully fulfil the coordination tasks which are part of the role. The Careers Leader also needs to be part of the middle leaders' meetings and not isolated from decision making forums such as the heads of department and pastoral leaders' groupings.

This approach offers schools the advantage of a dedicated role with oversight of all aspects of the programme. It is usually easier to identify regular time for middle leaders to discharge this role than it is to find equivalent time for senior leaders.

### **How it works in practice: Leyla Palmer, The Kingswinford School**

Leyla Palmer was Careers Leader for The Kingswinford School, an 11-16 academy in Dudley, and has subsequently been appointed to an assistant head role in her school. The school is part of a multi-academy trust, with one other secondary school and five primary academies.

Leyla was responsible for all aspects of careers across the school, including contracts with external careers providers. The post was organised as a middle leader position and Leyla combined her role as Careers Leader with responsibilities for the business department and vocational education. She also had a teaching commitment of 15 hours a week and was assisted by a member of the non-teaching staff who was allocated 50% of her time for careers. The post of Careers Leader was given a higher-level teaching and learning responsibility payment.

During 2016-17, Leyla was seconded for one day a week to the multi-academy trust's executive leadership team to develop the provision of careers and enterprise across all of the trust's schools, principally the other secondary school but also the five primaries.

**How it works in practice: Cathy Thompson, St Peter's Catholic School**

Cathy Thompson is Careers Leader at St Peter's Catholic School in Guildford, Surrey. She is responsible for the careers provision throughout the school and works with the sixth form career guidance lead who takes responsibility for all the higher education work.

Cathy is not a trained teacher and whilst not formally designated as a middle leader, is effectively treated as one. For example, her line manager is the deputy head with whom she meets regularly. Cathy chairs the school's careers group, which comprises: the deputy head; an assistant head who leads on citizenship; the heads of years 9, 10, and 11; the inclusion manager; the career guidance lead for the sixth form. She is full-time and paid on a senior support staff grade, giving her a salary commensurate with that of a head of year.

The school achieved the Investor in Careers quality award (now the *Quality in Careers Standard*) in 2010 and was re-accredited in 2013 and 2016. In 2013 Cathy was awarded the Career Development Institute's award for careers educator of the year.

## Model 2: Senior Careers Leader

Having a senior leader as the single Careers Leader brings a similar set of advantages to having a middle level Careers Leader. It also offers the advantage of ensuring that career guidance benefits from senior leadership attention. The added authority brought by a senior leader can also make it easier to achieve whole school changes and to engage staff from across the school in the careers programme.

The main challenge of this model comes from the fact that Careers Leaders who are senior leaders typically have several other senior leadership responsibilities, so have less time to devote to the careers leadership tasks. Schools that have recognised this challenge have overcome the problem by developing an assistant to the Careers Leader, or by careful delegation of some roles to other school staff.

### **How it works in practice: Lorraine McCormac, Billing Brook School**

Lorraine McCormac is the Careers Leader at Billing Brook School, Northampton. She is an assistant headteacher who is responsible for careers and enterprise programmes across the school.

Billing Brook is a special school and receives free career guidance provision from the local authority. The school also commissions an external provider to deliver work experience. Lorraine manages all of these external relationships, as well as developing the careers curriculum and leading other teachers to deliver it.

Lorraine started as a middle Careers Leader and benefitted from support from the local Connexions adviser who guided her into the role. She then led the school through the Quality in Careers Standard. She has benefitted from a number of short courses and from being part of a local network of other Careers Leaders.

Lorraine is a trained teacher who has experience of careers leadership at both the middle and senior level.

**How it works in practice: Marie Jobson, Churchill Community College**

Marie Jobson is the Careers Leader for Churchill Community College in North Tyneside, one of the schools involved in the Gatsby North East pilot. She is the lead for all aspects of the careers programme in the school, including managing the work for the Careers Adviser that the school commissions from the local authority's traded Connexions service. She is managed by the head of school, sits on the senior leadership team and meets regularly with the link governor with responsibility for careers.

Marie spends a lot of her time training and upskilling other members of staff to ensure that all staff are able to support pupils with their career development. She also works directly with pupils, leading sessions on collapsed timetable days, in tutorial time and in assemblies. The school has recently established a careers representative in each department and Marie works with these colleagues to embed careers across the curriculum.

Marie is not a qualified teacher but does have a background in education and she combines the role of Careers Leader with being the senior lead for behaviour. She has driven the growth of the school's careers and enterprise programme. When Marie took on the role of Careers Leader she was mentored and inducted by a careers professional working in the school. She has also completed qualifications with universities and the National College of Teaching and Leadership to support her professional development.

