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# London Careers Programme

**Careers Hubs and  
Careers Clusters  
Evaluation Report  
quantitative and  
qualitative  
data analysis**

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Your insights and ideas for action will play a vital role in shaping the London Careers Programme and enhancing careers education, information, and advice policies and practices (CEIAG) across London—both now and in the future.

## **dmh associates background**

In 2008, Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE established dmh associates to encourage collaboration and fresh thinking in careers, education and skills policy, research and practice. The outcomes from the organisation's work are designed to inform and influence policies, research and practice in the UK, Europe and internationally.

Our expertise includes consultancy, evaluation, evidence and impact assessment, literature reviews, qualitative and quantitative research, digital and labour market intelligence / information (LMI). We provide a full range of activities each tailored to meet specific organisational or individual needs.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

This evaluation undertaken by dmh associates, on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA), is designed to assess London's Careers Programme focusing on the ongoing London Careers Hubs, as well as the completed European Social Fund (ESF) funded former Careers Clusters. It aims to determine whether the original objectives were met and provide insights into careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools and colleges for students in compulsory education across London. The evaluation began in June 2024 and was completed in February 2025.

The Careers Clusters and Careers Hubs originated from the London Careers Programme, which was co-developed by the GLA with national, regional, and local partners. The programme aimed to address key priorities in the London Economic Action Partnership's European Structural Investment Fund strategy, the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy, and other Mayoral priorities. The programme and resources' core aim is to enhance CEIAG across London's secondary schools, special schools, alternative provision settings, and post-16 institutions, specifically targeting institutions with a high proportion of students in receipt of free school meals (FSM) and addressing inequalities and disparities of outcomes for vulnerable groups.

### Focus

- To assess the effectiveness of the four London Careers Hubs in achieving their goals, including the impact of various programme elements and key lessons learned.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of ten former Careers Clusters, including the benefits of different programme elements and how they complemented the Hubs.
- To gain a better understanding of careers provision in education institutions delivering to those in compulsory secondary education in London.

### Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative research. Evidence was gathered through desk research, interviews and group discussions with key stakeholders, two online surveys, and a Call for Evidence. Analysis was also conducted using information provided by The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC).<sup>1</sup>

### The London Careers Programme

London's education and employment landscape is diverse and dynamic, reflecting its status as a global city. In 2016, prior to the London Careers Programme, the Mayor of London established the *London Enterprise Adviser Network* (LEAN). From July 2020 to September 2023, ten *Careers Clusters* delivered pilot projects working with schools, students, employers and sectoral bodies. Since September 2021, four area-based London *Careers Hubs* replaced the LEAN and have provided an enhanced level of *strategic CEIAG support* to London's secondary schools, colleges, employers, sectoral and other professional bodies. The Hubs are co-funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Department for Education (DfE) through The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) via an annual licence agreement (Strand 1). Additional workplace experience activities were made possible through GLA European Social Fund (ESF) matched funding (Strand 2), supporting Gatsby Benchmark 5 (encounters with employers and employees) and Benchmark 6 (experiences of workplaces). The Hubs do not directly engage with students except within Strand 2. The Careers Clusters and the Careers Hubs have a priority focus to support engagement of small-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in supporting activities with education institutions.

The programme received a total investment of circa £15.4m between 2019 and 2023. The funding sources for Careers Clusters (July 2020 – September 2023) came from ESF. With the conclusion of ESF funding, the Cluster projects ceased in September 2023. The strategic support and delivery of innovative project activity has been incorporated into the work of the Careers Hubs. In April 2024 the GLA developed a Work Experience (WEX) programme targeted at young people who are at risk of being not in education, employment and/or training (NEET), funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) from April 2024 to March 2025 – which is outside the scope of this evaluation. Increasing young people’s exposure to and experiences of the world of work remains a high priority for the GLA and its partners.

