

Executive Summary of the Evaluation of the Careers and Enterprise Company: Personal Guidance Fund - Phase 2

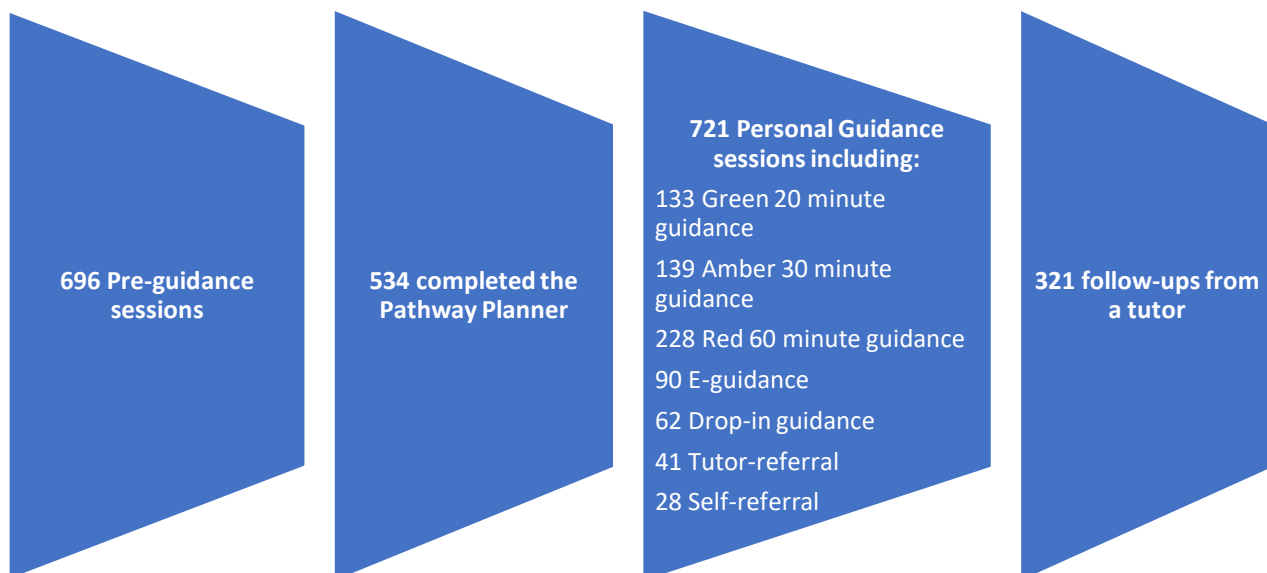
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Introduction

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, using triage, in 2019-20.

The CEC funding has supported the pilot of the model in six secondary schools in the South West. In 2019-20 it supported 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:

- 1. Pre-guidance Option Choice session:** All pilot students receive a one-hour structured online session starting 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. 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.
- 2. 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 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, Careerpilot recommended that schools plan personal guidance sessions with the following timings: Green (20 minutes), Amber (30 minutes) and for Red (60 minutes). The Career Adviser has access to the Pathway Planner results and the Careerpilot individual report to inform the discussion. At the end of the session, students receive a postcard with their co-determined action points and their Careerpilot profile is updated with action points and a comprehensive report.

- 3. Follow-up:** Four weeks after the personal guidance, a trained¹ 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 Careerpilot website and its reporting functions underpin the delivery of the personal guidance model. Students build an individual timeline in their Careerpilot 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.

To strengthen the Careers Guidance model and for on-going sustainability, a member of staff in each school² has been receiving training and mentoring to achieve the Level 6 Diploma of Careers Guidance and Development.

The approach to evaluation

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. It has explored:

- How effective is the staged careers guidance model?
- 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?

Methodology

The evaluation took place in two phases. The first phase gained student views immediately after the Pre-guidance Option Choice session and after attending the personal guidance discussion. The second phase provided a more in-depth consideration of the model, the impact on the young person and the views of the school. Students were interviewed in focus groups, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with school staff (including a member of the School Senior Leadership team and the Career Adviser).

The Pre-guidance Option Choice survey was completed by 236 Year 11 and 161 Year 12 students. The Personal Guidance survey was completed by 188 Year 11 and Year 12 student. 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. The six focus groups consisting of 42 students drawn from a mix of Year 11 and Year 12, took place in March 2020.

Findings

How has the model supported schools achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks?

The model has closely aligned to Gatsby Benchmark 8 'Personal Guidance' and has supported schools' achievement of this Benchmark. It has also helped schools move towards achieving Gatsby Benchmarks 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7.

¹ Trained to use Careerpilot and the Pathway Planner.

² 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 effective is the staged careers guidance model?

Schools recognise the Careerpilot brand as a quality careers resource which is regularly updated by skilled and knowledgeable careers professionals. Schools were keen to be involved, 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 SLTs 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.

Careers Advisers valued the effectiveness of the Pre-guidance Option for preparing students for Personal 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.

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)

Furthermore, having access to timely information from the Pathway Planner ensured they could focus on students who were most in 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. 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.

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 one in particular, who is 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 Advisor)

Schools value the detailed and accurate records that enabled them to monitor delivery and map key trends. For example, some schools had begun to collate data on student job/course interests, student concerns about careers and gaps in knowledge. This was enabling schools to be responsive to the specific needs within their wider Y11 and Y12 cohorts and develop an appropriate responsive action plan. Overall, there was much positive feedback from schools regarding the effectiveness of the model for providing a coherent programme of personal guidance.

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)

The model is a complex process, so the evaluation focused on feedback on the component parts – the Pre-guidance Option Choice, the Personal Guidance and the Follow-up.

Pre-guidance Option Choice session

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 futures³ enabling young people to take full advantage of the time with an Adviser.

³ There was little difference between the responses by students in Year 11 and Year 12.

- 90.2% of students told us the Your Future Career video was a good 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 choice 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 Choice session Quite to Extremely Useful.

Personal Guidance

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 student 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.
- 95.8% of students agreed they felt more confident about their plan for after Y11 or 6th Form.
- 84.4% of students felt that they had enough time in the personal guidance.

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 the 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.

Follow-up

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. One school sought permission from the students for their parent/guardian to be informed of the career discussion and action points which the students viewed as helpful.

Students recognised that having a tutor check their progress was beneficial⁴ 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 Adviser⁵. Some students suggested that ad-hoc virtual contact, for example, through messages and social media, may help remind them to look at Careerpilot 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. One challenge was ensuring tutors could utilise Careerpilot to ensure adequate recording of follow-up activity.

How is this 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 Careerpilot website to enable young people to explore a range of educational and career opportunities. Students find Careerpilot to be highly accessible

⁴ Due to the timing of the evaluation some young people had not yet been follow-up by their tutors.

⁵ 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.

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.

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)

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 this 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.

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.

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 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.

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)

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.

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)

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 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.

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 support of 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 focused themes within the Careerpilot 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.

Careers in this school is certainly a lot higher on the agenda because of this project and Careerpilot which has given us a framework. We now have somebody now overseeing and driving careers and it's going from a lot of sort of interfacing with the kids to actually 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)

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://www.careerpilot.org.uk/adviser-zone/pathway-planner-tool-gatsby-benchmark-8/new-pathway-planner-triage-tool>

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>.

The full report can be found at <https://careerpilot.org.uk/adviser-zone/careers-and-enterprise-company-pg-bid/careers-and-enterprise-company-pg-bid/case-studies-evaluation-and-research>.

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 impacted on young people's future career ideas.