

## Evaluation of the Careerpilot whole-school approach to personal guidance through a triage model



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Careerpilot would like to thank the Careers and Enterprise Company for providing the funding for this project. This financial support has been invaluable in enabling the delivery of a high-quality project that has successfully engaged schools and impact on young people’s future career ideas.

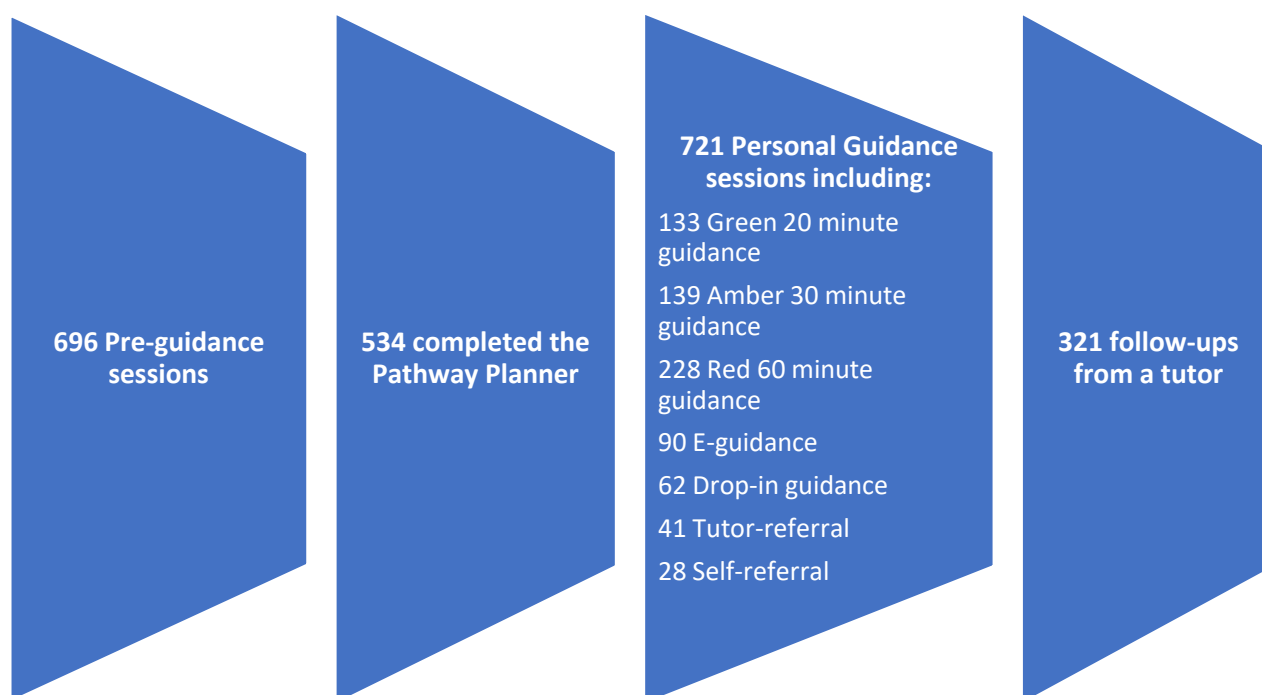
The researcher would like to thank the young people who gave their time and feedback and the schools for their support with this evaluation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Careerpilot hosted by the University of Bath secured funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company to pilot a whole-school personal guidance approach through a three-stage model in 2019-20. The whole-school model has built on emerging evidence to optimise the impact of personal guidance. This evidence was identified by the Careers and Enterprise research 'Personal Guidance: what works?'<sup>1</sup> and relates to the themes of integration; space and time; and, preparation and feedback.

The CEC funding has supported the pilot of the model in six secondary schools in the South West. In 2019-20 it helped 60 Y11s and 40 Y12s in each school with the intention to roll out the model across whole year groups in 2020-21. The pilot has provided 360 Year 11 and 240 Year 12 students with personal guidance through using a three-stage model and a triage tool called the Pathway Planner. In addition, 2054 non-pilot students received Careerpilot online workshops.

In total Year 11 students and Year 12 students benefitted from:



The three-stage pilot model includes:

**Pre-guidance Option Choice session:** All pilot students receive a one-hour structured online session. The session follows a set format. It starts with a short purposefully designed Your Future Career video to help the students understand how to manage their careers. The facilitator then talks students through their option choices and allows time for them to explore a range of options using the Careerpilot website. Careerpilot is a one-stop website of careers information, including a variety of decision-making tools and an individual progress reporting function. At the end of the session students complete the new Pathway Planner Triage Tool, which uses a quiz-based format to determine the options students are interested in and their readiness for their chosen pathway. The responses are scored and give students a Red, Amber or Green rating.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-research/personal-guidance-what-works>

- 1. Personal Guidance:** The Pathway Planner results provide individual and cohort level data on areas such as student career/education interests, level of knowledge and preparedness. The results are instantly available to the Careers Leader/Adviser. The Red, Amber, Green score can be used alongside other data (such as predicted grades) to determine the initial level of guidance. For the pilot project, Careerpivot recommended that schools plan personal guidance sessions with the following timings: Green (20 minutes), Amber (30 minutes) and for Red (60 minutes) - which includes all students who may be considering an Apprenticeship or have an additional need. The Career Adviser has access to the Pathway Planner results and the Careerpivot individual report to inform the discussion. At the end of the session, students receive a postcard with their co-determined action points and their Careerpivot profile is updated with action points and a comprehensive report. These are visible to the student and any staff member with access to that student.
- 2. Follow-up:** Several weeks after the personal guidance, a trained<sup>2</sup> tutor follows up each student with three basic questions to track progress. If concerns are raised, the tutor can refer students for additional guidance. Students can also follow-up their session with their Careers Adviser through e-guidance (using an online form), attending a weekly drop-in guidance session, or by self/tutor referral.

The Careerpivot website and its reporting functions underpin the delivery of the personal guidance model. Students build an individual timeline in their Careerpivot Pathway Planner, which shows their triage results and guidance interventions. They can edit their responses as they develop knowledge and understanding of their chosen options. For example, an original Red score based on an interest in an Apprenticeship pathway may advance to an Amber or Green because of the guidance and support received. Students can see their progress and schools can collate data on how they are supporting student needs (Gatsby 3).

To strengthen the Careers Guidance model and for on-going sustainability, a member of staff in each school<sup>3</sup> has been receiving training and mentoring to achieve the Level 6 Diploma of Careers Guidance and Development.