### Key findings

The Hubs with a *strategic* focus were introduced in 2021, four years after the Department for Education’s first wave of Hubs launched by The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) in 2018. While a delayed start gave the London Hubs less time to establish structures and build partnerships, significant progress and impactful achievements have been made.

*“Given the ongoing changes to the labour market since 2021, we need to invest more, not less. The lack of suitable investment in CEIAG by the central government has made this challenging. Schools face inflationary pressures, decreasing available funds. Employer investment in CEIAG is also decreasing, reflecting reduced resources for Sustainable Development Goals/Social Value/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plans due to a tighter economy.”* (Respondent to Call for Evidence)

The Clusters and the Hubs have served as ‘effective connectors’ between schools, colleges, employers, sectoral and professional bodies. The Hubs have a strong focus on recruiting, onboarding and matching Enterprise Advisers (volunteers from public, private and third sector employers) to work in partnership with schools and colleges. Enterprise Advisers work with a careers leader or senior leadership team in a school or college to increase business engagement so that more young people are having encounters with employers. They work in partnership to ensure this is part of a whole school, aspirational careers plan using Gatsby Benchmarks, as the gold standard for schools and colleges to achieve.<sup>2</sup> As of the end of February 2025, 819 Enterprise Advisers were reported as actively working within the Hubs.

Hard-to-fill vacancy trends and skills gap density trends in London have broadly followed the worsening national trends between 2011 and 2022. For instance, the share of establishments with at least one hard-to-fill vacancy has increased slowly over time from about 4-5% in London to 7-8%, before shooting up to 14.5% in 2022.

London employers are slightly more engaged in work experience/placements than the England average (except for college students and unemployed adults), e.g. 33% vs 30% nationally offering any type of placement, but slightly less engaged in offering work inspiration activities in schools (8% vs 9% nationally).

Regarding sustained apprenticeship destinations (sustained for at least six continuous months in the 2022/23 academic year), the national picture has been one of slow decline from 4.7% for the 2015/16 cohort to 3.3% for the 2020/21 cohort. In London, the decline has typically been sharper, ranging from 1.4%pts (Central Hub) to 2.4%pts (East and South Hubs). As well as declining slightly faster, the London participation rates began 1-3%pts lower than the national average.

The Clusters and the Hubs delivered a significant volume of activity for young people, which was recorded principally between July 2020 and September 2023 (the Clusters) and between Jan 2022 and August 2023 (the Hubs Strand 2).

- 30,139 student participations were recorded against insight activities/employer encounters
- 7,070 student participations were recorded against work placements/workplace experiences.

- The Clusters also reported 1,313 teachers participating in enrichment/CPD activities. (The Hubs also provide teacher CPD but volumes are not formally reported).

Employer and training provider respondents highlighted their strong relationships with local schools and colleges, along with access to a future talent pipeline, as key benefits of working with the Hubs and Careers Clusters.

### **The Careers Clusters**

The Clusters' work took place during a difficult period (during the Covid-19 pandemic and the second national lockdown in early 2021). However, challenges experienced were largely resolved. The Clusters delivered around 250 employer-led pilot projects to bring innovation to the London Careers Programme. Over 4,600 student work placements were delivered. There were 793 recorded activity participations with employers, of which 370 were SMEs. Example activities included 5-day work experiences (both virtual and physical), employer talks, site visits, work insights days, and careers carousels. The Clusters also gathered declarations/claims from 297 SME employer activities testifying to specific benefits, being 93% of all SME activities reported.

The ten Clusters were led by a combination of public, private and charitable sector organisations. Their focus on supporting young people with a higher level of need included a wide range of *delivery* activities. They all delivered:

- Support for schools and colleges to improve their careers offer and produce an employer-endorsed careers strategy
- Support teachers in schools and colleges to understand and use London's labour market information
- A 26-week sustained pilot project activity to develop innovative approaches to support careers education
- Work experience placements for students
- Engagement and support for SMEs to take part in activities.

