

**New Horizons - Careers  
education provision in areas of  
social deprivation: a report on  
efficacy.**

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## **Abstract**

Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) has undergone many reforms in a little more than a century of its existence in England. The most recent evolution of this sees the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection framework explicitly use research carried out by the Gatsby Foundation (Holman, 2014) that provides a series of eight benchmarks to used as an informed framework on which to assess CEIAG provision.

This paper uses a systematic literature review to evaluate the CEIAG provision of secondary schools in the East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber regions. Producing a narrative account that suggests that success under the Ofsted inspection framework and Gatsby benchmarks are insufficiently effective to address the CEIAG needs of school communities in areas of social deprivation. This report highlights shortcomings caused by a national focus on supporting individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds; resulting in current advice falling-short in helping schools address deeply-ingrained social disadvantage in communities that have long-standing factors restricting equitable access to impactful CEIAG-based experiences throughout Secondary and FE education.

Conclusions of shared best practice, made with considerations to common themes observed across successful CEIAG providers, and recommendations to improve CEIAG practice in Secondary schools serving communities in areas of social deprivation are made to promote effective provision that considers the challenges of meeting the needs of large numbers of disadvantaged students.

## Introduction and Aims

### 1.1 Introduction

'Careers education' has been the victim of diverse understandings as to what career education may comprise, both in concept and practice. Over the last decade, the term has been interpreted differently by researchers (Andrews, 2011; Hutchinson, 2012; Sultana, 2013). Hutchinson (2013) conceptualises this as a triad of career-related learning, comprising of careers education, work-related learning, and careers information and guidance. These are achieved through self-development, exploration and management, the discovery of types of work, and developing skills *for* work and *through* work experience. Hooley *et al.* (2014) supports Hutchinson's (2013) concepts, describing 'careers guidance' as

*"...activities which support individuals to learn about education and employment and plan for their future lives, learning and work".*

The term currently used for 'careers education' across stakeholders is 'Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)'. It is intended to prepare students for life in the workplace by providing knowledge, understanding and soft skills required to make informed choices and plans for their future learning and career. Both Hutchinson (2013) and Hooley *et al.* (2014) fit the Gatsby report's (Holman, 2014) interpretation of the purpose of CEIAG, and have been adopted in this paper.

The delivery of CEIAG has taken many forms over a little more than a century of government-led provision. Currently, the Gatsby benchmarks (Holman, 2014), which the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) have adopted as 'best practice' under the new school inspection guidelines (Office for Standards in Education, 2019), provide a picture of what should be expected from schools with regard to CEIAG. However, with budgets for CEIAG being reportedly cut by £300 million (Gardener, 2017) there are many challenges faced by schools to provide an effective provision. Among them is the disparity in the outcomes for those students from low socio-economic status. While this is an issue that features heavily in government reports and guidance, and a focus on these students is found across CEIAG literature, it is aimed at individuals rather than communities. Subsequently, this compounding-issue presents unique challenges for schools in areas of social deprivation across England and Wales, where large proportions of their students fall into the pupil premium or free school-meals (FSM) categories that the current research is centred upon.

## **1.2 Aims of this systematic review**

Current research and literature around CEIAG and social inequality is aimed at addressing the needs of individual students within a cohort. In many communities in England and Wales the socioeconomic demographics of a cohort present inherent challenges for schools serving them. Casting an eye back to CEIAG budgets, one of the challenges is for schools to maximise student CEIAG exposure to those that require effective interventions, when there numbers of pupil premium and FSM students are higher than the national average.

Teach First, the Education Endowment Federation, and Careers and Enterprise Company have all carried out extensive reports to look at the efficacy of CEIAG education. While these are in-depth and comprehensive in their nature, there is an absence of advice produced by these reports on how CEIAG education should be structured in order to be effective in areas of social deprivation, not just the benefits for individual 'NEETs' – students Not in Education, Employment, or Training.

To that end, the aims of this paper are to evaluate the CEIAG provision across two areas of social deprivation in order to establish the efficacy of programmes from schools that are deemed to be succeeding in this area of inspection, according to Ofsted, and establish what best practice might look like to ensure that the needs of students are met, despite the inherent challenges CEIAG faced in schools face with increased numbers of disadvantaged students within their communities.

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 *The birth of CEIAG as part of the 'welfare state'***

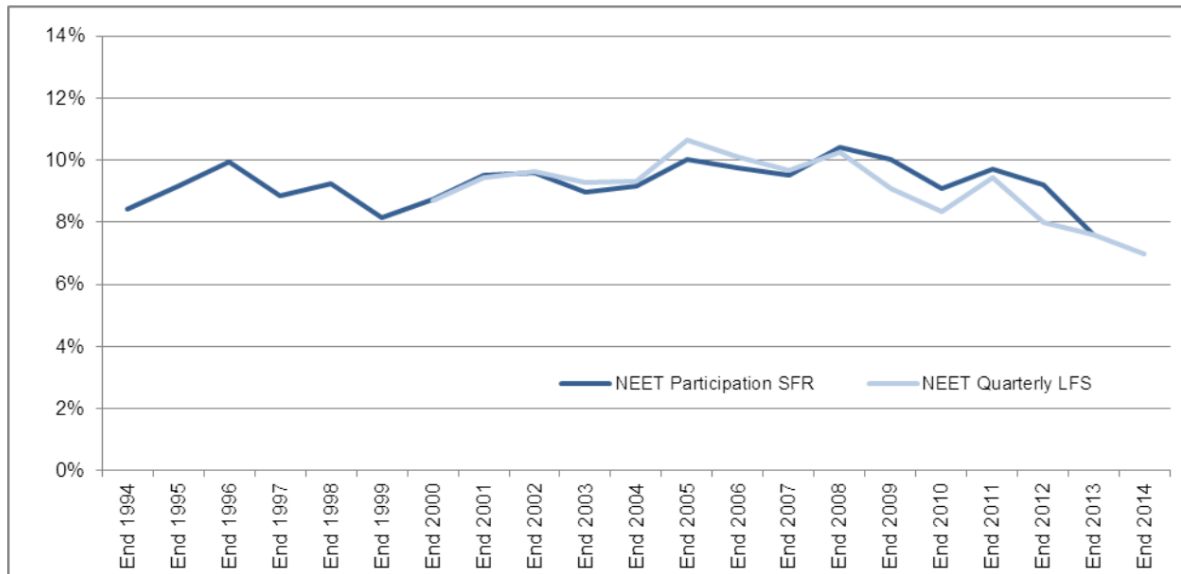
According to Roberts (2013), the Choice of Employment Act 1910 marked the birth of modern CEIAG. This piece of legislation accompanied the Labour Exchanges Act of 1909, where elements of voluntary organisations saw their philanthropy organised into what we now refer to as the 'welfare state', ensuring that the support provided by such organisations were rolled out across the country for the benefit of all. With the typical school-leaving age being a mere thirteen-years old, the local education authorities (LEAs) created Juvenile Employment Services, the fore-runner to today's modern CEIAG providers.

## **2.2 The changing face of CEIAG provision in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Careers guidance has a chequered past, certainly with two major overhauls in the last two decades. Prior to the turn of the millennium, the latest incarnation of CEIAG guidance saw central government funded local independent providers to provide the CEIAG guidance for schools and young people (Roberts, 2013). Following the Learning and Skills Act (2010), the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, introduced the Connexions strategy and Connexions Service to the country declaring that “The youth support service will be our frontline policy for young people” (Department for Education and Employment, 2000). The aim was to provide the highest standard of education and training for young people to support them into adulthood, while offering financial encouragement to remain in education. At the heart of the Connexions Service was a network of Personal Advisers that would support the transition of this nation’s youth through to adulthood – providing a solid start to their lives. This was affirmed by David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment;

*“Our goal is that young people should leave [secondary school] equipped for the challenges of the 21st Century. Young people must be prepared for life in the fullest sense - learn how to contribute to their family, their community and the wider society; have the skills, interests and confidence to use their leisure time positively and above all, learn to respect themselves and those around them and so become caring and active citizens - adults to be proud of”*  
(Department for Education and Employment, 2000).

The New Labour government realised that during the period Connexions was in operation it was not the resounding success that the government had hoped for, as they found it impossible to reduce the number of 16-18 year-old NEET below 9% nationally for any significant period of time (*figure 1*) (Department for Education, 2015); a critical issue in areas of social deprivation, as socio-economic status is a recognised factor for dropping out of education, employment, and training (Bathgate and Bird, 2013; Allen, 2014).



Source: Statistical First Release (SFR) 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England' and analysis of Labour Force Survey (LFS), Oct-Dec Quarter.

Figure 1 – NEET historical series for 16-18 year olds: England, end 1994 – end 2014 (Department for Education, 2015)

The problematic nature of Connexions highlighted that the CEIAG guidance provided to young people in the UK was “severely lacking” (Sainsbury, in Holman, 2014). Shortly after the 2010 general election, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government brought an end to the Connexions Service, following the Education Act (2011) by streamlining the responsibility of Local Authorities to solely assisting the most vulnerable who were at risk of disengaging from education and the workplace (Education Committee, 2013); the responsibility for CEIAG guidance was therefore transferred to schools in 2011.

