


## Careers programme strategy 2025/2026

Approved by	Samantha Collins
Position	Head of Quality
Approved date	July 2025
Signed	
Next review date	July 2026
Version	1



## 1. Aim

At Skills4, we believe that making informed decisions about career pathways is essential for every learner. We deliver a high-quality, impartial Careers Service that operates with integrity, helping students select the right courses and prepare effectively for sustainable education, training, and employment that align with their ambitions. This inclusive approach supports learners at all levels and in all programmes of study.

Overall, Skills4 aim is:

“To empower every Skills4 student with impartial, high-quality careers guidance that enables informed choices and sustainable progression.”

## 2. Key principles

We always place students at the heart of everything we do. Our Careers Service is built around the eight Gatsby Benchmarks:

1. **A Stable Careers Programme:** We implement a structured, carefully designed careers service backed by senior leadership and led by a trained Careers Leader. The programme is transparent, published, and regularly evaluated with student and stakeholder input.
2. **Labour Market & Career Information:** Students receive reliable, up to date information on labour markets, qualifications, and progress routes to support informed decision-making.
3. **Personalised Support:** We tailor guidance to each student's needs, ensuring inclusivity, with additional support for SEND and disadvantaged learners.
4. **Linking Curriculum to Careers:** Subject teaching is connected back to their programme of study, helping students understand why their learning matters.
5. **Employer Engagement:** We create meaningful encounters between students and employers or employees. This is achieved through events, mentoring, and talks - enhancing understanding of the world of work.
6. **Workplace Experiences:** Every student has access to quality workplace experiences via their apprenticeship, commercial programme of Skills Bootcamps, developing employability skills and deeper insight into their potential future environments.
7. **Exposure to Further & Higher Education** – We facilitate awareness and develop learners knowledge concerning wider opportunities such as via universities, apprenticeships, and further training.

1. **Personal Guidance:** All students can access at least session with a qualified, impartial careers adviser by age 16 and again by age 18. Careers advisers are also available for learners aged 19+. These sessions help learners clarify goals, understand progression pathways, and combat misconceptions.

We are proud to:

- Support individual aspirations, interests, and needs.
- Ensure careers information, advice and guidance are accessible to learners of all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Work with employers, training providers, and other stakeholders.
- Meet the requirements of the Education Act 1997, the Baker Clause, and the updated 2024 DfE statutory guidance.

### 3. Purpose

This strategy outlines the Skills4 approach and practice for offering careers education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG) to current and prospective students.

It aims to provide effective and fair access to advice, in accordance with the Skills4 Group's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. The strategy aims to make sure all potential learners are well informed about courses and the career pathways related to that course and that all learners at Skills4Pharmacy, Skills4Dental and Skills4Science have access to careers advice and guidance on progression. For the purposes of this strategy the definition of CEIAG is informed by the following publications and national bodies:

- FE White Paper: Skills for Jobs Lifelong learning for Opportunity and Growth. Available at: [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#)
- Good Careers Guidance 2018 - Gatsby Benchmark. Available at: [Good Career Guidance | Education | Gatsby](#)
- Matrix Quality Standard Recognised quality standard for IAG services. Available at: [Main home - The matrix Standard](#)
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework . Available at: [Further education and skills inspection handbook - GOV.UK](#)

- Career Development Framework, CDI, April 2021. Available at: [CDI Framework - Career Development Institute](#)

#### 4. Implementation

- Annual Careers Programme: Published on The Skills 4 website and accessible to learners, parents, and employers.
- Feedback: Gather learner, parent, and employer feedback to refine and improve the programme.
- Review: Conduct annual reviews of the programme, adapting to changes in the local labour market and learner needs.
- Learner and Employer Feedback: Collected at multiple stages to inform improvements and celebrate success.
- Data Monitoring: Tracking of attendance, progress, achievement, and destinations.
- Curriculum Reviews: Annual and mid-programme reviews to ensure content remains current and aligned with industry trends.
- Staff CPD Logs and Reviews: Monitored to ensure ongoing development, especially around new standards or delivery methods.

**Plan:**

Component	Details	Gatsby Benchmark(s)
1. Careers Leadership	Appoint a Careers Leader responsible for strategy and delivery.  Ensure they are appropriately trained and supported.	Benchmark 1
2. Careers Education	Embed careers education within learning sessions.  Explore pathways including other apprenticeships, T Levels, higher education, etc.	Benchmarks 1, 4
3. Individual Guidance	Provide 1:1 guidance with a qualified careers adviser, offered at key decision points.	Benchmark 8
4. Employer Encounters	Facilitate encounters with employers and employees (e.g., guest speakers, workplace visits).	Benchmark 5

	Cover a range of sectors and job roles.	
5. Experience of the Workplace	Provide work experience and workplace visits to develop practical skills and understanding of work environments.	Benchmark 6
6. Labour Market Information	Provide up-to-date and local LMI, including salary data and future skills needs.  Use resources like the National Careers Service.	Benchmark 2
7. Encounters with Providers	Ensure access for training and education providers (as per the Baker Clause) to inform learners about technical education and apprenticeships.	Benchmark 7
8. Recording and Tracking	Use tools to track learner aspirations, encounters, and progression.  Evaluate the programme's effectiveness.	Benchmark 3

## 5. Impact

To measure the impact of The Skills 4 Group’s careers programme, destination data is collected to track post-completion outcomes like apprenticeships, higher education, or employment. Regular learner surveys, reflection logs, and focus groups assess experiences, while feedback from employers and providers informs programme refinements and partnerships.

Staff observations and feedback highlight development areas and CPD needs.

The Compass tool benchmarks the programme against Gatsby standards, with insights from Ofsted and external evaluations incorporated into continuous improvement efforts.

Comprehensive records of careers activities support robust annual reports and action plans through reviewing these:

- Learner surveys and focus groups
- Destination data tracking (where learners go after completing their programmes)
- Regular internal reviews by the Careers Leader
- External reviews (e.g., Matrix and Ofsted inspections)