Of the ten Careers Clusters:

- Three Clusters focused on specific sectors:
  - *Pan Out 2* (hospitality), led by Rinova
  - *Build Your Future* (construction), led by the Construction Youth Trust
  - *Waltham Forest* (digital and creative), led by the London Borough of Waltham Forest
- One Cluster provided specialist support for FE Colleges and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND):
  - *Diverso*, led by Talentino
- The remaining six Clusters - *Croydon* (led by Education Development Trust), *Inspire My Careers* (Let Me Play / LMP Education), *Local Futures* (15 Billion EBP), *Hillingdon* (Education Development Trust), *Expanding Horizons*, *Raising Aspirations* (London Borough of Hounslow 14–19 Service), and *Young Careers* (Reed in Partnership) delivered a broad and consistent range of activities, including:
  - Work experience placements (WEX)
  - Employer engagement
  - Labour market information (LMI)
  - Career guidance informed by employer insight
  - Connecting students to local career opportunities.

All the partnerships anticipated that their outputs might support others to undertake CEIAG and community collaboration and generate a broader impact. Seven critical success factors were identified: (i) being responsive to school staff, employers and their practical needs (undertaking a needs and gap analysis), (ii) integration of careers into the curriculum, (iii) deep sector-specific partnerships established, (iv) workplace visits for students and teachers, (v) school and employer-based work experience programmes, (vi) flexible placements, particularly for those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and those in Alternative Provision and (vii) micro-businesses and small-medium enterprises (SMEs) offering students experiences of and exposure to the world of work.

Interviews with Cluster Leads highlighted key challenges faced during the project including high staff turnover, school capacity issues, transport barriers, and difficulties with employer engagement. Frequent turnover of Career Leaders in some areas resulted in delays and a lack of continuity, while competing school priorities and budget constraints, especially post-COVID, led to reduced involvement or last-minute withdrawals. Transport limitations further hindered students' access to events, particularly in remote areas, and some employers were hesitant to commit to in-person or virtual activities, adding pressure to cluster resources.

*"We've taken the model and now work with employers as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) to deliver to young people."* Cluster Lead

Survey findings showed at least 65% of respondents from the school and college survey sustained all or some of the provision after the funding ceased. Sustained legacy projects continued to engage with micro-businesses, SMEs and Cornerstone employers in supporting students, schools and colleges, such as: *work insights days for students with SEND* e.g. Ozerlat UK, a family-owned business specialising in Turkish coffee, confectionary and fine food encouraged students to learn from their experience and use social media to make a short video to upload onto Instagram building their confidence and skills; *flexible virtual sessions by employers* e.g. HMRC's ongoing work experience model for Croydon schools, helped build confidence and continues to do so; and *sustained employer engagement, with some employers working directly with students, schools and on-site Jobcentre support* e.g. the Hounslow Cluster.

Partnerships continue beyond the Cluster phase, emphasising the potential for enduring collaborations between schools, colleges, employers, local boroughs and the Hubs, while stressing the importance of maintaining momentum. The Clusters successfully delivered for key subregional and regional stakeholders, as demonstrated through interviews, surveys, and the Call for Evidence findings. However, funding constraints remain, highlighting the need for a more strategic, long-term funding model.

The Cluster experiences generated significant learning about effective CEIAG support for students in schools and colleges. This included insights into approaches that worked in specific contexts, the factors that influence sectoral and employer engagement, and the resources needed. This learning is a useful contribution to the evidence base on how to do this work. There is scope for closer collaboration between the legacy Clusters and the London Hubs.

### **The Careers Hubs**

The Hubs led by Reed in Partnership (Central), Education Development Trust (EDT) (West), Local London (East) and the South London Partnership (South) align their thematic goals and KPIs with those set by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC). Each has a Local Delivery Fund which provides flexibility in responding to specific local needs.