In 2013, Sir John Holman was commissioned with leading the Gatsby Foundation’s report on good career guidance. The aim of the report was to produce pragmatic actions which had the ability to improve CEIAG guidance in England. Upon the report’s completion, the Good Career Guidance report (Holman, 2014) presented “The eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance” (henceforth referred to as ‘*the Gatsby benchmarks*’) that would establish a good CEIAG guidance provision in England when measured by international standards. Around the same time as the Gatsby report was released, the UK government funded the establishment of the Careers Advice Company to oversee the provision of CEIAG advice and education for young people between the ages of 12 and 18-years old (Department for Education, 2014). This organisation is tasked with advising educational establishments, and increasing the level of employer input into CEIAG advice. In addition to feeding back to the government on the level of engagement between schools and employers.

After publication of the Gatsby benchmarks in 2014, Ofsted inspectors used them to inform their judgements of effective CEIAG provision while assessing school performance in the areas of both '*Personal development, behaviour and welfare*' and '*Outcomes for pupils*' within their inspection framework (Office for Standards in Education, 2015). However, there was no compulsion for schools to adopt the Gatsby benchmarks as a standard for CEIAG, leaving the individual educational establishments to justify the provision provided for students.

### **2.3 What forms the blueprint of CEIAG provision in England today?**

With the introduction in 2019 of Ofsted's 'new inspection framework', the Gatsby Benchmarks (Holman, 2014) have been fully embedded into the 2019 School Inspection Handbook where Ofsted inspectors assess whether a school is "*providing an effective careers programme in line with the government's statutory guidance on careers advice...*" (Office for Standards in Education, 2019). As such, the blueprint of good quality career guidance provided by schools since September 2019 has the following areas that must be evidenced to demonstrate an effective CEIAG provision:

1. *A stable careers programme.*
2. *Learning from career and labour market information.*
3. *Addressing the needs of each pupil.*
4. *Linking curriculum learning and careers.*
5. *Encounters with employers and employees.*
6. *Experiences of workplaces.*
7. *Encounters with further and higher education.*
8. *Personal guidance.*

These eight benchmarks require consideration of their efficacy themselves. While they form the framework in which schools are forced to operate due to the nature of Ofsted inspections, they are not all fit for purpose without consideration to the impact they have on school-communities:

'*A stable careers programme*' has obvious benefits; stability provides comparability between cohorts for KPI analysis and efficacy metrics - planned programme can be developed and improved upon.

'*Learning from career and labour market information (LMI)*' does have confounding challenges. Moote and Archer (2018), Sultana (2013) and Baruch and Vardi (2015), all



highlight that there is a risk of CEIAG reinforcing the cycle of social inequality or being a simple driver for acceptance and preparation for the workplace rather than being the driver of social change and reform that it proposes to be. While the Gatsby benchmarks use LMI to advise on how numerous the vacancies in a sector are, and how much they are likely to be paid, they do not seek to inform young people of the different types of employment contract that exist; for example, how a zero-hours contract or working as a sub-contractor affects an employee's rights. Information such as this is imperative to ensuring that young people are aware of the less positive side of the workplace, and how to guard themselves against this with their careers choices.

*'Addressing the needs of each pupil'* is a problematic benchmark, in that the needs of each pupil may be beyond the statutory guidance. While Holman (2014) states that CEIAG should embed equality and diversity throughout, there are blind-spots that need to be addressed to ensure all have equal access to experiences, especially in STEM (Baars, Mulchay, and Bernardes, 2016).

*'Linking curriculum learning and careers'* places pressure on departments to write careers into their curricula, delivering CEIAG education through their subject. This cannot be done effectively without some level of CEIAG training, and also fails to recognise that CEIAG delivery requires a discrete provision that delivers aspects that cannot be incorporated into subject-specific curricula, and to consolidate elements of learning encountered through this cross-curricular method (Andrews, 2020). Hanson *et al.* (2019) recognises the need for a cultural-shift within teaching to facilitate this goal. Without funding for training, and whole-school buy-in, this benchmark is problematic to achieve. Whereas, subjects with a perceived lack of relevance to the workplace will have a negative impact on achieving this completely.

*'Encounters with employers and employees'* presents emergent challenges at this stage of CEIAG. Hanson *et al.* (2019) notes that the definition of 'meaningful encounters' has differing interpretations across schools. This lack of clarity has the potential for disparity in experiences for students, further disadvantaging schools in areas of social deprivation as access to encounters with sufficient meaning to make an impact on their students may prove an additional challenge. This challenge also applies to *'experiences of workplaces'* and *'encounters with FE and HE'* where financial and time budgets present a challenge for schools to facilitate these benchmarks with a level of efficacy.

While Holman (2019) provides what appears to be a sensible 'checklist', there are considerable limitations to approaching the benchmarks as a 'tick-box exercise'. Indeed,

Holman's work was 'guidance' not designed as an accountability measure to be used by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in schools (Holman, in Whittaker, 2016). While the CEIAG sector has carried out high-profile surveys and reports into the nature of CEIAG provision with both Gatsby and the Career Development Institute's (2015) *Survey of Career Education and Guidance in Schools and Links with Employers*, these focus on the perspectives of both school leaders and CEIAG professionals. There are few studies that have sought to investigate the student experience of CEIAG (Moote and Archer, 2018). These are arguably the individuals whose voices we should be hearing when seeking to provide a CEIAG provision that is '*addressing the needs of each pupil*' and providing '*personal guidance*', not only under the new Ofsted inspection framework, but also from a moral standpoint where we are denying a level of agency to young people when seeking to find answers for their own futures.

## **2.4 Good jobs – definitions vs assumptions**

When one discusses career prospects it is important to cut determine clear definitions of commonly used and often politicised, yet rarely defined phraseology. In 2018, the UK government published the Good Work Plan (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2018) a clear definition of what the "good job" or "good employment" phrase meant in real terms, as a response to the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices (Taylor *et al.* 2017). Both agree that the approach that should be adopted in the government's Industrial Strategy should be underpinned by an common set of measures which determine the quality of work. It is my opinion that when discussing "good jobs" the CEIAG sector must also adopt these five principles as their definition to ensure parity. These principles are uncomplex, and address overall worker satisfaction; good pay; participation and progression; wellbeing, safety and security; and voice and autonomy. Yet charities and organisations that have historically worked to change the educational disadvantage seen in areas of social deprivation, such as Teach First, use the term "good job" without a definition in their message, alongside the push from the government to increase the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds that attend university. This has led to a conflation between the two terms within the education sector, likely caused by the lens through which teachers and career advisors view the success they see within themselves or their own social circles. Perhaps pushing against the historical differing expectations for communities of students based upon social class (Archer and Francis, 2007; Archer et al. 2010).

## 2.5 The context of the East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber

The East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber are two neighbouring regions in the United Kingdom. Both have coastal regions, former centres of heavy industry, and mining towns across their geographical area. Likewise, both regions have experienced the same loss of industry, the closures of the coal-mines, and a general lack of investment from central government over decades. This has had a negative impact on options for employment; limiting the career-choices open to residents, resulting in social deprivation becoming widespread. It is the volume of students within school communities that require a need for additional careers intervention which presents a real challenge for CEIAG leaders. As a typical example of these communities, School X is a smaller than average-sized East Midlands secondary school with circa 599 students. Forty-eight percent of these students are supported by the pupil premium, which places the school well above the national average for accommodating the educational and pastoral needs of students from low socio-economic backgrounds, or who are looked after by the local authority. However, the number of DSEN students at the school with a statement of special educational needs is below national average (Ofsted, 2019).

The school serves a catchment area comprising the three most disadvantaged wards in town, which are among the twenty percent most deprived wards in England (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2015); when considering the deprivation measure of education, skills and training, the Academy's catchment area falls into the ten percent most deprived areas nationally. The surrounding areas of the academy have low levels of educational attainment – 13.3% of the population have 'no qualifications' – significantly higher than the national figure of 8%. Furthermore, 11.6% of children live in households that are 'workless' (Office for National Statistics, 2020). In working households, the average salary is 36.5% lower than the national average for England (Office for National Statistics, 2020) and 38.25% of households are paid less than the 'living wage' (social mobility index data). This is a common picture across former coal-mining towns. Foden et al. (2014) found that residents in similar communities had an increased likelihood of employment in "lower-grade or manual occupations", and were "more likely to lack higher grade qualifications". With regard to employment figures, School X's community echoes that of other former coal-mining communities. Foden *et al.* (2014) further demonstrated that job density was also well below the national average, with an average across these communities of a mere 50 jobs per 100 residents of working age. However, it should be noted that a commuter-trend was found within these communities by Gore et al. (2007), where smaller

towns feed directly into the commuter-flow for larger cities in the region. Foden *et al.* (2014) further highlight the lower employment rate in the regions where these former coal-mining communities exist, and an higher percentage of manual labour when comparing both factors to the national average.