## 2. THE APPROACH TO EVALUATION

This study is a project evaluation to explore the lessons learnt from the whole-school personal guidance model. The overall aim is to help ensure robust evaluation of the model the contextualisation and dissemination of experiences.

This evaluation has explored the impact of the personal guidance model on young people's awareness of their career choices and their future decision-making and the impact of the personal guidance model on the school and its careers strategy.

The study will make recommendations to aid the dissemination and replication of effective practice. It has explored:

- How effective is the staged careers guidance model?

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<sup>2</sup> Trained to use Careerpivot and the Pathway Planner.

<sup>3</sup> Due to a trainee leaving one school this number reduced to five. However, another member of the staff team in this school is now undertaking their Level 6 training but through an alternative provider.

- How is the model contributing to young people’s awareness and understanding of their career choices and supporting their forward career planning?
- Whether young people who participate in the process feel better informed and more confident about their next steps as a result of the support?
- What are the implications for the on-going sustainability of the model?

### 3. METHODOLOGY

There have been two phases to the evaluation. The first phase was to gain student views immediately after taking part in the Pre-guidance Option Choice session and after attending the personal guidance discussion using a light touch survey.

The second phase focused on the longer-term and provided a more in-depth consideration of the model, the impact on the young person and the views of the school. In March 2020, all six schools hosted focus groups with a small group of students to measure the softer outcomes of the targeted sessions. The focus groups were interactive using visual techniques, discussions, and activities which enabled students to provide anonymous feedback.

As part of the school visits, semi-structured interviews were conducted with school staff (including a member of the School Senior Leadership team and the Career Adviser).

#### 3.1. INTERVIEWS WITH SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT) AND CAREERS ADVISERS

Interviews were conducted with six SLT and the five trainee Careers Advisers<sup>4</sup>. These interviews explored views on involvement with the collaboration, project feedback, successes and challenges, impact on school and students, integration with the school Careers Strategy, and on-going sustainability.

#### 3.2. STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

236 Year 11 and 161 Year 12 students completed the **Pre-guidance Option Choice survey**. The survey collected feedback on the Your Future Career video, whether the session had helped students to understand their choices, how much they had learnt about their career options and the student’s feedback of the Pathway Planner tool.

188 students completed the **Personal Guidance survey**. Of those completing the personal guidance 71 students had taken part in a 60-minute session, 64 had taken part in a 30-minute session, and 53 had taken part in a 20-minute session. We collected feedback from each cohort of students as to the extent the session allowed them to explore careers, how confident they felt about their planning, whether the session timings were sufficient and the overall usefulness of the session.

**Six focus groups** consisting of 42 students drawn from a mix of Year 11 and Year 12 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Focus Group session**

Focus Group	Year Group	Gender	Participants
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<sup>4</sup> In one school the trainee was also the SLT member.

<b>FG1</b>	Year 11	Mixed	4
<b>FG2</b>	Year 11	Mixed	5
<b>FG3</b>	Year 11 and Year 12	Mixed	14
<b>FG4</b>	Year 11 and Year 12	Mixed	5
<b>FG5</b>	Year 11	Mixed	5
<b>FG6</b>	Year 11 and Year 12	Mixed	9

## 4. FINDINGS

The evaluation highlights the effectiveness of the three-stage personal guidance model as an incremental, progressive programme which provides targeted personal guidance to young people.

All schools were positive about their involvement in the project with many finding it a catalyst for improving their personal guidance provision. Involvement had benefits for students beyond those in the pilot group and led to a commitment by schools to sustain critical components of the model. The feedback from schools highlights the integral aspects of the project, including:

- Personalised guidance to young people using tested and respected Careerpilot tools and materials;
- Targeting of careers guidance and tailoring the approach to student need;
- Broadening the range of options young people are considering;
- Increased knowledge and expertise of their Careers Adviser through involvement in the Level 6 careers qualification;
- A broader culture of careers support through the involvement of tutors;
- Opportunities to include and involve curriculum areas within careers work;
- Improving the involvement of parents;
- The model as a strategic tool to strengthen the delivery of careers guidance processes including targeting, monitoring and review; and
- Opportunities to sustain and embed the guidance model within the careers strategy.

### 4.1. EFFECTIVE PERSONALISED GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The first stage of the model is the delivery of pre-guidance activities to Year 11 and Year 12 students. These formally structured sessions help students understand more about managing their careers and their option choices to provide a firm foundation for personalised guidance.

*It is having a clear path when a student comes in for guidance. That they've completed all the tools on Careerpilot and then the interview is very focused use of time. (Careers Adviser)*

*I think that having a clear process like this is really good... You know they can dip back in if they need to, so it just feels more complete. Them having the hour-long session at the beginning has been really*

*helpful because there's a grounding for when they come to meet with me individually. (Careers Adviser)*

Overall, the young people felt the pre-guidance had prepared them to participate in the personal guidance and helped to ensure that the guidance was responsive to their needs. The young people felt able to participate in the personal guidance fully. They were prepared with information on their options and choices, had explored Careerpilot and had begun to consider their futures<sup>5</sup> enabling young people to take full advantage of the time with an Adviser.

- 90.2% of students told us the Your Future Career video was an excellent way to explain careers.
- Four-fifths of students (80.4%) told us they found the pre-guidance option session useful for finding out about the choices available to them.
- 86.7% of students told us they knew more about careers after taking part in the pre-guidance option session.
- Three quarters (75.1%) of students found the pre-guidance option session Quite to Extremely Useful.

Sample student feedback on the usefulness of the sessions:

- *The video emphasised the fact I have many more options than what I'm currently thinking of.*
- *The teacher gave an example of someone currently doing a degree-level apprenticeship in something I am interested in, which really opened my options from just Uni.*
- *I now have information on how it is possible to have a break from education at 18, with it being available to go to university later.*
- *I now know more information to help me choose my post 18 options and have new knowledge of routes to take*
- *Browsing potential job roles within my areas of interests and finding more information on how to achieve these roles.*
- *Understanding that I can go to university while working for a company relating to the field I'm interested in.*

The concluding aspect of the session was the individual completion of the new Pathway Planner Triage Tool. The responses determined the intensity of the personal guidance through a scoring mechanism and a Red, Amber or Green score. Respectively, the score allocated young people with a timed session of 60, 30 or 20 minutes. Some Careers Advisers suggested that cross-checking with a tutor who knew the student or cross-checking predicted grades enabled them to prioritise the order in which they saw students and modify time allocations. For example, a student who is keen to pursue A Levels and knows the subjects they wish to take would have a green rating. However, a predicated grade check may highlight difficulties with grade achievement, meaning an extended session may be more appropriate. While the Pathway Planner was highly effective for determining the initial level of guidance students, triangulation with other data improves its robustness.