The Hubs role is to support schools, colleges, special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Provision (AP) in their geographic sub-region to provide high quality, broad, structured, inclusive careers education that reaches every young person. Careers Hubs work with employers, universities and other education and training providers to bridge the gap between employers and education, ensuring that careers outcomes are improved for all young people. They also serve as ‘a filter and strategic coordinator’, streamlining information and opportunities for secondary schools, colleges, and employers to ensure accessibility and active engagement in high-quality CEIAG provision.

The Hubs have worked well individually but have also collaborated effectively on pan-London initiatives, driving impact across the city. Their joint efforts in areas such as *strategic* support for schools and colleges’ achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks, enterprise adviser (EA), employer and sectoral engagement, labour market intelligence (LMI) data-driven reports, teacher placements, training activities and conferences, have significantly contributed to strengthening CEIAG provision.

Our analysis indicates that, from the student perspective, an estimated 621,770 secondary education students in London Careers Hub target Education Institutions (EIs) were already enrolled in Hub EIs as of the end of the 2023/24 academic year. This represents 97% of the total eligible students to be in Hubs, which is about 641,000 students.

The self-assessed careers provision of London schools and colleges has improved every academic year from 2019/20 to 2023/24, from an average of Gatsby Benchmarks fully achieved from 2.6 to 5.3. This self-assessment is based on Compass survey completions by schools/colleges. Engagement rates with the Compass survey have increased significantly among London providers from 311 to 664 over this time-period, such that later years in particular provide very good coverage of all eligible institutions, while still remaining short of coverage of all institutions eligible for standard Careers Hub membership in the GLA area due to some institutions choosing not to provide Compass survey returns in each year.

Progress among mainstream education institutions (EIs) is broadly similar across the four Hubs, with slightly faster progress in the South and West Hubs (which started slightly lower) and slightly slower progress in the East and Central Hubs.

Results show an estimated 91% of eligible Hub members already having joined the Hubs as of end 2023/24 (with eligibility based on CEC’s reporting obligations to the DfE), with particular rapid membership growth in 2018/19 to 2020/21.

The national post-16 sustained education, employment and training (EET) rate has remained around 94%, with little change year-on-year. By contrast, in the London Hubs geographical areas, sustained EET rates for Year 11 cohorts in 2015/16 to 2020/21 improved between 0.2%pts (East Hub) and 1.4%pts (Central Hub), acknowledging some volatility in the data trends from year to year. In 2015/16, most Hubs were above the national average (except for Central Hub), but by the end of the period, all Hubs were 0.8%pts-2.0%pts above the national average.

For disadvantaged students, with pupil premium eligibility, the picture broadly mirrors the overall EET rate for all students. The national rate had been improving slightly over time but declined for the 2020/21 cohort leaving little difference since the 2015/16 cohort. In London, the rate improved by between 0.1%pts (East Hub) and 2.0%pts (Central Hub). This faster improvement compared to national rates combines with a higher initial rate to identify a large outperformance at the end of the period ranging from 3.8%pts to 5.4%pts across the Hubs.

*“Evidence shows a reduction in confirmed post-16 NEET rate from 2015/16 to 2020/21 cohorts of 0.9%pts (South Hub) to 1.7%pts (Central Hub), compared to a broadly flat trend in England.”*

The Hubs reported that they are currently working with thirty-seven Cornerstone employers. A total of 819 Enterprise Advisers (EAs) have also been recruited by the Hubs as of February 2025. The Hubs have also identified Enterprise Advisers from SMEs to support their schools/colleges in improving careers provision.