Finally, over 31% of households within a one mile radius of the academy have at least one person living with a disability or a long term health condition. Public Health England consider the area surrounding the academy to have a percentage of child poverty which is “significantly worse than England”. Similarly, other former coal-mining communities report “ill health or limitations on day-to-day activities” at a level almost double that of those in the South East of England. Furthermore, 7.9 percent of residents in these areas claim Disability Living Allowance; more than the 5.6 percent average across Britain, and 4.3 percent for the South East. (Foden *et al.*, 2014)

## **2.6 The impact of social deprivation on future career prospects**

There is a clear impact of social deprivation on young people with a timeline of disadvantage, from cradle to career<sup>1</sup>. The gap between low-income backgrounds and wealthier peers can be seen as far back as at 22 months old where a child’s development can be a predictor for their educational outcomes at age 26 (Feinstein, 2002). While this statistic is used by organisations such as Teach First to drive home the stark contrast created by family income with regards to outcomes, it must be recognised that this is a statistical prediction and cannot possibly predict accurate outcomes for all individuals. Indeed, this prediction fails to acknowledge that individuals also make life-choices that are not due to their academic outcomes. However, the Department for Education (2016) suggests school-preparedness correlates with income, with half a million children from low-income families proving to not be school-ready by five years-old – compounding pupil performance in reading, writing, and maths standards at KS2:

- Reading - Only 49% of pupils from low-income backgrounds, as opposed to 69% of wealthier peers;
- Writing – 59% of pupils from low income backgrounds, in comparison to 77% of wealthier peers;
- and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) – 57% of pupils from low income backgrounds, compared to 75% of wealthier peers.

<sup>1</sup> There is much data available on the many aspects of this, yet the literature shows a delay between the initial publishing of data by a department and the various departments looking at the data for aspects that concern them. All attempts have been made to use the most up-to-date data.

Therefore, prior to a student from a low-income family arriving at secondary school, there is a strong chance they fall behind wealthier peers academically; nor do many catch up, under-performing at GCSE on every measure. A third of disadvantaged students achieve five good GCSEs, (A\*-C; now 9-4) and only 24.5% achieved this level of pass in both English and maths; only 9.8% achieved the EBacc with passes at this level (Department for Education, 2018).

Ofsted gradings and locale data shows a distinct lack of 'Outstanding' schools in areas of social deprivation, as well as the large numbers of schools graded as 'Inadequate' or 'Requires Improvement' (Save the Children, 2012). This is an incomplete picture when it comes to the cause of the attainment gap; family background has a much more significant role than influencing the kind of education they receive in school. Just 20% of variability in pupil achievement can be attributed to school quality, the remaining 80% is attributed to 'pupil-level factors'; where they live, family background and income. The latter has a greater impact on pupil achievement than either gender or ethnicity. Therefore, the achievement gap between the poorest and most affluent pupils cannot be solved by simply having an 'Outstanding' educational provision for every child.

Continuing along the educational-timeline, further education compounds difficulties. For those on free school meals (FSM), almost one-in-three will have dropped out of education by the time they reach Year 13; yet only one-in-seven of those not eligible for FSM will have done so. Furthermore, pupils from low-income backgrounds are one-third more likely to finish education at age 16, even after controlling for GCSE attainment (Gadsby, 2017).

There are similar observable barriers that inhibit access to higher education too. A-levels continue to be the norm for access to higher education, particularly for the most selective universities and courses. It is no surprise that these hold the key to opening the door to leading professions. Therefore, we see young people from low-income backgrounds locked out of these opportunities without the qualifications or networks afforded to those accessing these opportunities. Indeed, around one in 200 pupils who have received FSM go on to achieve three As and Bs at A-level in what were the facilitating subjects<sup>2</sup> that Russell Group universities have historically looked for (Social Mobility Commission, 2014). These were dropped in favour of a broad-scope approach to A-level choices by the 24 Russell Group universities, that would support social mobility (Bloom, 2019; Whittaker, 2019). A compounding issue that contributes to the attainment gap at A-level is the uptake of students from low-income backgrounds that opt to pursue vocational post-16 qualifications; between 2006 and 2014 number of pupils completing BTECs trebled (Richards, 2016). While this rise

<sup>2</sup> English Literature, History, a Modern Foreign Language, a Classical Language, Maths and Further Maths, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, History, and Geography.

looks impressive, this is reflective of the government's implementation of the Education and Skills Act (2008) in the 2013 academic year.

Finally, university campuses are where we find young people with higher academic attainment (5+ A\*-C /9-4 GCSEs or equivalent including English and Maths) from GCSE onwards; here the disparity between low-income and better-off backgrounds remains. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2015) reports the government sought to double the percentage of disadvantaged students entering higher education from 13.6% to 27.2%; Bolton (2020) reported that 26.3% of (former FSM) disadvantaged pupils had entered university. Yet, this is not the last hurdle; the Higher Education Statistics Agency (2019) showed that disadvantaged young people were more likely to leave their university studies in their first year (8.8% of full-time first degree students under-21) compared to their more privileged peers (6.0%).

Higher education has changed since the birth of CEIAG over a century ago. Data from the last 30 years (Baldauf and Luchinskaya, 2019) shows that by 30 years-old, nearly one-in-two people participate in higher education; supported by the fact that the rise of full-time student (18-24 years old) numbers has been shown to have increased almost two-fold between 1992 (984,000) and 2016 (1.87 million) (Office for National Statistics, 2016). The Department for Education (2019) assert that *"the vast majority of graduates are still working in what are considered graduate jobs"*. While this claim is true for *all* graduates in the workforce, the picture for *recent* graduates is something those involved with CEIAG need to consider. There is now a paucity of graduate-level jobs in real-terms; analysis of ONS data (Office for National Statistics, 2020) shows that recent graduates who are working in in non-graduate roles across the East Midlands stands at 47.9%, with a further 43.7% in Yorkshire & The Humber.

School X is not unique, in as much as it serves the most disadvantaged communities in one of the many urban areas of the East Midlands. This is just one example of similar schools across regions of social deprivation within England, facing comparable challenges for their communities. For decades simplistic dichotomies have been used to describe geographical inequalities in England, such as the North/South divide; towns versus countryside and coastal regions; affluent areas versus poor ones. London and its commuter belt provides the best opportunities for young people getting into a job that pays well, with good benefits, working conditions, and with job security (Social Mobility Commission, 2016). London has advantages compared to many regions in the country despite disparity between London boroughs, with some suffering from levels of inequality more than others. However, the

levels of inequality are shown to be less than experienced by other areas of social deprivation (Social Mobility Commission, 2016). Regions like the East Midlands, and Yorkshire & The Humber, with their older industrial, mining towns, coastal communities and even cities, are entrenched social mobility cold-spots; as young people in these regions find their future prospects limited. Indeed, “England is a small nation characterised by a large divide” (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016). There is much work that needs to be done to address social disadvantage in this country before we can claim to have a level playing field of opportunity for all, regardless of their postcode.

The Social Mobility Index (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016) determines what impact growing up in a particular area has on a disadvantaged young person, and the chances of “*doing well*” as an adult. The report focuses on two types of outcome; educational attainment of those from poorer backgrounds, and outcomes achieved by adults in the area. The results for the East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber (*figure 2*) show a large proportion of the region falls into social mobility ‘cold-spots’, with twenty-six percent of the East Midlands and eleven percent of Yorkshire & The Humber falling into the bottom ten percent of performing areas. As a combined area of interest, the East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber has only one local authority in the top-fifty social mobility hot-spots, yet twenty local authorities in the bottom-fifty social mobility cold-spots. Demonstrating the fact that social deprivation is multi-faceted, and neighbouring areas can show great disparity for the life-chances of young people.