Careers Advisers found the information inputted by students into the Pathway Planner tool invaluable to the shaping of the personal guidance session. The data gives a clear picture of the

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<sup>5</sup> There was little difference between the responses by students in Year 11 and Year 12.

young person's knowledge, interests and aspirations and enables Careers Advisers to prepare to ensure the best use of the time.

*Having that first workshop, introducing students to it, getting them set up on it, sharing it with parents when they come in for options evening – then having that sequence following on from it. You're looking at the different options which then feeds directly into the one-to-one guidance meetings, and you have a better idea of the level of support that they need. (Careers Adviser)*

*What I like about the Pathway Planner is that it gives me some preparation material that allows me to have a conversation. It's a really good opener. Come on, let's talk about what you thought about university, what you thought about employment and I think it's a really good icebreaker... I think the kids have quite enjoyed thinking about it because it's probably the first time they've had all these four options in front of them... And it saves time, it really does. (Careers Adviser)*

The tailored personal guidance sessions were exceptionally well-reviewed by students. For many, it was the first time they had talked one-to-one about their future and career ideas. Completing the Pathway Planner had highlighted to students areas they might want to discuss with their Career Adviser and meant they felt well-prepared. They felt their Career Adviser was skilled and knowledgeable and had encouraged them to consider a range of options. The students highly valued working one-to-one with an Adviser during the Guidance sessions.

- 95.1% of students agreed that the personal guidance session helped them explore their career options.
- 90.2% of students agreed that taking part in the personal guidance had been useful.
- 84.4% of students felt that they had enough time in the personal guidance.
- 95.8% of students agreed they felt more confident about their plan for after Y11 or 6th Form.

The above figures are averages across all levels of guidance (20, 30 and 60 minutes combined), but there was little difference between the three levels of guidance. This suggests that all three guidance intensities are effective at meeting student needs and that this is likely to be attributable to the robustness of the process and the validity of Pathway Planner in identifying student need. However, while Careers Advisers often flexed the timings according to student need, some students would have appreciated longer sessions.

Student valued the personal guidance and the tailored advice and information received through the project and the impact this had on their understanding about their future hopes and aspiration.

Sample student feedback:

- *Having an environment with a professional and having space where you could map out exactly where you're planning on going was extremely helpful and put a lot of things in perspective. Overall, the guidance session was relatively supportive with what I have been working towards, and I have left with possibilities that I would not have had - had the guidance session not taken place. (Student from a 20 minute session)*
- *The most useful thing about the guidance session was that I could talk about all the options I could take into the medical career path and discuss the courses I would need to take to go into the medical world and the courses I may not need to take. I also got the information of what employers look for and what would stand out to an employer like having some mention of work experience on your CV, making you stand out from the rest. (Student from a 20 minute session)*



- *I was able to see what qualifications I needed for the jobs I was interested in. I was also able to see new career paths that I had never thought of before that I was interested in. (Student from a 20 minute session)*
- *It allowed me to explore my options with what I want to do with my career interests (i.e. potential pathways). (Student from a 30 minute session)*
- *I was able to explore out-of-school courses that I can do in order to improve my knowledge and understanding of the industry I want to work in. (Student from a 30 minute session)*
- *Information about where I can find organisations that can coordinate gap years and how the skills you learn from the gap year can be transferred in your career later on. (Student from a 30 minute session)*
- *Being helped to know where I would be recommended to go after GCSE based on what I'm interested in. (Student from a 30 minute session)*
- *Exploring all the possible options that I have to get into a career I would love. I also got many useful links that can help me further explore what I want to do and how I want to get there. (Student from a 60 minute session)*
- *I was able to explore pathways that I can take post 16, as well as what they could lead to after deciding what I might want to do. It also makes me less stressed about deciding on my college courses. (Student from a 60 minute session)*
- *Looking at all my options not just focusing on one and widening the range of options. (Student from a 60 minute session)*

A further well-regarded aspect was the additional forms of guidance and on-going support, which enabled young people to also access e-guidance, drop-in, and tutor and self-referral. This continuous loop supports students who are struggling to move forward to return into the system for additional guidance.

*I think the gap with the previous system was that there was limited flexibility for the student themselves to refer and I think it's important that they can say "actually, you know what I'm stuck". I think this system enables them to say, "I don't know" and I think that's a real bonus. (Careers Adviser)*

#### 4.2. TARGETING AND TAILORING OF CAREERS GUIDANCE

The information inputted by students into the Pathway Planner enabled Careers Advisers to tailor discussions and helped prioritise those students in most immediate need. For example, more than one school highlighted that the results of the Pathway Planner had identified students whom the school had viewed as sure to progress to Post-16, yet their Pathway Planner results highlighted concerns. Career Advisers had worked to prioritise working with these students.

*I have found it [the Pathway Planner] really useful with the 'grey student'; the ones with no major issues who are just floating along. I had a really bright student, and everyone just assumed that she'd go to sixth form, but she just had no idea, and the Pathway Planner helped to identify that. I was able to bring her in, and it was just knowledge she needed about her options. That's one thing which I think has been a huge success of it is being able to identify those grey students. (School Guidance Adviser)*

*We've got students who are really anxious, really bright students, who are going to get the GCSEs but they're really anxious about not getting the qualifications to go on to do A levels. And so, one of the things that means is we can be proactive and intervene with those grey students that tend to be not as vocal or as needy but indeed have needs, and so that was very helpful to me. (Senior Leader)*

*I prioritised the reds just because I felt like a lot of them need multiple meetings, they have no idea what they're going to do next year, and they don't have the grades for the sixth form. (Careers Adviser)*

Careers Advisers also felt that the independent completion of the Pathway Planner by the young person before their personal guidance leads to greater control and ownership over the process. Young people felt well prepared to participate in the personal guidance and combined with the tailoring of the session to the young person's interests and knowledge gaps; this supports the impartiality of the guidance process.

*It helps me understand what each student needs once they've done the Pathway Planner. That's been independent. That's not influenced by anybody else. So, then I can cater the meetings to exactly what they need and do a little bit of exploration. They can be really targeted, which is better for them. (Careers Adviser)*

Furthermore, having a transparent time allocation for each student has led to better time management by Careers Advisers.