## Model 3: Multi-school leadership

Sharing a Careers Leader across more than one school can potentially create challenges that arise from not being full-time in one school. Potential problems can be avoided, however, by regular communication with senior leaders in the school and having other staff with operational roles based in the individual schools. The model does bring the benefits of sharing practice and efficient use of management resources. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of multi-academy trusts (MATs).

### **How it works in practice: Joanna Flynn, Thomas Telford School**

Joanna Flynn is the Careers Leader in Thomas Telford School (TTS) and also the Careers Leader in a nearby academy that the CTC sponsors, Madeley Academy. Joanna was originally recruited to TTS from her job as a HR specialist, to become the executive director of the school's careers service. The service comprises, a team of three Careers Advisers who work across the two schools. Her job is to lead the team and to manage the service across both schools.

Joanna is based in TTS but meets with a senior deputy head in the other school on a weekly basis. She was promoted to her current post of deputy head to take on responsibility for overseeing the business department and to integrate it more closely with careers. She is a full-time member of staff with no teaching commitment and is paid on a support staff salary scale at a level commensurate with a senior leader who is a qualified teacher.

The role of a Careers Leader for multiple institutions needs to be distinguished from wider forms of overseeing and support that are organised at a trust level. Some trusts have established trust-wide posts to provide strategic leadership for careers in all their schools, but this strategic role is in addition to having a Careers Leader in each of the schools. Such trust-wide posts can take on some of the more outward-facing aspects of careers leadership, such as developing external partnerships. This releases time for the Careers Leaders in the individual schools to focus on internal project management and co-ordination functions.

**How it works in practice: Sian Gresswell, Greenwood Academies Trust**

Sian Gresswell is the Education Adviser for Careers and Employability in the Greenwood Academies Trust. The trust consists of 32 academies, in four clusters across the East Midlands and the East of England. Sian is a member of the educational support team and has been the Education Adviser with responsibility for supporting Careers Leaders across all the academies in the trust since March 2016.

Sian is not a Careers Leader in any of the academies, although in her previous role, as a teacher and head of year in one of the academies, she did take on many of the careers leadership tasks for key stages 3 and 4. Her new role is to support the development of careers and employability programmes in all of the academies within the trust, secondary; primary; and special. She does not line manage the Careers Leaders in the academies but provides support to each of them and leads the development of a trust-wide vision and strategy for careers and employability.



## Identifying or appointing a Careers Leader

Schools may either utilise an existing member of staff for the Careers Leader role or appoint a new member of staff. Most schools currently favour the former approach, with Careers Leaders typically combining their role with other responsibilities. If this is the case, it is important that they have a substantial allocation of time and due consideration is given to their professional development needs.

### Key principle: Time and resources

Careers Leaders often do the job alongside other responsibilities. In order to be effective, Careers Leaders require a substantial allocation of time (measured in days rather than periods per week). Ideally, this is supported by additional administrative support (a Careers Administrator) to assist with more routine tasks, such as maintaining the careers information resources, booking appointments for careers interviews, arranging information evenings and dealing with the paperwork associated with employer encounters and experiences of work.

Typically Careers Leaders come from one of three main backgrounds.

	Typical areas of strength	Typical areas for development
Teachers	Experience of schools. Experience of designing and delivering schemes of work.	Knowledge of career guidance. Leadership.
Careers professionals	Knowledge of career guidance.	Experience of designing and delivering schemes of work. Leadership.
Other professionals, often from outside education.	Existing networks of employers. More likely to have leadership experience.	Knowledge of career guidance. Knowledge of schools. Experience of designing and delivering schemes of work.