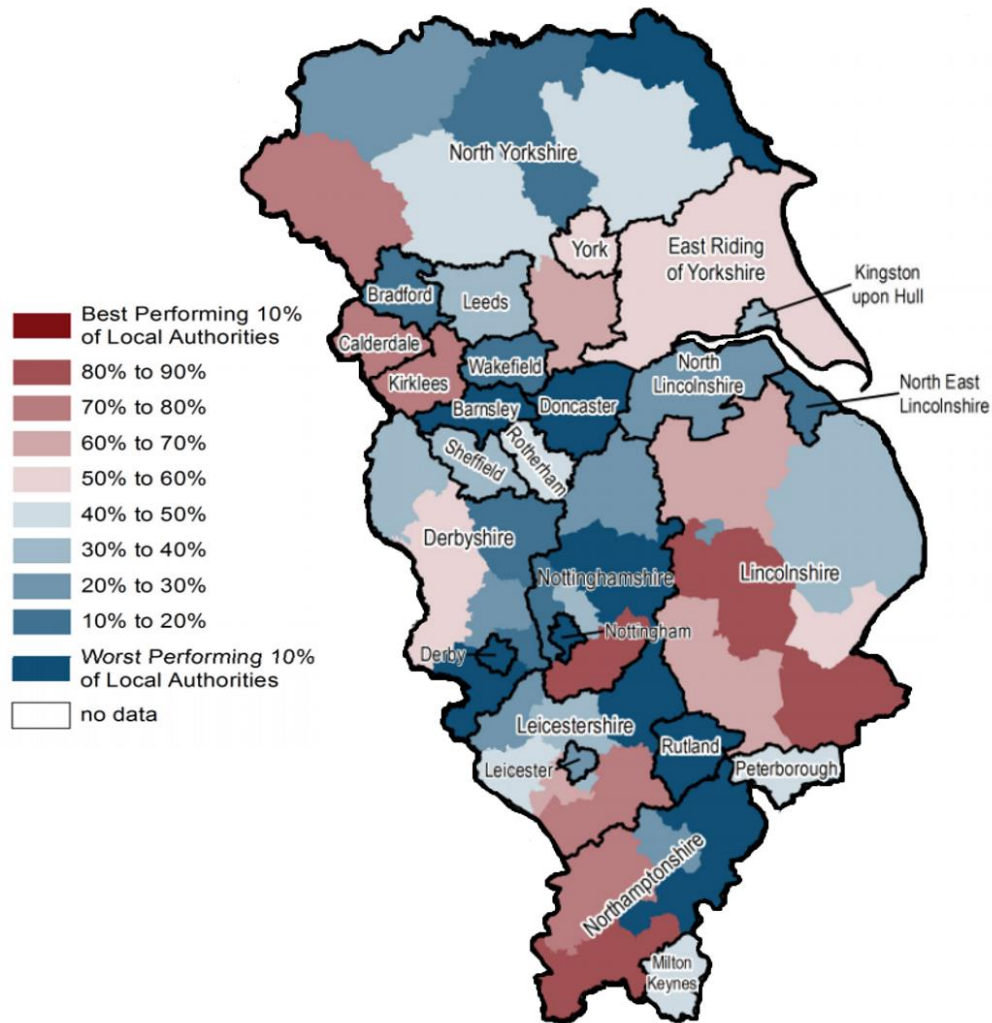


Figure 2 - A map of the East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber regions performance against the Social Mobility Index. Adapted from the Social Mobility Index (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2016)

## 2.7 Middle class ideology does not match working class reality

Statistics around the disparity between those experiencing social disadvantage and the well-off show the disadvantaged appear to be 'locked out' of the things that would lead to social mobility. However, the narrative around those living with social disadvantage comes from a middle-class positionality. Some papers certainly appear to be written by 'those that know best' about 'those that know no better'. Bourdieu and Richardson (1986) link cultural capital to one of the middle-class ideal; value is placed in social capital and status – the more middle-class defined capital, the more successful one's outcomes. This premise places limitations on, and promotes inequality and unfairness toward those who place value in other aspects of their lives. Failing to acknowledge positivity in working-class values and culture that arguably exist due to economic inequality. Holding values closely, while reaping the



benefits of experiences provided to enable access to the curriculum are key to self-identity and success. Cultural and social capital acquisition extends beyond the community, with schools having a key role in economically deprived areas.

McKenzie's (2016) work on the Nottingham St Ann's estate discusses how the community had their own cultural identity, with strong and distinct values deeply embedded in the psyche. When working with working-class communities, Robertson *et al.* (2008) also found "*Neighbourhood identities are underpinned by social class and social status, and these identities are very resilient to change*". Therefore, it can be seen that place plays a major role in working-class attitudes. When one considers that what Pearce and Milne (2010) defines as 'estatism' is:

*"The sense among estate residents that there are specific social dynamics of place associated with council estates, and that residents experience prejudice based upon where they live"*.

It only serves to underpin this sense of belonging when it is noted that not all the areas studied were council estates, this concept can easily be extrapolated to towns, counties and even the region in which young working-class people make their homes. Cole *et al.*'s (2011) work in low-income neighbourhoods reinforces how place was perceived as fundamental to identity. Ingram (2009) supports this in their work with working-class boys in Belfast. In particular their work in a comprehensive school mirrors the experiences I have had in the East Midlands; families that have lived alongside each other for several generations, forming an idea that 'everyone is close-knit, everyone knows everybody, you trust people'. Ingram (2009) goes on to state that weaving ones' identity into the emotional and physical part of a community provides a sense of security, despite the fact this has inherent limitations on prospects for what is commonly seen as a "good job" as defined by the Good Work Plan (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2018). This definition is not in keeping with Bourdieu and Richardson's (1986) middle-class ideals of a well-paid graduate role. However, the fact remains that areas of social deprivation lack the same career opportunities as more affluent regions.

Therefore, it can be argued that with poor investment from central government over decades, and such a focus on London and the South East by businesses, generations of families in former coastal, industrial, and mining communities feel that their prospects are limited, while also not wanting to move away from a central part of their own identity to pursue better prospects.

## **2.8 Challenges for schools providing CEIAG provision in areas of social deprivation**

There are distinct challenges for schools in areas of social deprivation in addressing the almost intrinsic nature of student educational and occupational choices that, according to Hutchinson *et al.* (2011), Hutchinson (2012) and Millward *et al.* (2006) show a pattern of being along social demographics. CEIAG provision walks the line between needing to assure students and their families that the opportunities and choices open to them are not fixed or determined by the young person's background, while acknowledging that often these factors are at play.

Holman (2014) is clear that the CEIAG provision should provide LMI for students to make informed career choices. This data highlights the number of jobs available within a sector, and illustrates jobs available locally. However, there is a real danger of this information pushing students into career-sectors that are characterised by low pay, long hours or poor job security due to geographically available employment. Indeed, the pitfalls of the UK's economic restructuring has led to 'poor work' (McDowell, 2003), 'donkey work' (Warhurst and Thompson, 1998) or 'junk jobs' (Lash and Urry, 1994) used to describe a reduction of access to reasonably well-paid work for workers with limited skills that relies on supplemented incomes from government employment benefit payments. McDowell (2003) further raises the prevalence of low-skilled jobs created since the 1990s providing an income that is sufficient to support a family. It is a challenge for CEIAG providers to be able to use LMI in order to effectively guide students into the government's own definition of 'good jobs' in the areas this paper seeks to address, while promoting high-aspirations for all students.

This same challenge is presented when students are provided workplace exposure through work experience. Work-related learning (WRL) became a requirement of the key stage 4 (KS4) curriculum in England and Wales in September 2004 (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2007). Yet, in the most recent publications focusing on WRL from the Department for Work and Pensions (2011) and research here shows a trend to look to protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act (2010), specifically age, gender, race, and disability. Francis *et al.* (2005) acknowledged how difficult it is to identify the socio-economic status of individuals within research. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the disparity of access to WRL based upon socio-economic background. However, there is some research that supports a correlation between school socio-economic status and the social status of the workplaces that students have access to for their work-experience placements (Hatcher and Le Gallis, 2008). It was also found that while there is evidence to support the fact that some

of this accessibility problem is linked to 'professional' workplaces being selective as to the educational establishments they offer places to, there is a self-perpetuating issue of students choosing their placement workplaces, and schools organising work-experience placements with employers based upon student vocational course selection at the end of key stage 3 – restricting vocational horizons by limiting their exposure to careers outside of their curriculum experiences.

While this is a limitation for broadening the horizons, it must be acknowledged that for students that often rely on their vocational subjects chosen for future employment, this work-experience is often key to discussions for further education places, apprenticeships, or post-16 employment.

## **2.9 Leading school CEIAG provision**

The Careers & Enterprise Company and Gatsby Charitable Foundation (2018) provides guidance for Careers Leaders to steer the CEIAG provision within an establishment, and ensure the school's CEIAG provision is delivered in a manner that meets the expectations of the Gatsby benchmarks (Holman, 2014). This role requires a leader to work collaboratively with, and to coordinate contributions from both external-stakeholders already mentioned and internal-stakeholders such as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Subject Leads and teachers, tutors, and pastoral teams. The key principle behind this important school-role is the quality assurance and evaluation of the careers programme for their establishment in a time where budgets are extensively cut (Gardener, 2017), and to record the impact of the programme on those benefitting from it. Due to the whole-school nature, and engagement with external-stakeholders, the Careers Leader needs to have the authority to influence development of the CEIAG strategy and implementation of the programme. This is realistically only achieved by being a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or reporting directly to them, with a clear link-governor as the governing body of a school has ultimate accountability for the CEIAG provision.

## Methodology

### 3.1 Research strategy

Due to the challenges presented during the 2020/2021 Covid-19 pandemic, and nationwide lockdown, it was decided to forego the proposed action-research element of seeing best practice in schools within the East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber regions. As such, this paper is a systematic review of publicly available Ofsted inspection reports for Secondary schools with 'Outstanding', 'Good' or 'Requires Improvement' ratings that have been considered to have effective CEIAG provision in HMI inspections. These were published between the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The start of this date range was chosen due to the Ofsted consultation draft of the new inspection framework in January 2019, where schools had been afforded a full 12 months to prepare for the use of the Gatsby benchmarks as new statutory guidance (Department for Education, 2017). For the purposes of this study "secondary schools" are institutions that educate eleven to eighteen-year olds in a non-specialist setting; the provision is for students within this age-range, in mainstream education.