*I think the ring-fencing of the time. I could look at the tool, I could see who has additional needs, and I could use the red/green... It just helps with time management, when you know you have other things and only half a day to make some progress you can slot in a lot of greens and then, you know, you can manage your workload. That's more job satisfaction, and you can manage your productivity a little bit better. (Careers Adviser)*

Data from Pathway Planner results was helping schools to understand better a cohorts' broader career concerns and interests and helps schools and advisers to better target and tailor careers guidance to these. Having access to this data is enabling schools to adapt future careers guidance programmes and activities to meet these needs. For example, some schools were collating information on student career and course interests, student concerns about careers, and knowledge gaps. This enables schools to respond to the specific needs within their wider Y11 and Y12 cohorts and develop a responsive action plan.

*I can find out how many children are interested in veterinary, how many children are interested in engineering and so on. And then what we do is we try and organise a trip that directly links to what their interests are. I wouldn't be able to do that without something like Careerpilot. It would be impossible. It's targeted, and it's tailored. (Senior Leader)*

*Having the reports, for us we realised we have some really bright students that are really anxious that they are not going to get the qualifications they need to go on to A Levels. What that means is that we can be proactive and intervene. (School Senior Leader)*

#### 4.3. BROADEN THE CULTURE OF CAREERS

A core component is to embed the post-guidance follow-up within the school-tutor process, whereby a trained<sup>6</sup> school tutor receives a copy of the student's action plan and follows-up each student with three basic questions to understand if they are on track. If any concerns are raised, the tutor can refer students for additional guidance. This follow-up aims to ensure that students are supported to achieve their action points and to provide on-going dialogue rather than a one-off action. The aim is to redress the culture of careers within schools and ensure responsibility for supporting young people in their next steps is part of the school-tutor processes.

Students recognised the importance of building on the personal guidance and completing the action points set. Students highlighted that being given (at the time or subsequently) information postcards with their action points was extremely useful. Most students could recall some of the action points they had agreed and felt that they had made progress with them. Students recognised that having a tutor check their progress was beneficial<sup>7</sup> and had appreciated the on-going communication. Many students had taken advantage of the e-guidance, drop-in, and self-referral services offered through the project, although some students were unaware that they could seek further advice from their Adviser<sup>8</sup>. Some students suggested that ad-hoc virtual contact, for example, through messages and social media, may help remind them to look at Careerpivot and to continue to think about their future plans.

Some schools experienced internal, administrative challenges with embedding this aspect of the model, yet all recognised the importance of the approach. While this aspect was sometimes tricky, schools were working towards strengthening and localising their approach to tutor involvement.

*So, getting tutors on board and having a structure for tutors to follow is really helpful. I mean, that's something that we've clearly got work to do on with training tutors, but those one-to-one conversations are really important. (Senior Leader)*

One challenge was ensuring tutors could utilise Careerpivot to ensure adequate recording of follow-up activity.

*The tutors do it all the time; the challenge is recording it. I know every single morning they have a chat with their Year 11 about what's going on next but recording that is a real big challenge. (Careers Adviser)*

The time between the training session and the follow-up meant some tutors required a refresher. Furthermore, in schools with vertical tutor groups, a tutor may only have a small handful of eligible students which means more tutors required training. Despite these challenges, tutors and Careers Advisers recognised the value in an additional person supporting the students and the impact that this had.

*I know how useful students found your careers meetings, they were always so positive when I asked them how they went - to the point when others in the tutor group wanted to bring their appointments with you forward as they were envious of the advice given!! (Personal Tutor)*

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<sup>6</sup> Trained to use Careerpivot and the Pathway Planner.

<sup>7</sup> Due to the timing of the evaluation some young people had not yet been follow-up by their tutors.

<sup>8</sup> This feedback was most often from students who had a 20-minute checking Personal Guidance session with the time impacting on how much information they could be provided with.

*It has been a great way for us to get to know our tutees more in terms of what career paths they would like to choose! It is always great for me to learn my way around new software too, as I am a technophobe, so knowing how to use Careerpilot is a new skill for me! I know they have really enjoyed working with you, and it has really made them think about what they want to do and has given them insight into the world of work that is so invaluable. (Personal Tutor)*

#### 4.4. INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE OF THE CAREERS ADVISER

As part of the project, a Careers Adviser in each pilot school had the opportunity to complete a Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development. The Careerpilot team deliver the course which involves taught masterclasses, distance learning, in-school mentoring and observations from a qualified adviser. Overall, this was a positive experience despite the challenge of a study workload combined with everyday workloads. The benefits gained from the course were significant. Careers Advisers reflected on how their increased skill, knowledge, confidence and competence in delivering personal guidance had made a positive difference to the quality of the guidance young people received<sup>9</sup>.

*I am fairly new to careers and schools really, so the project has helped me develop a good structure for my interviews. Now there is much more exploration involved and a really solid structure that comes from attending the Masterclasses and getting feedback and observations. (Careers Adviser)*

*It's given me a lot more confidence with what I am doing. If a student has a question, I have an answer, and I can adapt and change to the student needs, which I don't think I was really able to do before. (Careers Advisers)*

*It's informed what I'm doing in my meetings with the students. I can see my progression already. Now I feel like a student can walk through the door, and I would know how to approach most scenarios. (Careers Advisers)*

Careers Advisers valued the mentoring from an experienced adviser and how this had given them greater insight to the conduct of the guidance interviews and how they had moved from a process which had focused mainly on advice to exploration.

*It's really helpful building a structure of how to do a guidance interview, and now there's a good structure to it. A lot of exploration, which I didn't think I was doing that much before. (Careers Advisers)*

*[Careers Adviser] has been saying she has been able to guide the students better and at a deeper level. I think the fact that they're more sorted is the acid test. (Senior Leader)*

All schools recognised the benefits of a qualified professional guidance professional within their staff team and the quality and impartiality of the advice provided. Furthermore, schools acknowledged having an internal member of staff with responsibility for personal guidance was extremely positive for developing on-going relationships with staff and students.

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<sup>9</sup> Five of the school Careers Advisers were relatively new to their role and gained the most benefit from the qualification

*I think in terms of the success it's been the students getting the guidance that that wasn't there for them before and particularly that guidance being impartial... I feel that those students have had a much better deal than what they've had previously because we've got somebody dedicated but also trained to a higher level. (Senior Leader)*

The qualification, with the associated knowledge and theoretical base, was extremely valuable for giving the Careers Advisers credibility within their schools, particularly for those who were newer in their roles. Many felt that this would give them more considerable influence and encourage the embedding of careers work more broadly within their schools.

