

September 2026

West London Careers Hub Newsletter



edt
West London
Careers Hub

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON

THE **CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE**
COMPANY



Welcome Back

I hope you all had a restful summer and have had a good start to the new academic year!

During the break, the hub have had the opportunity to reflect on the progress made across 2025/26, celebrates the achievements of schools, colleges, employers and partners, and highlights some of the priorities and opportunities ahead for 2026/27.

It has been another busy and positive year for West London Careers Hub (WLCH). We have continued to strengthen careers education across the region, with a focus on continuous improvement, meaningful employer engagement, modern work experience and clear pathways into apprenticeships and technical education.

There is much to celebrate, including increased participation in the Careers Impact System, strong engagement with peer-to-peer reviews, continued progress across the Gatsby Benchmarks, and the ongoing success of programmes such as Best Next Steps, Bridging the Gap and Hospitality Connect.

Thank you to all our schools, colleges, Independent Training Providers (ITP's), Enterprise Advisers, Cornerstone Employers, local authority partners and wider stakeholders. Your commitment and collaboration continue to make a real difference to young people across West London.

As we begin a new two-year contract, we also say a heartfelt thank you and farewell to colleagues who have moved on, including Anita, Lola and Temi, and welcome Bradley, Zabrina and Laurisa into new roles focusing on Alternative Provision (AP) and modern work experience (WEX).

There will be fresh opportunities and new priorities this year, but our shared goal remains the same: to ensure every young person in West London has access to the guidance, experiences and pathways they need to take their next best step.

We look forward to working with you all again this year.

Best wishes

Aarti Jaswal, WLCH Strategic Hub Lead



A year in review

Highlights, progress and what's next

Careers Impact System/Strive for Excellence

Priority 1

The Careers Impact System (CIS) remains a key priority for the Hub, supporting schools and colleges to take a whole-institution approach to careers education and link provision more closely to school improvement and student outcomes.

In 2025/26, institutions completed an Internal Leadership Review, with 48 going on to complete a Peer-to-Peer Review. Feedback has been very positive, with 96% of education leaders saying the process will help improve their careers programme.

For 2026/27, we will continue to support institutions to embed continuous improvement, strengthen careers leadership and build on Gatsby Benchmark performance.



Equalex Pilot– Year 1 - Best Next Steps

Priority 2

The Best Next Step - Equalex pilot helped schools strengthen modern work experience, target interventions and careers readiness for young people.

Across the year, 22 schools engaged with the programme, delivering 64 activities with 1,099 students participating. Schools also saw encouraging progress against Gatsby Benchmarks 5, 6 and 7.

The pilot has provided a strong foundation for future development and shows the value of collaborative partnerships in helping young people build confidence, explore pathways and access meaningful employer and workplace encounters.



Boosting Apprenticeships and Technical Pathways

Priority 3

This year, the Hub established a Community of Practice for Independent Training and Further Education providers, creating a space to share best practice and strengthen Gatsby Benchmark 7 and Provider Access Legislation delivery.

We are also working with the Greater London Authority on a provider directory to help schools and colleges connect more easily with training and education providers. This will help support careers leaders as apprenticeships, T Levels and technical pathways continue to evolve.

To support planning, we have included a short list of useful resources below.

- » [Statutory Guidance for Schools](#) checklist (including Gatsby Benchmark 7)
- » [Skills England Occupational Maps](#)
- » [Provider Directory for Schools and Colleges](#)
- » [Apprenticeship Reform Updates](#)

Employer Engagement

Employer engagement has supported more than 150 careers events, from mock interviews and careers fairs to Dragon's Den-style challenges.

Employer support across West London continues to grow, with 100 new employers and organisations that connected with the hub to support careers education this year, including 40% small and medium-sized enterprises. Employers have supported programmes such as **Best Next Steps Modern Work Experience**, while 61 have completed the [Employer Standards](#) toolkit.

Our **Hospitality Connect** programme has also expanded, now involving 17 hotels and 20 schools, including SEND and Alternative Provision settings.

If your institution needs employer support, please submit a request through [this form](#). Employers interested in getting involved can [register their interest](#).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

In 2025/26, the Hub delivered 10 CPD sessions for Careers Leaders, teachers, parents and senior leaders, covering topics such as careers leadership, Labour Market Information, Gatsby Benchmarks, the Careers Impact System (CIS) and employer engagement.

The CPD programme will continue to grow in 2026/27, offering further opportunities to share best practice, build confidence and support high-quality careers education for all learners.



West London Youth Employment Roadmap

This year also saw the launch of the West London Youth Employment Roadmap, marking an important milestone for the region after three years of collaboration with young people, employers, educators, local authorities and community partners.

For West London Careers Hub, the Roadmap provides a shared framework for working with partners to strengthen employer engagement, improve careers education and create clearer pathways into employment for young people.

» [Read the full Roadmap here.](#)

At the launch, Deputy Mayor of London for Business and Growth, Howard Dawber OBE, highlighted the importance of partnership working in creating opportunity and supporting inclusive growth across London.

As part of the launch, Aarti spoke to Niall McManus, Deputy Headteacher and Careers Leader at Northwood School, and Andrew Dakers from West London Business about the importance of collaboration, amplifying the Roadmap's reach, and engaging SMEs and students to reduce barriers to success.