Collected data was limited to two areas of high social deprivation and low social mobility – the East Midlands and the Yorkshire & The Humber educational regions, providing information on Ofsted judgements in a narrative format filtered for mentions of positive keywords. The resulting shortlist provided examples of practice meeting the Gatsby benchmarks (Holman, 2014) to interrogate each schools' CEIAG provisions through the information within both the Ofsted reports and the information published on the school website; building a picture of best practice in CEIAG provision in areas of social deprivation, and how the challenges of their communities are met. This process acts as a proxy for being able to visit and interview the CEIAG leaders in these establishments due to imposed lockdown restrictions. Where a published report was not a 'full inspection', and the published report lacked any explicit reference to "careers", the last 'full inspection' was referred to, providing it fell in the expanded period between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 and 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020. This was done in order to ensure that the findings of schools undergoing 'short inspections' and 'monitoring visit' reports in the review period had their CEIAG provision included. Where no mention of these in inspections short of a full inspection could only be viewed as meaning no identifiable change had taken place in the school's provision to students.

As Ofsted inspectors look toward the Gatsby benchmarks (Holman, 2014) as a metric to measure successful CEIAG provision in the schools, it was decided that for the purposes of

this paper the efficacy of any school-based CEIAG programme must be linked to the Gatsby benchmarks. These not only have a clear impact on the students benefitting from a programme designed to address the imbalance in outcomes for students in areas of social deprivation, but also address the needs of schools in these areas to ensure they benefit from investing time and funding into one of the key areas of an Ofsted inspection under the 'New Framework' (Office for Standards in Education, 2019).

Due to the eight-part structure of the Gatsby benchmarks, the systematic overview of common practice within school career guidance provision used the eight benchmarks to group both current best-practice and recommendations for improved practice under.

While the Gatsby benchmarks are used to group practices under as a framework, the Quality in Careers Consortium's (Quality in Careers Consortium, 2019) assessment guide for 'The Quality in Careers Standard' (QCC standard) accreditation was used to inform what practices would be considered effective and best-practice.

### **3.2 Positionality, epistemology, and aims**

As an aspiring leader currently teaching in the East Midlands, my aim is to bridge the gap in cultural capital to afford all students the knowledge to make informed choices for their futures, placing them on the same level as those not in regions of social deprivation. Bourdieu and Richardson (1986) links society's view of cultural capital to that of the middle class ideal, with inextricable links embedded in social capital and status – the more middle-class defined social capital one has, the more successful one will become. While I fundamentally disagree with this premise vis-à-vis 'culture' because it places limitations on, and promotes inequality and unfairness toward those who place value in other aspects of their lives; when taken into the knowledge of the workplace, further and higher education, and the jobs market, Bourdieu and Richardson make valid points. I would argue that the more background knowledge a student has of their career options, rights and expectations within a workplace, further and higher education options, and the local and national jobs market, the more likely a student will be to have a successful educational experience and subsequent career prospects. This link is supported by Hughes *et al.* (2016) who agrees that careers education provides a host of wider positive outcomes for students, such as positive attitudes towards school learning and motivation toward study.

Social-mobility is often linked toward moving away from the very communities working-class students are from; away from the shared values and connection to their roots that Ingram (2009); Cole (2011); and McKenzie (2016) discuss. Effective CEIAG uses labour market information from the same region students are living in to promote the amazing opportunities

on their doorstep, rather than send students on trips to the South-east of England; stripping a region of its talent-pool stifles regional development, and lowers the prospects of all who live there.

I must acknowledge my own biases and values here – as a working-class person from the North-west of England, I feel there is a strong cultural identity in our communities. This comes with limited expectations; my own parents were proud when I left home to join the British Army, but were confused when they discovered that I had decided to career-change at the age of thirty-six, and was at university with aspirations of becoming a teacher. By career-changing, I made two leaps up the 'social-ladder'. Firstly, with a 'trade' in the Army. After leaving the Army, I moved into Logistics Management, a small step up the 'social-ladder' as far as my family were concerned, yet not a career of any real social significance. However, once I made the choice to go to university and teach, my societal role changed significantly. Working-class peers now saw me as someone with a voice and authority; this is also how the teaching profession is viewed by School X's parent/carer and student community.

This paper considers the efficacy of CEIAG interventions in supporting students of schools in areas of social deprivation within the framework of the Gatsby benchmarks (Holman, 2014). A narrative synthesis is used to discuss the findings of the literature review and data from schools employing 'best practice' in CEIAG as highlighted in Ofsted reports. As this study seeks to explore and understand the relationship between human beings and the CEIAG environment in schools, the stakeholders are playing a part in forming the social fabric in which they are a part (McQueen and Knussen, 2002). This is achieved through the personal opinions in the form of Ofsted Inspector judgements, and Careers Leader interpretations, of how to apply the Gatsby benchmarks to assess, and plan, a school's CEIAG provision are used as evidence.

Therefore, as it is inherently qualitative in nature, the study's epistemological standpoint falls within the interpretivist paradigm. Thanh and Thanh (2015) support this stance, asserting that interpretivist studies use perceptions and opinions of individuals as their data, as opposed to the directly measurable numerical and statistical datasets found in quantitative studies. These methods therefore seek to gain understanding from experiences and perceptions to uncover the value in the research. Thanh and Thanh (2015) goes on to state that research within an interpretivist paradigm is inclusive for all involved as the empirical data collected takes into account the viewpoints of the Ofsted inspectors, the Careers Leads in the schools who create CEIAG policies and curricula, and the school communities that

they serve. However, student voice across so many educational establishments proved to be impossible, due to Covid-19. Likewise, approaching businesses, with many staff under-pressure while working from home proved to be unrealistic. As a proxy for individual stakeholder opinions from employers, news articles were used to build up a picture of general ideas. Likewise, the research carried out by Moote and Archer (2018) was considered to accurately reflect the voices heard many conversations around CEIAG with stakeholders that are not represented directly.

### **3.3 Ethical considerations**

Underpinning educational research are ethics and ethical considerations; Israel and Hay (2006) highlight the significance of ethical behaviour in promoting socially useful research. While this systematic literature review does not involve individuals it is still necessary to fully review any potential ethical implications that may arise through carrying out this research.

The Association of Internet Researchers (Franzke *et al*, 2020) discusses a range of ethical frameworks, where they suggest that ethically, collecting data from publicly available information should be treated with *phronēsis* or “reflective judgement” due to the pluralistic nature of international ethical bodies. As all of the initial data in this study is from Ofsted gradings freely available on the GOV.UK website, it is reasonable to retain the establishment name, town, postcode, number of pupils on roll, type of establishment, Ofsted grading, and any comments pertaining to CEIAG education and personal development that are contained within. This data will then be used to narrow the number of educational establishments down based on criteria laid out in the inclusion and exclusion criteria, before anonymising the establishment to a two-letter identifier to differentiate between establishments, with the establishment name and postcode removed from the database.

Despite the research methods of this paper working within a simple ethical framework, it is important to consider the purpose of this research. Hammersley and Traianou (2012) state that the primary ethical responsibility for an educational researcher is the pursuit of worthwhile knowledge. This is a fact that must be brought to the fore of this research; with the nature of this work it must be clear that there is not a conflict of interest from a professional perspective, in that the beneficiaries of this body of work must be the students and families of schools served by schools in areas of social deprivation.

There were no perceivable ethical dilemmas presented during this study. However, it is pertinent to consider the fact that had any arose the reflective mechanisms of Rolfe *et al*.

(2001) would provide an applicable model of reflection to apply as a matter of good research practice.

### 3.4 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Once the initial search strategy had been completed, it was identified from the Ofsted report language where the report fell in terms of a positive CEIAG provision or one that required improvement. The following common language in Ofsted reports with a positive leaning was identified:

- a) *‘Careers education is a **strength**’*
- b) *“Pupils receive very **high-quality** careers advice”*
- c) *“The provision for careers education is **effective** throughout the school”*
- d) *“...is **outstanding**”*
- e) *“...is **excellent**”*
- f) *“...is **good**”*

Less explicit references to personal, social, and health education (PHSE) or CEIAG were noted in the form of wider narrative, or through the acknowledgement of the provision of independent careers advice; these were recorded as ‘other’ mentions. While any mention that CEIAG provision fell below the expected standards was regarded as a ‘negative’ response by the inspector. Research by the Careers and Enterprise Company in their 2019 State of the nation report (Careers and Enterprise Company, 2019) shows that the average number of Gatsby benchmarks achieved by respondent schools to be low prior to the proposal of the Ofsted new inspection framework. Looking to the East Midlands and Yorkshire & The Humber regions, the eight Local Enterprise Partnerships (coordinate careers provision in their respective areas of responsibility) have at worst only 2.4 benchmarks met (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire), and at best 3.4 benchmarks met (York, North Yorkshire and East Riding), this low-performance was mirrored in 125 schools from the 292 that were used for the initial data search in this study with either negative or no mention of careers in their Ofsted inspection reports.