*I feel more clued up now about the world of careers than any of my colleagues here. So, I feel like in general, as a result, I can talk with a bit of authority now. So, if I have to do a staff CPD, I feel I have the underpinning knowledge to go with the status. (Careers Advisers)*

#### 4.5. INVOLVING PARENTS

Schools acknowledged the need to develop their work with parents if careers education for their students was to be successful. Schools involved with the CEC project recognised the opportunities that Careerpivot offered for engaging with parents. Some schools had begun to introduce parents to Careerpivot, with other schools having firm ideas about the expansion of careers work with parents. Plans included running Careerpivot information sessions, activities about supporting careers guidance during parents evenings, linking to Careerpivot on school webpages and posting careers highlights in school newsletters.

*So, this next year, we want to roll out two forums to parents on Careerpivot and how they can get involved... How you can support your child. So hopefully we'll get them on board as well. (Senior Leader)*

*We have a careers page on our website, and we guide parents back to that as well. There's an actual parent section, and it's linked into areas that they can help the children and Careerpivot is on there as I try to encourage the parents to register. (Senior Leader)*

Schools acknowledged that reaching parents was often tricky yet crucial if young people are to be supported in making decisions. Schools consider Careerpivot a helpful tool for informing parents about the changing landscape of education and careers.

*I go to parents evening, and I'm always fully booked which is really positive, and parents are emailing me more. But it's still not great, and it's always a challenge... Students don't necessarily think their parents understand their futures and understand careers because they really don't. So informing them is a big barrier. But again, parental involvement is really important for us... We do want to get parents much more involved. Having something that they can take away and then go home and get on their computers and look at will be really helpful. (Careers Adviser)*

We must also acknowledge that parents can contribute to careers programmes and should be drawn into the partnership to support provision and influence the coherence of the messages between school and home. Careers education with parents needed to start much lower down the school to

develop a better culture around careers education and school recognised Careerpivot could support this.

*[I've] been using it with parents at parents evening as well. I just bring an iPad and if they have an idea or thought we just explore on the website there and then. Rather than just me giving them information, it's giving them the tools to do it themselves. So, it would be great to do that from Year 7 and would really demonstrate to students and parents that right from the get-go we are interested in supporting them in their careers and widening their aspirations. (Careers Adviser)*

One school had been highly proactive in involving parents in the career guidance process. With the permission of the student, parents received the career guidance report and action plan alongside resources to help them support their child in completing their action plan and moving forward with their ideas. This approach was part of the school's career strategy and parent feedback mechanisms.

*The other thing that I've started doing as well is getting permission from all the students to be able to share their action plan with their parents... I send a covering letter that just reminds them of all the support their child will get, and I put on there a link to a survey so that they can give me some feedback as well... So, some of the workshops that they're interested in are what they want to know more about - what are the options that are available, which is best for their child, what careers are available in different sectors and information about apprenticeships as well. (Senior Leader)*

#### 4.6. INVOLVING CURRICULUM AREAS

While beyond the scope of the CEC project, schools recognised that their involvement with Careerpivot had strengthened their enhancement of the careers/curriculum links. School senior leaders were enthusiastic about the opportunities that Careerpivot offered for embedding careers within the curriculum so that young people can encounter career learning within their subject lessons. Schools recognised that Careerpivot resources could support them to integrate careers within subject areas and can help broaden young people's awareness of subject-related career opportunities.

*I'm trying to get a lot more of the careers within the curriculum as well. If the staff are supporting students with the types of careers that are available linked to that subject that saves quite a lot of time within the meetings doesn't it because they're coming to us with "I really like this subject, but I don't know what I could do" so actually if the staff can support with that. (Senior Leader)*

*The next step is engaging with curriculum lessons and getting teaching staff to work on careers... Also thinking about more generally about trying to get staff and our middle leaders really thinking about careers. (Senior Leader)*

*We are pushing heads of house and heads of department and subject teachers to be accountable for careers, to make it part of their curriculum to make sure they cover. (Senior Leader)*

One school has a designated careers staff link within each subject department, and another school had started to use Careerpivot posters and features such as 'jobs of the week' in newsletters to raise awareness of subject links.

However, there is a need to provide adequate support for teaching staff, as they may feel inadequately informed. Staff training, alongside access to Careerpivot resources, will ensure teachers can better link subject learning to careers. Resources about sector-based skills shortages, labour market information and lesson ideas are useful approaches and easy to use in teaching and learning activities.

#### 4.7. A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR CAREERS GUIDANCE

In the six pilot schools, the model was recognised as a robust and strategic tool for the provision of personal guidance and had received the support of senior leaders. Some schools had encountered challenges in the delivery of the pilot, but a clear commitment had overcome these. Senior leaders described how the project had led to improved processes for careers guidance, and greater visibility of careers work across the school.

*It's helping just get everybody involved a little bit more, from department leads down to teaching staff even SLT as well. Get everybody involved in delivering some sort of guidance. (Senior Leader)*

*It is strategic. You've got the online platform which supports everything. It's the go-to for students. It's the go-to for me. Tutors can use, and I can direct the teachers towards it to support the students. (Senior Leader)*

*From our point of view as a school, it is really useful to have a system like this where you can see where students are in terms of their career guidance, how much career guidance they probably needed. The Pathway Planner is fantastic I have to say. It is a really useful strategic tool for me as a senior leader. (Senior Leader)*

The student-led approach of the project and the comprehensive Careerpivot resources were highly valued. The Careerpivot management tools had enabled the collection of a broad range of data on student career and educational interests, action planning and careers guidance support. This data was being utilised by schools to understand the trajectory of students, ensure that students are on track to achieve and can access their preferred courses or employment options.

*Because of the way that I triangulate everything and the fact that the students allow me to share what we discuss, not only do I have that information, it's passed to the progress leaders who then can have the conversations with the parents and have discussions about any of the concerns. (Careers Adviser)*

In one school, the Careers Adviser had further enhanced the pre-guidance for all Year 11s by working with the PHSE lead to deliver an additional session and encourage a follow-up for all students.