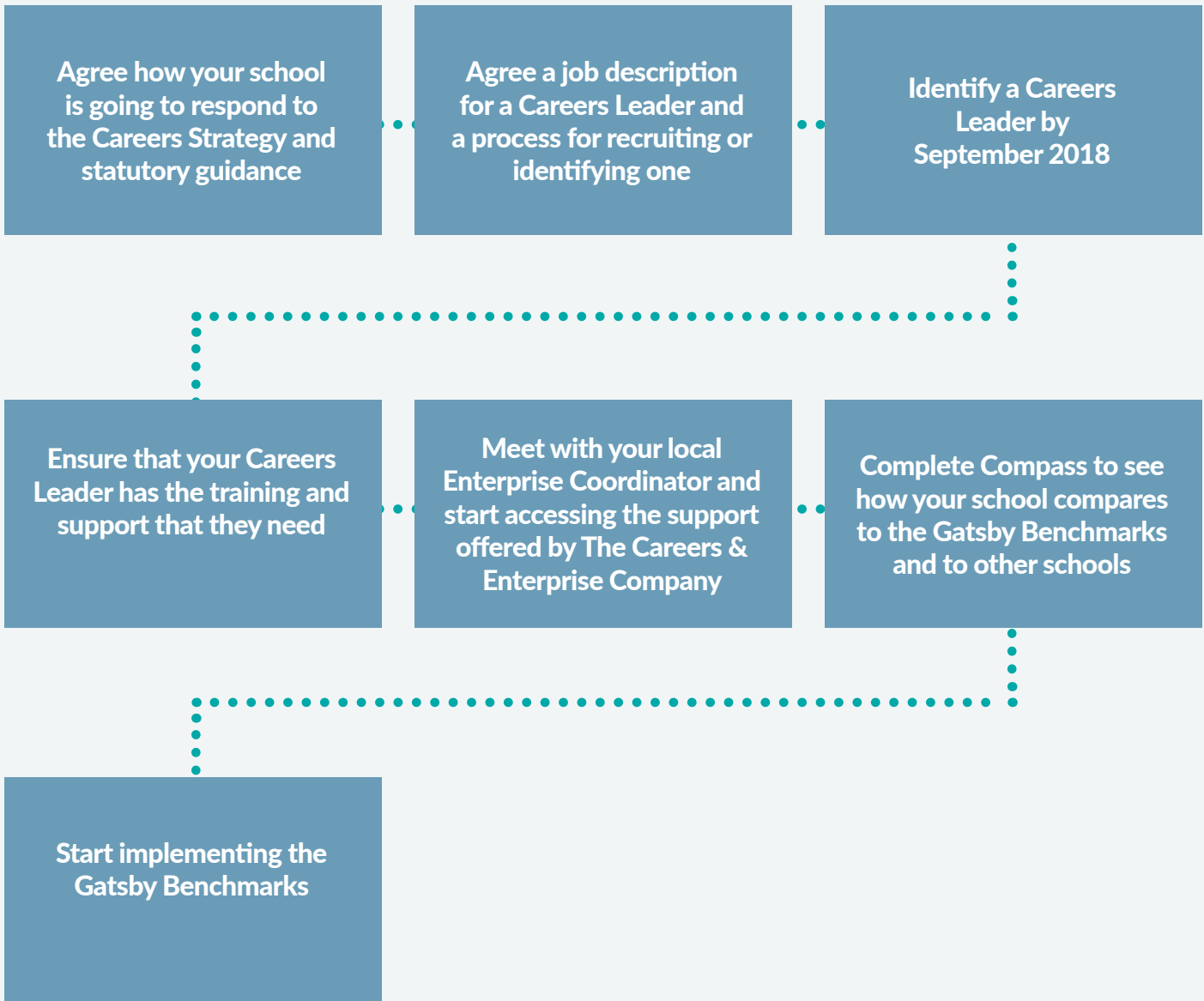
When appointing a Careers Leader in your school, it is important to think about who is the right individual and what training and support they are going to need to be effective in the role. The earlier list of responsibilities of Careers Leaders may be helpful in this respect, or can form the basis of a new job description. The key question should be, 'who is most able to **lead** your school's career guidance programme?'

#### Key principle: Expertise

The tasks of careers leadership require a level of expertise in career guidance, teaching and learning and management. Careers Leaders come into their posts from a variety of backgrounds, with different areas of expertise. To ensure that they have sufficient expertise to do the job, it is important to give them access to initial training, continuous professional development and the opportunity to meet and interact with other Careers Leaders, for example, by joining their professional body, the Career Development Institute.

The Careers & Enterprise Company will be making 500 training bursaries available to schools to support the development of careers leadership. Further announcements about how to get your school involved will be posted on our website, [careersandenterprise.co.uk](https://careersandenterprise.co.uk)

# Key milestones for implementing careers leadership in your school



## Useful resources

*Careers Strategy: Making the most of everyone's skills and talents*

([www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-strategy-making-the-most-of-everyones-skills-and-talents))

The Statutory Guidance for schools (*Careers Guidance and Access for Education and Training Providers*)

([www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools))

Gatsby Charitable Foundation's *Good Career Guidance* report

([www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance](http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance))

The Career Development Institute ([www.thecdi.net](http://www.thecdi.net))

The Careers & Enterprise Company resources for schools and colleges

([www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/](http://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/))

The Framework for Careers, Employability and Enterprise Education (March 2018)

([www.thecdi.net/write/BP556-CDI-Framework-web.pdf](http://www.thecdi.net/write/BP556-CDI-Framework-web.pdf))

The Good Career Guidance website ([www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk](http://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk))

The Quality in Careers Standard ([www.qualityincareers.org.uk/](http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/))