Eighty-two schools were identified as having explicitly positive commentary within their Ofsted report. From this group twelve Independent Schools were discounted due to the fact the number of pupils on role were disproportionately less (less than half) than the national average of 986 pupils in 2020 (Department for Education, 2020). Furthermore, nine Special Schools were discounted due to their exclusion of mainstream students from their CEIAG provision. Therefore, a total of sixty-one mainstream Secondary Schools were selected for further investigation through viewing the published CEIAG policy, programme, and publicly available information on the institution’s website.



## **Findings and discussion**

### **4.1 A systematic overview of common practice**

The results of the findings from the systematic review (figure 3) show there are common elements of shared best-practice. The minimum expected requirements are quite clearly shared across the vast majority of educational establishments, with both 'careers fairs' and collaboration with 'FE/HE providers' featuring in the top-ten common practices. This is most likely due to the free-of-charge nature of these student-experiences. The minimum expectations under the Baker-clause and Ofsted also appear here, with both the statutory age-range (Y8-13) and extended (inclusive of Y7), a 'planned programme' of 'impartial [advice]' and 'personalised advice' being prevalent across the establishment-sample. These common mentions of CEIAG provision are reviewed against the Gatsby benchmarks (Holman, 2014) and considerations for improvement in each benchmark are made in a narrative of this systematic review within the following section of this paper.

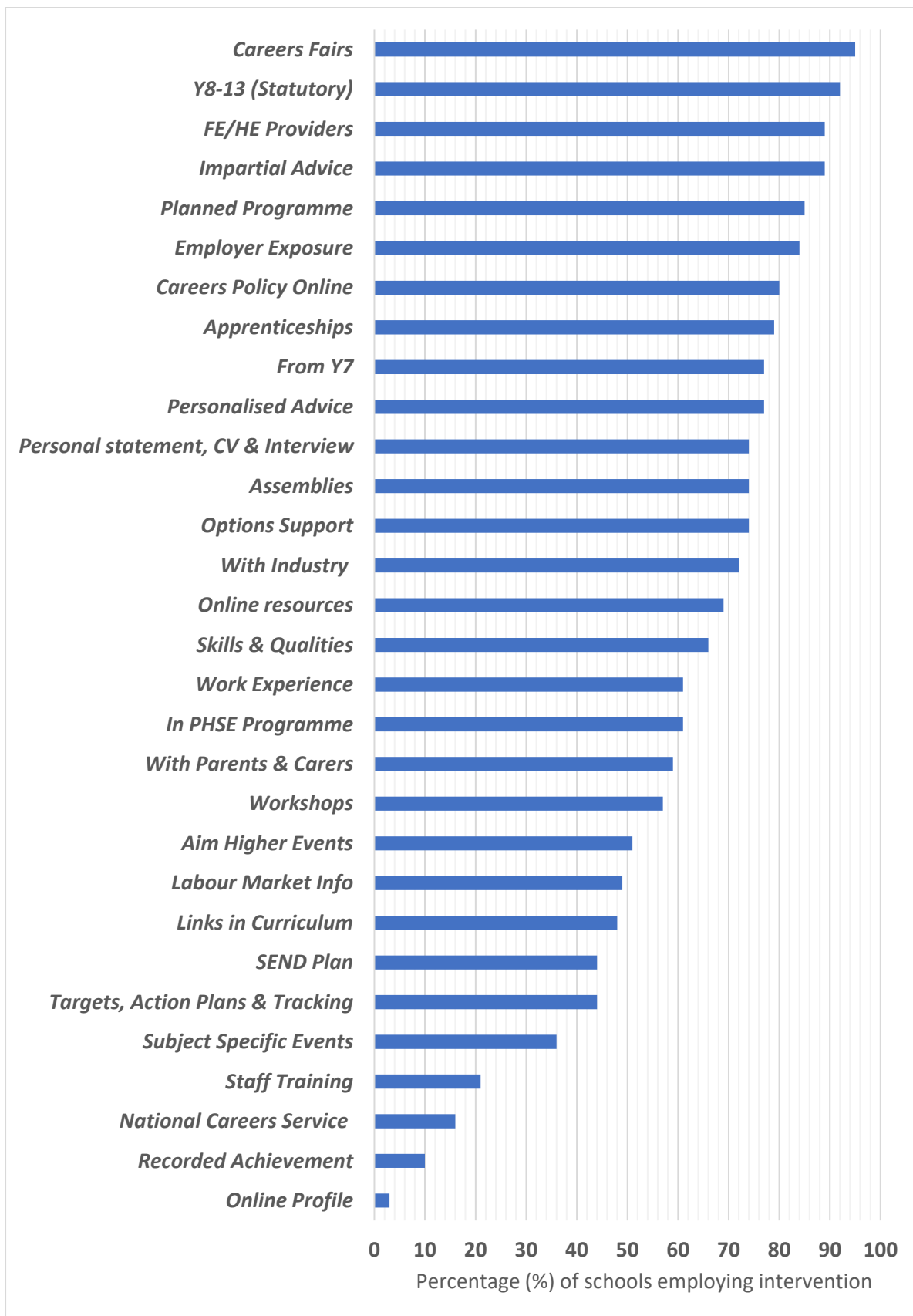


Figure 3 – Common mentions of CEIAG practice in the Ofsted inspections of 82 schools across the East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber regions between the period of 1st January 2018 and 16th July 2020.

## **4.2 A narrative of shared best practice and recommendations for improving CEIAG provision.**

### **1. A stable careers programme**

#### *Shared best practice*

This is the keystone that holds all the elements of Gatsby Benchmarks together. Without stability the programme fails. Every school must embed a CEIAG programme in such a way that it is “known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers and employers” (Holman, 2014). Holman (2014) goes on to recommend that this is published on the school’s website in such a manner that all stakeholders within the school community are able to access and understand. Stakeholders must be able to feedback on the programme regularly as part of an evaluation process. Furthermore, the QCC standard to see a sustainable, systems-based approach that has a “Strongly embedded programme” supported proactively by both the governing body and senior leadership team. This should be part of the school’s ‘development and improvement plan’. The programme should encourage all staff to be aware of their roles, and contribute to initiatives.

However, it was found that only eighty-five percent of schools were following the Gatsby recommendation. It was noted that most of those not publishing a careers programme had a careers programme that was delivered by an external agency. Similarly, only eighty percent of schools published their careers policy online. Those that published both their careers programme and policy did so in easily signposted areas of their website, normally under the ‘Parents’ or ‘Students’ tabs, but most I would argue it was most effectively done under a distinct ‘Careers’ tab, due to the fact that this information should also be easily accessed by external education and training providers under the “Baker Clause” - section 42B of the Education Act (1997).

#### *Recommendations for improving practice*

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) (Hochlaf and Dromney, 2019) reported that almost two-thirds of the school failed to have a CEIAG policy online as required, supporting this was an area of improvement. Interestingly, according to Allen-Kinross (2019), writing for *Schools Week*, the Association of School and College Leaders attempted to mitigate this failure, stating that schools are juggling a “large number of requirements”. This further highlights the need for a dedicated Careers Lead role within a school’s leadership structure, rather than CEIAG being ‘bolted on’ to an existing leadership team member’s responsibilities; CEIAG is simply too complex and important for students for it to not be a stand-alone responsibility with full support from the governors through to the staff body. I

fundamentally believe that to achieve the first of the Gatsby benchmarks, a well written programme, tailored for the context of the school, and championed by a dedicated Careers Leader is necessary. This must then be easily accessible to all stakeholders, with an annual appraisal framework should be used to determine efficacy prior to inclusion in the SIP in order to be considered both stable and effective. This annual reflection is critical to remaining up-to-date in an ever-changing sector, to provide the best experience for students.

This first benchmark cannot be achieved without addressing the need for resourcing and budget, so that the careers programme is not seen as an addition to, rather than the integral part of the school's personal development curriculum as is right and proper. In order to achieve this there must be explicit support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and have an identified individual within the organisation that is trained to the appropriate level and responsible for the programme. The programme also needs to be embedded in the curriculum with proactive support from ideally a link-governor, and the senior leadership team. The effectiveness of the school's careers provision should be regularly evaluated, with student and parent voice incorporated into this process.

## **2. *Learning from the career and labour market information***

### *Shared best practice*

Holman (2014) recommends that all stakeholders should have readily made access to good quality information about future study options and LMI. Alongside support from an informed careers advisor by the time a student reaches fourteen-years old; so that informed decisions can be made with regard to the study options required to pursue career-paths. Parents should be encouraged to access this information to inform how they support their children. Indeed, local LMI is important to help inform student choices from KS4 options, through to Post-16 and Post-18 choices. Anne Milton MP (Department for Education, 2017) wrote in her foreword of the DfE's 2017 Careers strategy that:

*“It is vital, in an environment where new industries are emerging and many of the most important jobs of the future don't yet exist, that individuals have access to high-quality labour market information and earnings data to underpin their choices.”*

Schools addressed this benchmark in a number of manners. Providing links on their careers page proved to be common, and simple solution. The findings of this study were supported by Hanson *et al.* (2019) who suggests that this benchmark has seen a large increase of

schools meeting it, with a positive impact on students becoming career-ready, with increases in GCSE attainment.