In *Strand 2*, they also recorded the number of unique SMEs participating (unique on a per-hub basis) and the number of activities, up to three with SMEs, being the minimum requirement to count as successfully completing a project. A total of 100 SMEs were identified as participating in 188 activities, the majority of which were employer encounters such as careers fairs, career talks, and workshops. Strand 2 activity presented challenges for three out of the four Hubs, as they did not bring in additional resource to deliver the Strand 2 activity at an early enough stage. The West London Careers Hub was more successful in delivering Gatsby Benchmark 5 and 6 activities (Strand 2). West London appointed a dedicated Project Manager and established a separate line management reporting structure early on. This ensured that the delivery of Strand 2 did not detract from the focus or pressures of fulfilling the Hub’s main strategic role. A key takeaway is that Careers Hubs should carefully consider how they structure delivery activities when taking on new projects in the future.

In the schools and colleges survey, several activities supported by the Hubs were reported as highly effective, with 45% of respondents highlighting success in achieving Gatsby Benchmarks and using Compass tools, and 27% noting strong engagement with employers. Also, regarding changes in CEIAG for students in London between September 2021 and July 2024, 55% reported an improvement, 16% noted no change, 2% felt it had declined, and 27% were unsure.

The majority of school and college survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the support provided by the Careers Hub Leads, with 40% (n=45) being very satisfied and 45% (n=50) satisfied. Only 6% (n=7) reported dissatisfaction. Positive feedback included praise for individual Enterprise Coordinators (ECs), improved guidance, and specific support in areas such as organising careers fairs, work experience (WEX), and navigating tools like Compass and the Gatsby Benchmarks. The most impactful support received has been in the areas of student pathway choices and improved education, employment and training (EET) outcomes.

### **Good practice and the importance of tailoring to specific needs**

Examples of how the Hubs tailored their approaches include:

- *Needs and gap analysis* e.g. Each Careers Hub undertakes a needs and gap analysis with EIs from the outset and this is reviewed annually, ideally with a Senior Leadership Team representative governor and Careers Leader in schools and colleges.
- *Sector specific projects* e.g. Green Skills, Health & Social Care, Digital and Creative, Construction etc.
- *Careers Fairs, carousels and work insight days* e.g. sometimes provided for all students and sometimes tailored to students with SEND.



- *Give an Hour campaign* e.g. designed to attract more volunteer Enterprise Advisers (EAs).
- *Teacher Encounters* – e.g. VIP and industry days in the workplace.
- *Training and continuous profession development* – EAs and Careers Leaders onboarding, ATE pathways, special themes e.g. harnessing emotional intelligence; understanding those with neurodiverse needs; careers embedded in the curriculum; SEND approaches and effective use of resources.
- *Promoting Employer Standards and Work Experience* e.g. Equalex and ATE pathways.
- *Producing high-quality labour market intelligence (LMI)* e.g. production of brochures with CareerMag and the London LMI portal.
- *Cornerstone employers* e.g. projects focused on supporting specific target groups e.g. students and parents.
- *Careers System Impact Reviews* e.g. supporting peer to peer learning and quality improvements.
- *Networking with local groups* e.g. West London Alliance, Local London, London Borough Councils etc.

## Lesson learned

### The Clusters

- Teachers' limited understanding of the workings and benefits of apprenticeships and technical education (ATE), coupled with a perceived cultural bias favouring academic routes, was reported to hinder wider acceptance of these pathways. Colleges, however, were noted to be more proactive in integrating these opportunities into their curricula.
- Without Senior Leadership Team (SLT) backing in schools and colleges, Cluster programmes often struggled to gain the necessary time and resources to succeed. Engaging SLTs early and ensuring their buy-in led to more consistent engagement across schools.
- In some boroughs, schools and colleges expressed confusion over the respective roles of Hubs versus Clusters, particularly regarding career strategy development. This resulted in overlaps, inefficiencies, and misaligned expectations. Better communication between clusters, hubs, and EIs is essential to clarify roles and avoid confusion. This should include clearer documentation and distinct guidelines on what each programme offers.
- Data sharing posed a major challenge, hindering smooth communication and continuity in relationships between the Clusters and the Hubs, highlighting the need for more transparent protocols, guidelines and data sharing agreements.
- The delayed confirmation of contracts during Covid, especially during the summer months, proved challenging for schools, leaving them with insufficient time to plan and integrate career-related programmes into their academic schedules. Addressing this issue requires greater awareness and proactive measures from the GLA to mitigate this barrier to success. Lessons learned from this experience were taken on board by the GLA with a smoother contractual and more flexible delivery arrangement for the work experience (WEX) programme that followed the Careers Clusters.
- A recurring issue was the emphasis on short-term funding and hitting numerical targets rather than focusing on the quality of engagement, leading to confusion and a perceived focus on meeting goals rather than delivering optimal outcomes for students. This was to some extent constrained by the ESF funding expectations and reporting regime.