*It prompted us to do this big PSHE session on careers to all the Year 11s, and I probably wouldn't have done it otherwise, so that was a huge bonus because that ended up being really helpful... I was going in to check with tutors on the pilots; I was like well I'm here I'm going to check with the other students... I didn't do any of that last year, and I don't think I would have done it this year. So that's had a big impact. (Careers Adviser)*

Furthermore, Careerpivot data was being utilised by schools to understand their student cohorts better and be more responsive to their needs, for example, by organising speakers or employer visits.

*I can run a report, and I can find out how many children are interested in veterinary, how many children are interested in engineering, and so on. And then we try and organise a trip that directly links to what their interests are. I wouldn't be able to do that without something like Careerpivot. It would be impossible, but doing it using that platform enables me to use that data. (Careers Adviser)*

Several schools considered Careerpivot fundamental to their whole approach to careers, with students being introduced to Careerpivot in Year 7 building their engagement through their secondary school education. While this is a new approach, schools envisage that by embedding Careerpivot as the critical resource across the school's whole career strategy that young people can build a relationship with it, can track their progress and recognise careers education as a journey. Schools hope this will result in young people's increased confidence in their future and will contribute to the evolution of personal guidance within the school.

*Careerpilot has given us a framework to hang everything on. It's been really useful, and from using Careerpivot we've been able to develop our school progression map. We have taken Careerpivot resources, and we produced objectives for every year group... We've developed tutor time resources and PHSE time resources and assembly time resources. (Senior Leader)*

*We're linking Careerpivot as a resource where we possibly can, and it is fundamental to our engagement with the kids right from Year 7. So, all the way from Year 7 to Year 13, I'm hoping by the end of this year the lot will be registered. Of course, the challenge then is engagement. But they all know where to go, they know that's our resource, and that's what we use. (Careers Adviser)*

*It gives it coherence. They'll have the records instead of schools having to start every year afresh... We're trying to encourage students in Year 9 to make decisions about their options that might influence what A Levels they go on to do and what careers they want to do. So, I think anything that sees it as the long game, you know sort of the infinite game and is their tracker. That also has an impact on us being able to monitor the impact we have. So those one-to-one conversations: Do they support the students? Did they change their mind? Did they go off in a different direction? (Senior Leader)*

Most schools acknowledge that crucial aspects of the model were integral to their future delivery of personal careers guidance. However, many recognised that the model in its current form might require adaptations to work for a whole cohort.

#### 4.8. SUSTAIN AND EMBED THE GUIDANCE MODEL

The project had challenged schools to think differently about how they delivered personal guidance and had encouraged them to explore how they could sustain and embed the model while tailoring to the needs and resources of their schools.

*There is not a good enough reason not to do it. We'll find a way to do it because those kids need this. Having done what we've done over the last few months, it's even clearer to me how important it is. (Senior Leader)*



*All this has done has just told us what we should have been doing anyway. I think every young person should have an opportunity to sit down and talk to somebody about what they might want to do. They're probably getting misinformation at home, misinformation from friends and I think it's great to have that one-to-one time where they can just sit and talk to somebody that is qualified. (Senior Leader)*

Careerpilot may want to offer advice or critical principles to ensure the preservation of core features while supporting schools to shape the model according to their needs and limitations, including difficulties in IT access, PSHE structures and other time constraints. Schools suggestions for adaptations<sup>10</sup> include using assemblies combined with PHSE sessions for the pre-guidance and additional pre-guidance sessions to ensure young people are better informed about their options before a guidance session.

*I think the process that we had to follow - the PSHE session, guidance and then follow-up I would do again next year. I would replicate the process, but I would modify because we just don't have the time resource. (Senior Leader)*

*PHSE is an hour, and they have six weeks of careers. So, we could just do an assembly to the whole year group, and we go this is what you're going to be doing in PSHE. I suppose there is a four-stage but the first stage you get a brief introduction but don't get to play with it. (Careers Adviser)*

*I think I will probably do more than one pre guidance session... spending longer on each of the different options that are available to them post-16 or post 18. Just for them to come into the meeting more informed because even having done the pre guidance you still have to run through the options with them and remind them, and that takes up time. (Senior Leader)*

Schools also discussed adaptation to the provision of personal one-to-one guidance to enable them to support a greater number of students. Other suggestions included modifying the time allocations for red students, starting the process in Year 10, running small group sessions for green students, and, running additional topic-focused pre-guidance sessions, for example, on gap years or Apprenticeship. While schools appreciated small groups for guidance deviated from the model, they recognised that retaining alternative guidance methods would enable them to offer ad-hoc guidance to any students who subsequently required it.

*You might have to think about like it pragmatically... You might have to think that the green ones do get something different. So, some sort of group meetings I think is the way forward with that and other ways that you manage rather than an individual one. (Senior Leader)*

*Could you have potentially something where students get directed initially to go and have the conversation with a tutor or subject which is then recorded on the system? Then the careers lead picks up the amber and red and greens if they need further support. (Senior Leader)*

*I've suggested we bring that forward to the end of year 10 when it is not so manic. If people are starting to think about the careers earlier, then we should potentially be hitting that point when they come in September and they're focused on what they're going to do in Year 11. (Careers Adviser)*

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<sup>10</sup> See section 5.5 for more detailed suggestions of adaptations.

During the project, many schools had continued to buy-in in personal guidance from an external adviser to add capacity. While schools valued having the option to add capacity, they were eager to ensure that external provision aligned with their use of Careerpivot and the Pathway Planner to facilitate tracking and follow-up.

*We also buy-in guidance and we bought in some guidance from an advisor, and it is purely because I can't see everybody. So, in the plan for next year, there is still several days of guidance that's going to be required. My concern with that though is it doesn't have the impact [because] there's not really a process to follow up. (Careers Adviser)*

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. SUPPORT FOR GATSBY

The evaluation did not specifically intend to evaluate the model's impact on the Gatsby Benchmarks<sup>11</sup>; however, the model has closely aligned to Gatsby Benchmark 8 'Personal Guidance'. The Gatsby Benchmarks offer schools an opportunity to assess their progress but as one senior leader acknowledged, sustaining and developing the quality of their careers education and guidance is part of a cycle of continuous quality improvement and better support for students.