### *Recommendations for improving practice*

While 70 percent of schools had their careers policies online, along with other resources to support students and parents, not all of these were well signposted, and many were difficult to navigate. LMI information was not found on 51 percent of these websites. All LMI data should be clearly signposted with navigational prompts to support users to find this information. Additionally, considerations that have come to the fore through 2020-2021 prove that relying on online access is not an effective strategy to ensuring *all* students have access to them in areas of social deprivation. The Covid-19 lockdown of 2020-21 has provided a focus on the access students and families have to the technology needed to engage with online learning. This is a good proxy for the same students being able to access online LMI on a school website. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (Andrew *et al.*, 2020) showed that 14 percent of Secondary students only had access through a mobile phone, or could not access online learning at all (see figure 4); supported by Ofcom (2020) who estimate that between 1 million and 1.8 million children do not have access to a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet at home. The families of these students will be those most disadvantaged in society, and this will impact disproportionately on schools who serve areas of social deprivation. Therefore, relying on LMI posted on a school website to inform students is not the most equitable manner in which to disseminate this information.

This is an opportunity to create 'careers-champions' within each school department alongside prominent noticeboards/screens in schools. Curating these to show the possible careers that are opened up through study in a subject area, alongside LMI would help promote local employers in these fields. This in turn has the advantage of engaging with employers to gain workplace experience for students, vital for breaking down biases in relation to students' career aspirations, educational and occupational choices that are patterned by social class, gender, and ethnicity (Correll, 2004; Lufkin *et al.* 2007; Hutchinson *et al.*, 2011).

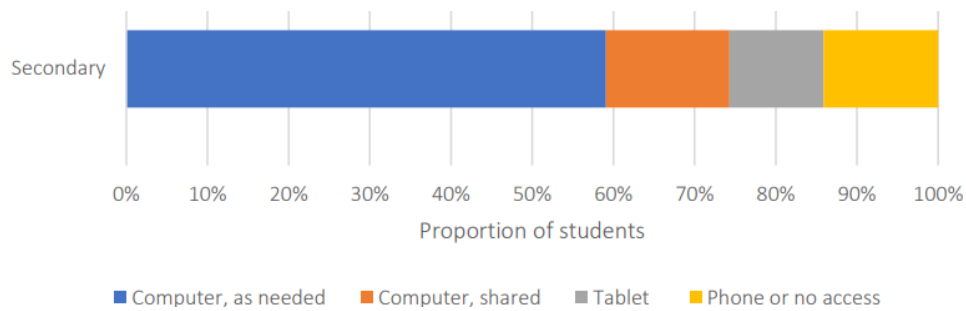


Figure 4 - Distribution of access to technology among secondary school students (Andrew et al., 2020)

It was observed that few schools actively involve parents/carers when it comes to CEIAG. When one considers the figures around qualifications, unemployment, and employment-sector of many living in former coal-mining communities, it is important to provide a holistic approach to CEIAG for the school community. By actively engaging with parents careers leaders will be able to gain buy-in from them, and proactively engage with disengaged students most at risk of becoming NEETs. Promoting the benefits of good CEIAG, alongside LMI will ensure young people make informed decisions with the support of those closest to them potentially breaking a cycle of deprivation caused by ‘estatism’ and self-imposed limitations on career aspirations.

### **3. Addressing the needs of each student.**

#### *Shared best practice*

To achieve under the third Gatsby Benchmark, students must be given differentiated guidance at the various stages of their school-life, tailored to their own specific needs. Records must be adequately kept (and archived for three years) of advice and agreed decisions made, and these must be available to students in order to support their career development. Equality and diversity must be considered, with stereotypes challenged and aspirations raised. This proved to be one of the most difficult areas for schools to effectively. Only 44 percent had a clear mention of “targets, action plans and tracking” in their online CEIAG curriculum or policies, with only 10 percent providing students with some form of a record of achievement. There were many mentions of “BAME (black and minority ethnic) or women in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths)” events among the assemblies and work within industry, while 44 percent of the schools had a clear SEND plan for students to access CEIAG provision equally. Additionally, not one school mentioned how they supported students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds; these factors combined mean many fall short of the QCC standard.

### *Recommendations for improving practice*

Schools should have a clear plan to identify and respond to the specific needs of targeted groups within their communities; specifically high achieving, SEND, young carers, looked after children, and those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds should have clear support planned into the CEIAG programme. By ensuring that these groups are included in areas that challenge stereotypical thinking, schools provide opportunities where aspirations are lifted for those that will benefit from equality of opportunity. It is clear that students have self-efficacy as far as career-choices are concerned, and unless careers leaders ensure equity when considering socio-economic status, the advice is not equitable in meeting the specific CEIAG needs of a large percentage of students in these communities. This provides an argument that rather than planning a CEIAG curriculum that sees the socio-economic status of individuals in a cohort as a bolt-on, in areas of social deprivation this enriched CEIAG should be the norm. Likewise, initiatives used to address equality should be holistic, not reductive – BAME and women in STEM projects look toward representation within these career areas, while white working-class boys are not seen as a focus despite this demographic not being represented well in HE attendance figures (Stokes *et al.*, 2015; Baars, Mulchay, and Bernardes, 2016).

#### **4. Linking curriculum learning and careers.**

##### *Shared best practice*

The curricula of a school should have planned opportunities for all teachers to link curriculum learning with careers. This can be achieved through providing CEIAG learning through the PHSE programme, as 61 percent of schools did, or organised extra-curricular activities that enrich the curriculum with external speakers or activities. However, only 48 percent of schools made explicit references to “links in the curriculum”. In particular, Holman (2104) specifically mentions the need for STEM subject teachers to “highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths”.

##### *Recommendations for improving practice*

There is scope to improve the use of CEIAG and LMI into school curricula by providing more staff training on CEIAG provision (only 21 percent of schools did this), or through a departmental careers champion, as already mentioned. This would reduce the workload of the careers leader, and ensure that subject specialists are able to provide tailored opportunities to engage with careers related to their disciplines. With only 36 percent of schools providing subject-specific events in their CEIAG calendar, it is an opportunity to

increase engagement and subject-capital for students who are disengaged or unsure of the relevance of a particular subject.

Additional areas for consideration, given the issues raised regarding access to IT and the internet, would be the use of social media platforms through official school accounts. Improved or explicit references to highlight the relevance of a subject content, techniques or the skills learnt within course descriptions, prospectuses, and displays. Embedding CEIAG exposure within the classroom through 'guest teachers' and speakers, or within the lesson content itself has merit according to the QCC standard (Quality in Careers Consortium, 2019). The aim here would be to provide links for students from Year 7, through to leaving in Year 11 or Year 13, that inform them of the relevance of the skills and knowledge taught in subjects and subject clusters – how subjects interlink toward career pathways. This proved to be an area for development with 'skills and qualities' highlighted in only 66 percent of the sample schools. As discussed previously, many FSM and PP students will fall below the "five good GCSEs" expectation, giving them opportunities to show evidence of skills and qualities – then explicitly profiling these as such for them, helps to improve their employability.

## ***5. Encounters with employers and employees.***

### *Shared best practice*

Through enrichment activities such as visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes, all students should be afforded multiple opportunities to meet and learn directly from employers about the world of work, employment, and the skills and qualities that are valued in the workplace.

95 percent Careers Fairs, 84 percent employer exposure, but not every year group 23 percent did not expand their CEIAG programmes outside of the statutory Year 8-13 requirement.

The QCC standards suggest that all students should have access to at least one learning activity facilitated by employers and employees. This was achieved in the sample-schools through the use of assemblies (74 percent), competitions and challenges – subject specific events (36 percent), or workshops (57 percent).

### *Recommendations for improving practice*

While the minimum expectation is to have at least one learning activity with employers/employees, in areas of social deprivation it is critical to maximise the exposure of



students to as many career and employer options as possible during their CEIAG. This is in order to compensate for a restricted CEIAG-capital that is the result of what Greenbank and Hepworth (2008) refer to as “pool levels of social capital” caused due to the habitus that these students, and any work-place contacts they have, occupy. While this study was quite typical of the literature available in looking at the impact of social deprivation on the individual, this can be applied to school communities readily. QCC standards recommends the use of alumni and parents, this may also prove to be more of a challenge for schools in areas of social deprivation. That is not to say that they should not make best use of successful alumni, but to support this the use of successful individuals with connections to the local community, and members of the wider school community should also be considered. It was noted that 72 percent of schools did work ‘with industry’ to deliver their CEIAG programmes, these relationships should be extended to include work experience placements for students where possible.