*“When you give students immersive and engaging experiences with the opportunity to hear from and talk to a range of speakers they are empowered to take ownership of their career learning. We are connectors between schools, colleges and employers.” (Cluster Lead)*

- There were missed opportunities for more collaboration and shared learning across the Clusters and the Hubs, including a joint celebration of key achievements, high profile inspirational CEIAG champions and improved student outcomes.

## The Hubs

- Awareness of the Hubs has increased since their inception; however, a challenge remains in ensuring that all schools, academies, and college headteachers, principals, governors, and careers leaders fully understand and take up the strategic support openly available to their institution.
- Data sharing poses a challenge, with confusion around ownership and permissions in relation to Gatsby Benchmarks and Compass performance data at a local and regional level, highlighting the need for more transparent protocols, guidelines and data sharing agreements. This evaluation project facilitated improved access to data from The CEC within clearly defined and agreed parameters. CEC and GLA teams worked hard to overcome difficulties with data sharing, ultimately resulting in successful data sharing to support the report after several months. We understand that CEC is developing new protocols for data sharing which should make similar efforts smoother in the future.
- In the majority of cases, Strand 2 of the Hubs contracts did not work as well as originally anticipated. There were various reasons for this e.g. some of the work undertaken by the Hubs did not meet the set funding criteria, the Hubs were already stretched due to staff vacancies, the project officer appointment varied in experience and level of salary. A key lesson learned was to consider a sub-contractor arrangement (either internally or externally) to ensure a laser focus on the set KPIs and funding criteria outlined in the GLA Handbook.
- Training for Careers Leaders received mixed feedback in the schools and colleges survey; while 63% found it effective, some concerns were raised about variability in its type and depth.

*“All four London Hubs share a unified mission: To enhance and improve the range and quality of CEIAG provision by connecting schools, colleges, and employers within their respective geographical areas and on a pan-London basis.” (Careers Hubs Leads)*

## Recommendations

We have developed the following recommendations based on the evaluation findings. The initial recommendations are aimed at the GLA to inform future programme commissioning and design and maximise the impact of learnings from the Clusters and the Hubs. The second set of recommendations is aimed at The GLA and its partners. The final set of recommendations are aimed at others seeking to replicate or learn from the Clusters and Hubs in London.

### Recommendations for the GLA.

#### *Programme design and delivery*

#### **Recommendation 1: Identify senior champions, potential for impact, and routes to sustainability for future initiatives within the commissioning process.**

Consider the balance between CEIAG *delivery projects* and *strategic support* for schools and colleges. Prioritise approaches that address capacity and resource limitations within schools and colleges. A blended approach already exists with legacy Clusters, the Hubs, the Work Experience (WEX) programme, Integration Hubs, and Jobcentre Plus each operating separately with senior champions and local networks. There is potential to bring them together to secure buy-in, share evidence, and align priorities for the next 2-5 years, focusing on sustainable CEIAG policies and practices. Identifying key stakeholders and aligning with their priorities and decision-making timelines will support the sustainability and impact of CEIAG for all young Londoners. There is

also opportunity to consider London's CEIAG landscape over the next decade and to consider 'future scenario insights' to stimulate discussion with partners and align initiatives that promote sustainability and enhance policies and practices that can demonstrate tangible impact.