The Benchmarks 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 and work-related learning providers
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

*In terms of Gatsby 3, I think Careerpivot helps me understand what each student needs once they've done the Pathway Planner. (Senior Leader)*

*The main one is Benchmark 8, but Careerpivot as a whole has helped us with 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 in some ways with information about universities and things. But yeah, it's helped us in lots of different ways. (Senior Leader)*

*Gatsby 2, the use of Labour Market information has been embedded within the meetings. Gatsby 3, meeting the needs of the individual students. That's a big one for us because up until this point we were organising workshops.... It was quite generic. It was its meeting their needs, but this is much more personalised. So, it's really supporting that as well. Benchmark 1 - having that clear strategy in place. It is strategic. (Senior Leader)*

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<sup>11</sup> Gatsby Charitable Foundation. (2014). Good Career Guidance. London. The Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

Schools recognised that while the project most explicitly supported their achievement of Gatsby 8, the model and the broader work with Careerpivot has also helped schools move towards achieving Gatsby 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7.

## 5.2. HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE STAGED CAREERS GUIDANCE MODEL?

Schools involved in the project recognise the Careerpivot brand as a quality careers resource which is regularly updated by skilled and knowledgeable careers professionals. Schools were keen to be involved in the project, were proactively engaged and acknowledged the quality of processes and evidence which had underpinned the development of the model.

Schools embraced the three-stage of the Pathway Planner model, recognising the clarity of the process for providing individual personal guidance to students. Careers Advisers and senior leaders acknowledged that the three-stages ensured they could provide students with a coherent and integrated package of personalised guidance. Due to the timing of the evaluation, the follow-up in some schools had been minimal. However, this was viewed as a core element and an aspect to sustain in the future.

Schools value the detailed and accurate records that enabled them to monitor delivery and map key trends. Overall, there was much positive feedback from schools regarding the effectiveness of the model for providing a coherent programme of personal guidance.

## 5.3. HOW IS THE MODEL CONTRIBUTING TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR CAREER CHOICES AND SUPPORTING THEIR FORWARD CAREER PLANNING?

The delivery of the model draws on the resources and tools of the Careerpivot website to enable young people to explore a range of educational and career opportunities. Students find Careerpivot to be highly accessible and comprehensive and enjoy the ease of which they can explore information through the three homepage access points. Students value the breadth of information available and that the careers discussion draws on up-to-date knowledge.

Young people were also extremely positive about the support from the wider project and their Careers Adviser. Overwhelmingly, the students valued the one-to-one personal guidance sessions and recognised how they had enabled them to explore and plan their future career and education options. They recognised the tailored nature of the discussions and how it was focused distinctively on their situation and needs. Students commented on feeling listened to, being supported and encouraged, and gaining knowledge about themselves and their future possibilities. The young people had developed an understanding of the relationship between their current/future studies and moving successfully into employment:

*I feel like I have more knowledge around my potential career paths and how I can get there. Had encouragement to look at degrees and weigh up which is most suitable (Year 12 student)*

*Having an environment with a professional and having space where you could map out exactly where you're planning on going was extremely helpful and put a lot of things in perspective. Overall, the guidance session was relatively supportive with what I have been working towards, and I have left with possibilities that I would not have had - had the guidance session not taken place. (Year 12 student)*

*From not knowing what to do at the start and not wanting to go to sixth form it has helped me massively (Year 11 student)*

The student comments were mirrored by the Careers Advisers and SLT, with many viewing Careerpivot and the model as an integral aspect of their future career strategy. Schools recognise Careerpivot as a well-respected and successful resource which they could embed within their whole school careers strategy.

*Careers in this school is certainly a lot higher on the agenda because of this project and Careerpivot, which has given us a framework. We now have somebody overseeing and driving careers. It's going from a lot of sort of interfacing with the kids to this strategic model about how we get proper careers education and guidance to all the kids. From my point of view, it's doing exactly what I want. As a strategic tool, it's perfect. (School Senior Leader)*

The feedback from students about their participation in the project was overwhelmingly positive. For most young people, the personalised one-to-one discussion with the Careers Adviser had the most significant impact - they felt listened to, supported, and that the advice was impartial and aspirational. The guidance session encouraged them to take ownership of their decision-making, and the co-creation of the action points had enabled them to move their ideas forward.

*The reason I like Careerpivot is it's because it's for the students... It's about the kids taking ownership of their own pathway. (Senior Leader)*

*It [the guidance session] introduced me to the jobs I can take with the subjects I choose and gave me a range of information about my next steps" (Year 11 student)*

#### 5.4. WHETHER YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS FEEL BETTER INFORMED AND MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR NEXT STEPS AS A RESULT OF THE SUPPORT?

Young people who took part in the focus groups reflected positively on the impact on their confidence to make an informed decision about their future education and career. Students attributed their increased confidence to a greater awareness of opportunities, understanding potential courses and knowing where they could locate further information. Some Year 11 students were concerned about their ability to gain the grades they required to move on to their planned route but felt the personal guidance had enabled them to map an alternative plan should they not achieve their grades. Some young people discussed developing a better sense of themselves, what they wanted to achieve and the career and educational opportunities that appealed to them as a result of being involved with the project:

*I feel more knowledgeable about myself and what I want to do in the future (Year 12 student)*

*I feel more confident in moving forward and making a decision for my future now I have all the information (Year 12 student)*

*Being part of this project has helped me to understand what I am going to do in the future and made me feel relieved and more confident (Year 11 student)*

*It has given me a clearer understanding of my future paths but also made me more aware of more opportunities. (Year 11 student)*

An internal Year 11 expected destinations survey had found that all the students who had taken part in the project had a clear plan for after Year 11. This differed from the wider Year 11 cohort and was viewed as a direct result of involvement in the project.

*We have just done our Year 11 destination survey and there are only about four or five kids that have not got an idea, which is so different from normal. (Senior Leader)*

## 5.5. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ON-GOING SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MODEL?

All six schools had built strong working relationships with the Careerpilot team, and there were many examples of the embedding of Careerpilot within the school's broader careers strategy. All six schools are keen to have continued access to the Pathway Planner and have developed plans to sustain the model within their Careers Strategy for 2020-2021.

