

Exchange	CEIAG
Date of Meeting	15/05/2026
Location	Microsoft Teams
GMLPN Staff	Charlotte Jones, Chloe Forrest, Hannah Bolsher
Chair	Donna Graham, Services Lead, Positive Steps
Speakers:	- The Careers & Enterprise Company – Kelly Dillon - NowSkills – Amanda Bradford-Hunt
Attendees:	Wayne Hunt, Castelli, Charlotte (Bolton College), Christine Edwards (Creating Excellence), Gill Scott (Gill Scott Consultancy), Gary Foster (GMP), Melanie Bailey (Oldham Council), Rachael McMahon (Race Ahead), Alison Hogg SR CC), Dionne Webber (Wigan & Leigh College), Paula Courchene (Salford City College), Claire Rouse (Learning Curve Group), Mark Whittaker (Rochdale Training), Hatton, Joanne (Bury Adult Learning Service), David Hewitt (Mantra Learning), Felgate, Lisa (Wigan Council), Lesley McCormack (MichaelJohn Training), Louise Pollitt (Elevated Knowledge), Stevenson-Miller, Helen (Growth Company), Suzanne Stewart (GMP)
Key Themes / Discussion Points	
Ofsted Inspection Experience (New Framework) - Stronger emphasis on: - Learner voice over documentation - Triangulation (interviews, observations, systems) - Inspectors: - Ask learners about next steps and career awareness - Value transparent, collaborative discussions - Focus on quality of personal development and CEIAG delivery - Findings: “Expected Standard” = high bar - Strengths must be clearly evidenced and showcased - Challenge: - Learners often struggle to articulate next steps, even when they’ve had support Careers Education & Quality Frameworks - Key tools discussed: - Gatsby Benchmarks - Compass tool (post-16/ITP version) - Careers Impact Maturity Model - Internal Leadership Review - Benefits:	

- Provides structure for self-assessment and improvement planning
- Supports quality assurance and SLT engagement
- Barriers:
 - Complexity and volume of tools
 - Lack of digital integration across systems (MIS challenges)
 - Resource constraints for smaller providers

Size Matters: Different Provider Challenges

Large Providers:

- More structured frameworks:
 - Integrated systems (Gatsby, Matrix, ISO etc.)
 - Formal QA processes and tracking
- Still face:
 - Keeping provision aligned with rapid change
 - Managing scale

Small Providers:

- Key challenges:
 - Limited funding and staff capacity
 - Difficulty implementing all Gatsby benchmarks fully
 - Cannot always afford Level 6-qualified careers staff
- Approach:
 - Embedded, whole-organisation delivery
 - Careers integrated across:
 - Recruitment
 - Onboarding
 - Teaching and reviews

Careers Guidance in Apprenticeships

- Tension:
 - Need to provide impartial careers advice
 - BUT employers expect apprentices to stay and progress internally
- Challenge:
 - Balancing:
 - Learner development and opportunity awareness
 - Employer expectations and retention
- Reality:
 - Careers pathways are “wiggly” and non-linear
 - Many learners don’t know future steps early in programmes

Learner Voice & Careers Understanding

- Issues identified:
 - Learners:
 - Don't always recognise CEIAG activities (especially soft skills)
 - May give limited answers ("I don't know") with Ofsted inspectors (even if they do know)
- Key insight:
 - CEIAG must include:
 - Soft skills (communication, professionalism)
 - Career management skills (CVs, networking)
- Need to make careers learning more visible and explicit to learners

Rapidly Changing Labour Market & AI

- Challenges:
 - Job roles evolving rapidly (especially digital sectors)
 - Job titles inconsistent across employers
 - AI impacting:
 - Recruitment processes (CV screening)
 - Entry-level opportunities
- Opportunities:
 - AI tools for:
 - Careers guidance
 - Labour market updates
 - Personalised pathways

School Transition & Early Careers Guidance

- Significant gap identified:
 - Reduction in school engagement (loss of ASK programme)
- Issues:
 - Limited access to learners in KS4/KS5
 - Careers advice in schools inconsistent
 - Poor awareness of apprenticeships and alternatives
- Need:
 - Stronger school-provider collaboration
 - Better transition data sharing

Information, Systems & Data Sharing

- Current barriers:
 - MIS systems not integrated across sectors
 - Tools (e.g. OnTrack / Compass+) not yet fully compatible post-16
- Future opportunity:
 - Shared learner records (progress, skills, aspirations)

- Digital portfolios (e.g. LinkedIn as modern “Record of Achievement”)

Resources / Links Shared

[Create an account | Schools Hub | The Careers and Enterprise Company](#)
[FE and ITPs Connect Newsletter | CEC Corporate Web](#)
[Further education and skills inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information - GOV.UK](#)
[Sixth forms, colleges and providers - issue education records](#)

Actions

Short-Term

Providers to:

- Review use of Compass and maturity model
- Strengthen documentation of CEIAG activity
- Improve learner understanding of careers learning

Medium-Term

- Develop:
 - More systematic approach to embedding CEIAG across curriculum
 - Staff CPD in careers knowledge (not just specialists)
- Explore:
 - Internal routes to develop staff to Level 4/6 careers qualifications
- Improve:
 - Tracking and evidence of learner progression and destinations

Collaboration Actions

- Consider:
 - Provider spotlight sessions (sharing good practice)
 - Mapping provision across GM (who offers what)
- Develop:
 - Network approach to sharing careers pathways and opportunities

Next Steps

The next CEIAG date: TBC

For Future Sessions

- Invite:
 - Schools / Careers Leads
 - Skills England representatives
 - Potentially Ofsted/CEC contributors
- Focus topics:
 - Transition (school → post-16)
 - Employer engagement in CEIAG
 - Effective models of embedding careers

Development Workstreams

1. AI Careers Tool Exploration – Gill Scott
 - a. Develop collaborative working group
 - b. Align with Ofsted expectations
 - c. Avoid duplication with national tools
2. Careers Delivery Models
 - a. Compare:
 - i. Large vs small provider approaches
 - ii. Embedded vs specialist delivery
 - b. Identify scalable best practice
3. Training Quality Review
 - a. Potential anonymous provider review of CEIAG training providers
 - b. Identify high-quality CPD routes

Strategic Priorities

- Strengthen learner voice and articulation
- Build clear progression pathways across sectors
- Improve visibility of careers education (internally & externally)
- Increase sector collaboration
- Influence policy through collective voice

[GMLPN SEND Exchange Tickets, Thursday, June 18 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite](#) - (Members only)