**Recommendation 2: Increase the numbers of Enterprise Advisers (EAs) though the Hubs connecting with more micro-businesses, SMEs and Cornerstone employers.**

While EAs are eager to support schools and colleges, the level of engagement from senior leadership teams (SLTs) and potential volunteers varies significantly. To boost engagement, it would be helpful to produce and share high-profile case studies working with schools and colleges showcasing the added value EAs bring to them and vice-versa. Additionally, building on successful practices in East London, consider celebrating and rewarding highly engaged EAs, businesses, teachers, and careers advisers as local champions. Public recognition through events and initiatives like those used by Careers Wales could help London further foster involvement and inspire others to participate.

The London Cornerstone Employer model is delivering impact, including strategies to support vulnerable young people. Now is the time to go further - leveraging their networks to increase volunteer engagement. The London Mayor's office and The CEC's national network of Cornerstone Employers could do more to enable Careers Hubs to piggyback on existing employer engagement activities, amplifying impact and streamlining efforts. Strengthening these partnerships will unlock opportunities for young Londoners while building a stronger talent pipeline for the future. Beyond this, there is also scope to align public procurement with CEIAG priorities to incentivise employer participation and making it easier for businesses to support schools and colleges through strategic planning, work insight days, industry placements, and supported internships.

**Recommendation 3: Amplify the Impact of Clusters and Hubs.**

Careers Hubs and Clusters have developed valuable tools and approaches that others can learn from, avoiding duplication and accelerating progress - whether in work experience, sector-specific projects, borough-level impact reports, teacher placements, or SEND and alternative provision guides. To maximise their reach, Careers Hubs should use their websites more effectively to share these resources across their networks. The GLA can also play a crucial role in broadening awareness by leveraging its influence and communication channels to extend their impact beyond local networks.

**Recommendation 4: Explore opportunities to support work in primary schools and Key Stage 3.**

Draw on lessons learned from earlier GLA commissioned work on career-related learning in primary schools (2022). Showcase potential career paths in specific growth sectors to primary-aged pupils across London aligned to Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities. Address the noted gap in careers provision at Key Stage 3 by educating employers about the benefits of engaging with younger students, particularly to introduce them to apprenticeship and technical education pathways before traditional academic routes become entrenched.

**Recommendation 5: Future-proofing career education by embracing technology and innovation.**

Harness existing online platforms like Inspiring the Future/Primary Futures which provide innovative online match-making technology to connect schools and colleges across the country with tens of thousands of volunteers working in different sectors – for free. Encourage employers to join online platforms (e.g., Inspiring the Future and Scale Up for Sustainability etc) and promote their greater use by schools and colleges for supporting careers activities and accessing opportunities.

Invest in 'test and learn' pilot projects using AI and large language models (LLMs), such as career-themed gaming (e.g., Minecraft in Scotland and Wales) and chatbot technology (e.g., Huxby and CiCi in London schools). Explore 'blended hybrid' AI approaches to make it easier for the Hubs and educational institutions, including schools,

colleges, and SEND/alternative provision providers, to access these tools. Provide training to build confidence and competence in using AI-driven career education tools.

**Recommendation 6: Revisit the community of practice model in each Hub.**

Define what success looks like in fostering an inclusive community that engages a dynamic network of Enterprise Advisers and other key stakeholders to strengthen the CEIAG system. This should create an environment where businesses, careers professionals, enterprise and employability specialists come together with a shared purpose to improve outcomes for young Londoners. With support from the GLA, London's Careers Communities of Practice can collaborate more effectively to build a high-quality, sustainable, and inclusive pan-London system for careers, skills, and employability. They can also draw on lessons learned from area-based experiences as well as those outside of London e.g. Manchester, Scotland etc.