- Strategic process for the delivery of personal guidance: All the pilot schools viewed the model as a useful structure for enabling the provision of coherent student-led personal guidance. Schools recognised that the model had the potential to be fully integrated as part of their career guidance programme. In all schools, the model was supported by a senior leader with on-going work and support to ensure the involvement of the wider teaching team. The Careerpilot team were responding to school requests to support the integration of the model and Careerpilot resources through providing tutor training and curriculum resources.
- Integration of the Careerpilot personal guidance model: Schools praised the integrated model with Careerpilot, and the personal guidance model seen as fundamental within their on-going Careers Guidance strategy. Senior Leadership Teams and Careers Advisers were keen to integrate the model within their Careers Guidance strategy and to aid their achievement of the Gatsby benchmarks. All schools have developed a sustainability plan with their ideas for tailoring the model to reflect their individual school culture and broader strategy.
- The impact of the Level 6 Careers Adviser: The newly trained Level 6 Careers Adviser was integral to the school's on-going careers strategy. The skills and knowledge the Careers Adviser had gained both through the Level 6 qualification and the broader support of the Careerpilot team and mentors were highly praised. An internal, qualified and skilled Careers Adviser was viewed as beneficial for integrating personal guidance and as a resource to enable the delivery of the broader careers programme. In some schools, the Careers Adviser is planning to deliver CPD for teachers and tutors to enhance understanding and support for careers guidance.
- Identification of student needs: The Pathway Planner/Triage Tool and the resulting student data was supporting schools to identify the students in need of additional support and the nature of their needs. This was enabling schools to direct resources towards students uncertain of their future direction and to collate information on possible interventions to ensure students were receiving appropriate support and help. For example, several schools were considering offering tailored sessions for small groups of students on specific topics in response to the knowledge gaps highlighted.

- **Staffing and resource implications:** Schools recognised the staffing and resource implications for a whole school model yet were committed to exploring adaptations to ensure the future delivery of the model and longer-term sustainability. Suggested adaptations include, for example:
  - Amend guidance session length to ensure all eligible students have access to personal guidance.
  - Introduce pre-guidance session at the end of Year 10.
  - Introduce ad hoc guidance for Year 13 who may require intervention.
  - Build the capacity of teaching staff to use Careerpilot and to take responsibility for students triaged as green.
  - Use data from the Pathway Planner to provide responsive targeted student workshops, for example, applying to college, finding an Apprenticeship.
  - Allocate monthly focused tutor time for Year 11 to focus on updating the Pathway Planner and action plans.

## 6. REFLECTIONS

The design of the whole-school model responded to emerging practice on optimising the impact of personal guidance highlighted by the Careers and Enterprise research 'Personal Guidance: what works?'. The model intended to address the themes of integration; space and time; and, preparation and feedback. This evaluation evidences good practice concerning these themes:

- **Integration:** Careerpilot and the personal guidance model is being integrated into the school's strategic career guidance programme. The supported by senior leaders and the involvement of teaching staff is helping schools to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks. Several schools indicated how Careerpilot and the project supported their work with parents. A skilled and qualified Careers Adviser was also significant in a school's ability to offer a coherent, integrated programme. Having a level 6 qualified Careers Advisers employed and integrated into schools is enhancing relationships with staff and students and developing the role of careers within the school.
- **Space and time.** Most of the Careers Advisers had appropriate areas to work in, although some had experienced issues in gaining access to IT suites. Students were familiar with the careers space and had made use of drop-in opportunities and e-guidance tools. The reporting tools in Careerpilot were central to recording the ad-hoc personal guidance and in ensuring schools were effectively monitoring the delivery of personal guidance. Furthermore, the reporting tools enabled Career Advisers to prioritise different groups of students, such as those with few career ideas or plans. Regarding the time available for personal guidance, the triage tool was helpful with guiding the time allocation and ensuring the Career Adviser preparation for the guidance discussion. Pre-guidance was delivered at a critical decision time for Y11 and Y12.
- **Preparation and feedback.** The three-stage model ensures that young people are adequately prepared for their personal guidance session. Registering young people on Careerpilot, allowing them to explore a range of information, and complete the Pathway Planner provided effective preparation for the guidance interview. This preparation enabled the Careers Adviser to direct the guidance towards crucial topics. The co-agreement of action points and reporting through Careerpilot has been helping young people to understand their next steps, and the involvement of tutors in this stage is helping to embed careers more broadly within the school community.

Capturing data accurately within Careerpilot ensures the school is collating accurate individual and cohort level data which can be shared when appropriate.

- While Effective interviews and Professionalism were not explicitly recognised as themes within the CEC bid, it is clear from the evaluation that the model has also supported these. The investment in a Level 6 qualified Career Adviser is helping to ensure the personal guidance interviews themselves are effective, neutral and informed.

## 7. FURTHER SUPPORT

The evidence from schools and students recognises the success of the model enabling Careerpilot to roll out the Pathway Planner Triage Tool to support staff in schools and colleges to prioritise personal guidance to meet individual student need.



Further information about the model, benefits, training and cost can be found at:

<https://careerpilot.org.uk/adviser-zone/new-pathway-planner-tool-information-resources>.

The Careerpilot team, along with partner schools, have also produced a range of high-quality case studies to support schools who are considering implementing the Pathway Planner Triage Tool:

<https://careerpilot.org.uk/adviser-zone/careers-and-enterprise-company-pg-bid/careers-and-enterprise-company-pg-bid/case-studies-evaluation-and-research>

### Top tips for anybody deciding to sign up to use the Pathway Planner model

**Tip 1:** Get SLT, Career Leader, Level 6 Adviser and tutor team buy in, by showing the benefits and impact of the Pathway Planner;

**Tip 2:** Ensure your school/college has access to Careerpilot and the Reporting Zone so you can set up groups and see reports;

**Tip 3:** Before the pre-guidance session get students registered on Careerpilot so they have an account and can be set up to access the Pathway Planner (just a 20 minute quick intro to Careerpilot and get registered session would do);

**Tip 4:** Schedule sessions in an IT room, at an appropriate time for the students in their decision-making process, of one hour, for all students who will be receiving the pre-guidance session which will include using the PP;

**Tip 5:** Allocate time to analyse results and book guidance sessions according to need (remember one session before 16 and one after to meet Gatsby 8 with a L6 adviser);

**Tip 6:** Record all bookings on the Careerpilot Pathway Planner so that the interventions are logged on the student's Pathway Planner timeline;

**Tip 7:** Record all guidance reports and action on the Careerpilot Reporting Zone so they can be seen by the students and any staff with access;

**Tip 8:** Give tutors or those doing follow-up access to Careerpilot so they can see the Career Tool and Pathway Planner report and add follow-up outcomes (takes 5 minutes per student). Train tutors (25 mins) to ask the 5 follow-up questions and log student responses on Careerpilot.

**Tip 9:** Set up evaluation to monitor the impact of the Pathway Planner model and guidance on students, tutors and other school outcomes.

**Tip 10:** Share Careerpilot Reports with parents.