Recommendations from the QCC standards also suggest that students should record the impact of these activities, and use these reflections as a starting point to discuss at a later point. This appears to be completely neglected in all but 10 percent of the schools concerned in this paper, outside of the “targets, action plans and tracking” required under the Gatsby benchmarks (Homan, 2014). This is a real opportunity to provide a focus for students in their CEIAG activities. Schools appear to have a prevalence of contracting to outside organisations to meet their CEIAG needs. This ‘off-the-shelf’ approach does not afford students the opportunity to leave school with their own careers-based research, record of the skills they have developed, nor reflections on CEIAG experiences that could be used to develop a curriculum vitae for future use in further-education, employment, or higher-education applications. This record should be written into a CEIAG programme of study, with contributions made across the span of study, to provide a tangible record of work that can be referred back to in the future.

## ***6. Experiences of workplaces.***

### *Shared best practice*

Holman’s (2014) recommendation is that every student should benefit from experiencing the workplace first-hand. This can be facilitated through personalised work experience, work shadowing and/or work visits to enable them to explore a range of career opportunities, and expand their networks. However, only 61 percent of schools in this study afforded students first-hand workplace experience.

### *Recommendations for improving practice*

This is a concerning trend, in that there has been a marked decline in the number of young people having part-time (Saturday) employment has halved in the last twenty years, with full-time students in both schools and colleges considerably less-likely to take up part-time employment alongside their studies (Booth, 2020; Gardiner, 2020). This work experience is important to help prepare students for the workplace. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) (2019) has reported that 45 percent of businesses rank 'work readiness' as the most important recruitment factor, yet 44 percent of employers find those leaving education at all levels 'not work ready'. This sentiment is supported by a quarter of young people in their report. The DfE's (Department for Education, 2017) put an onus onto employers to provide encounters that will both provide opportunities to learn about the workplace, and inspire students.

The QCC standards recommend that students should have an opportunity to reflect after work experience; this again could be used in the record of CEIAG recommended to support students in communicating their skills, qualities, and experiences.

## **7. Encounters with further and higher education**

### *Shared best practice*

All students should appreciate the prospects that are available to them for their post-16 and post-18 experiences. This must encompass learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace, including both academic and vocational routes. FE/HE provider interaction was observed in 89 percent of the sample schools as clear best practice. This proved to be through activities such as careers fairs, assemblies, workshops and 'aim-higher' events.

### *Recommendations for improving practice*

While the exposure to FE/HE is commonplace, the quality of these encounters is unknown; working closely with widening participation teams at individual universities to tailor talks for specific communities is a conclusion drawn from anecdotal experience on both sides of this relationship. Best practice from the QCC standards suggest the need to engage with both staff and students from FE/HE establishments, alongside organisations offering apprenticeships. However, agreements with local providers of opportunities to support lower and middle-achieving students at risk of becoming NEETs should be a strong focus in areas of social disadvantage.

## **8. Personal guidance**

### *Shared best practice*

Personalised CEIAG guidance interviews should be offered to all students, with either an internal (member of school staff) or external CEIAG adviser, who must be trained to an appropriate level. Opportunities for these should be made available whenever meaningful study decisions (KS4, KS5 and HE course choices) or career choices are made. These should be an expectation for all students and timed to meet their individual needs.

While 77 percent of schools did specify “personalised advice” was provided, it was impossible to determine the efficacy of this or the level of personalisation provided. The minimum expectation is an interview with an qualified careers advisor providing impartial guidance.

### *Recommendations for improving practice*

One of the challenges with this benchmark is the “timeliness” of interviews; the ‘serial approach’ to CEIAG programmes sees students prioritise more pressing educational matters e.g. assessments, mock exams, or coursework, over CEIAG engagement, especially if this is not in the planned programme for their development (Greenbank and Hepworth, 2008). Moote and Archer (2018) found that careers interviews are largely conducted through self-referral; a problematic method of engaging those who are in real need of accessing this advice and guidance. Many of the school polices mentioned that staff could also refer students, yet this seems to miss the fact that the simple use of centralised contextual data for a cohort would mean the very students that should be prioritised for CEIAG interviews early on are already known to the school. To that end, it is recommended that these factors are used to weave these interviews into a programme of CEIAG support, rather than the use of referrals as the primary route to gain an interview. Referral should be used to help engage the disengaged, and help address the challenges disengagement with education presents.

## **5 Conclusions**

### **5.1 Summary of research**

The findings of this paper are that while CEIAG programmes must meet the eight Gatsby benchmarks (Holman, 2014) as a minimum expectation due to the 'New Inspection Framework' from Ofsted, this standard is not sufficient to use as a benchmark of success for schools in areas of social deprivation; where increased numbers of students require additional provision to address inequalities driven by socio-economic factors.

This is supported by Moote and Archer (2018), in that it is insufficient to solely focus on 'provision' of CEIAG in schools, but the quality of 'participation' must be seen as the true indicator of a successful CEIAG programme in schools serving areas of social deprivation. To ensure that socio-economic factors are not over-looked within a programme, schools should ensure that initiatives that seek to address inequality and break stereotypes should extend beyond those of gender and a reductive view of ethnicity. CEIAG programmes are most effective when they engage with stakeholders from across the wider-community, with employers, FE/HE providers, teachers, parents and students all having a voice facilitated through dialogue with the Careers Leader, and a recommended Careers-link governor for a school. CEIAG provision succeeds when it is not solely confined within a discrete area of provision, but is woven throughout the school's curricula, and embedded in an ethos of providing the best opportunities for *all* within the school-community. The current inspection criteria does not meet the Quality in Careers standard; the adoption of this would go some way to closing the gap in the standard of provision seen in areas of social deprivation. Schools in opportunity areas would be well advised to seek funding from these schemes to support their CEIAG development to achieve this additional standard in order to improve the outcomes for their students. These outcomes need to extend beyond the prevalent voices in CEIAG education; ensuring student-voice and community-voice are incorporated into the design of a CEIAG programme that puts the wider-school community at its heart.

### **5.2 Limitations**

While this paper takes advantage of the information publicly available on CEIAG provision in schools within a targeted area, the methodology falls short in being able to converse with Careers Leaders in those schools, or to conduct 'student voice' to accurately determine the reality of provision in the schools sampled. This has been the unfortunate result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and as such presents an opportunity to develop on the initial research carried out in this systematic literature review. Additionally, this paper only touches upon the compulsory CEIAG provision in secondary education. To that end there is also further work

to be done around careers education in primary schools, where Palladino Schultheiss (2005) suggests that this work should begin. This seems logical given that much of the original research discussed in this paper also contains links that point towards inequity setting in before secondary education.

### **5.3 Original contributions**

This paper seeks to address the gap in research in the CEIAG field around social deprivation. While there is much research carried out on how to address social inequality for the individual, there is much work to be done to address these factors when they are prevalent for not just a single school-community, but entire communities living with the impact of low social-mobility, in areas of high social-deprivation within England and Wales.

### **5.4 Reflection on research**

Reflecting on this research is an important part of preparing for school leadership. It is not sufficient to simply complete this work in order to develop and learn as a school leader. Without reflection of this experience and its impact on leadership in schools, this period study is incomplete. Using Rolfe et al.'s (2001) model my reflections can be simply structured:

#### *What?*

Inequality exists in society, this is can manifest itself not only for individuals but for entire communities in some regions across the country. By researching the prospects of those living in these communities I have been able to challenge my own perceptions developed over the last four years in education. A "good job" does not necessarily mean the one that is frequently pushed through middle-class ideas on students from working-class backgrounds. There is now a clear definition of what this term means, and this should be accommodated within the understanding of all teachers, especially those serving areas of social deprivation.

#### *So what?*

While I was aware of my own challenges as a working-class child, I did not live in an area of social deprivation. This challenged my own understanding of the challenges inherent to those living in a region where access to a 'good job' can be more challenging should the student wish to remain close to community, family and the friends they grew up with.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought challenges in completing this research paper, leaving more work to be done in this area of research than I had anticipated. Work in this field is important, and complex inequal measure, and should be continued to support schools to improve the

CEIAG provision they offer to students. By decreasing disengagement in students, GCSE results are likely to improve, providing better opportunities – helping break the cycle of low-paid and insecure employment that can be seen in communities like the East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber.

### *Now what?*

Though participating in my Masters' studies I have been able to reflect on the importance of CEIAG and the potential impact that an effective provision can have on the wider-school community. I entered teaching through the Teach First programme because I wanted to commit to addressing educational disadvantage. Whilst this was always my reason for working in schools serving communities like my own as a child, my experience of studying for my MA in Leadership in Learning has brought this to the fore of my practice; proving to me that there are areas of educational leadership that are over-looked by national policy-makers, where local-leadership is required to work toward making real-life differences every day. Using the knowledge I have gained in this important area of school leadership I am able to directly make changes to the curriculum in my science department, and provide a model of what CEIAG embedded within a curriculum looks like in the very type of setting this paper is addressing. Additionally, it is proposed that this research be used by a large trust in the East Midlands to address these issues across all of the schools that it manages as part best practice.

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