**Recommendation 7: Enhance Access to Pathways and LMI for Parents and Teachers.**

Continue producing and sharing high-quality pathway guides and LMI across London until Skills England is fully established, addressing the gap left by the end of DfE's 'LMI for All' funding. Build on successful Cluster and Hub models to ensure schools and colleges have up-to-date insights. Expand parent-focused webinars, podcasts, and events—offering flexible options like coffee mornings, after-school sessions, and weekend slots—to improve access to LMI, apprenticeships, and technical education. This will empower parents, as key influencers, to better support their children's career choices. A similar approach could be used for teachers, scaling up awareness and equipping them with the confidence and competence to embed LMI and careers into the curriculum.

**Recommendations for the GLA, their partners including The CEC, and government departments such as the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Work & Pensions .**

*Generating new insights, maximising learning and dissemination.*

**Recommendation 8: Reach agreement to ensure greater transparency in the ownership and sharing of Gatsby performance data, Compass and anonymised student outcomes.**

At present, the GLA and London Boroughs do not have full visibility of data in the absence of clear protocols and procedures, although progress following this evaluation is hoped to improve matters in the future. Take steps to review the thematic areas of London Hubs work and allied KPIs, identify and streamline priorities going forward. Maintain flexibility in agreeing specific themes and KPIs.

**Recommendation 9: Build in flexibility while being clear on expected outcomes.**

London's careers and employability landscape is too complex for a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach. While shared goals provide direction, excessive KPIs and metrics can dilute impact. The GLA's willingness to negotiate flexible KPIs with The CEC was welcomed by Hub Leaders and should continue in future initiatives. Flexibility must be built into programme design, allowing outcomes to evolve based on real-time insights while meeting UKSPF and other funding requirements. Streamlining and prioritising KPIs will enable Hubs to focus on what truly drives high-impact results.

**Recommendation 10: Leveraging employer networks.**

Build on the GLA Careers Team's work on employer engagement through streamlined work and communications with employers across all GLA teams: to identify key stakeholders and umbrella organisations and how the GLA can work effectively with those to ensure that CEIAG is at the forefront for employers planning their talent pipeline e.g work already underway with support organisations such as Business LDN, and London and Partners. This should include clear signposting for employers depending on their talent need. Similarly, The CEC headquarters team have access to key employer networks and professional bodies. Leverage these networks to

enhance the Hubs, promote employer involvement in CEIAG activities, and develop employer led practical projects to improve student outcomes, especially for vulnerable groups. This will strengthen connections between London employers, schools, and colleges, highlighting the positive impact of CEIAG based on strong evidence of effective practices.

### **Recommendations for others seeking to learn from the Clusters and the Hubs.**

#### *Multi-agency working and capturing the voices of young people*

#### **Recommendation 11. Create more inclusive training and professional development opportunities to break down silo working and future-proof London's careers ecosystem.**

Involve key stakeholders like former Careers Clusters, Hubs, WEX programme leads, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) Work Coaches, the National Careers Service and other intermediaries working in schools and colleges through shared activities. Focus on improving student outcomes, including culturally relevant CEIAG, and integrating specific actions for vulnerable students (e.g., SEND, home-educated, young carers, and those at risk of becoming NEET), innovation in CEIAG etc through targeted training, partnerships, and feedback mechanisms.

#### **Recommendation 12. Ensure young people's voices shape CEIAG through school, college and community engagement.**

Make use of feedback tools like surveys and youth parliaments. Communicate key priorities identified by young people and provide progress updates with measurable outcomes. Use community youth resources and local borough partnerships to improve accessibility, especially for underserved groups (e.g., SEND, home-educated, young carers, at-risk youth). Partner with youth foundations and community centres to promote services and share resources. Adopt inclusive commissioning practices to encourage diversity in programme design and delivery

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> EAs support schools and colleges in achieving all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks, with a primary focus on: Benchmark 1 – A Stable Careers Programme, Benchmark 5 – Encounters with Employers and Employees, and Benchmark 6 – Experiences of Workplaces - <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/Enterprise%20Adviser%20role%20description.pdf>