» [Watch the video here.](#)



“Creating opportunities for young people requires organisations across sectors to work together. The West London Youth Employment Roadmap provides a shared vision and practical framework for partnership working, helping to connect more young people with the opportunities, experiences and support they need to succeed.”

Howard Dawber OBE, Deputy Mayor of London for Business and Growth

The year ahead

Strategic Hub and Operational Priorities 2026–27

The West London Careers Strategy 2026–2027 sets out a coordinated approach to strengthening careers education across the region and improving outcomes for young people. It focuses on raising the quality and consistency of careers leadership, modernising work experience, and increasing progression into apprenticeships and technical education—particularly for disadvantaged young people who may face additional barriers to accessing opportunities.

The strategy has three main priorities:

- 1 Continuous improvement:** The Careers Impact System will provide a consistent framework for institutions to assess and strengthen their careers provision. It will support careers leaders and senior leadership teams to identify areas for development, embed careers education across the institution and improve the impact of provision on young people.
- 2 Modern work experience:** The Careers Hub will play a central role in coordinating the regional work-experience agenda. By bringing together selected education institutions, employers and wider partners, the hub will help ensure that work experience is purposeful, accessible and connected to the needs of young people and the West London economy.
- 3 Apprenticeship and technical pathways:** The strategy aims to improve awareness, access and progression into apprenticeships and technical education. Particular attention will be given to strengthening the conversion rate among disadvantaged students so that more young people move successfully from awareness and interest into applications, offers and sustained participation.

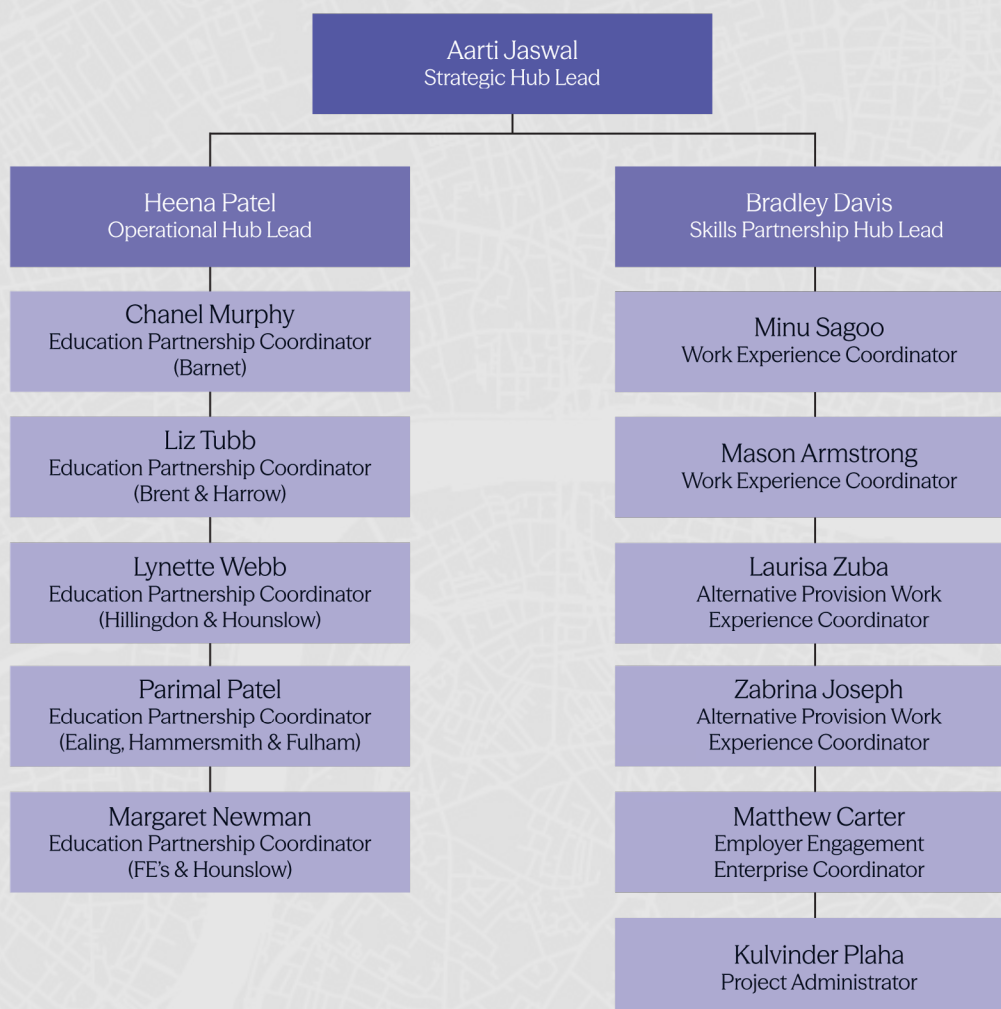
Delivery will be supported through five flagship projects. The Careers Impact System will work with 60 institutions during 2026–2027 to drive continuous improvement. Bridging the Gap will provide 50 teacher encounters for institutions participating in the system, helping teachers develop a stronger understanding of the workplace and connect curriculum learning with careers. Best Next Steps will introduce a modern work-experience programme based on the Equalex framework across 30 institutions as well as 11 Alternative Provision institutions, as part of the Aspiring Pathways funding, supporting a more structured and equitable approach to workplace experiences.

The strategy will also deliver three Employer Standards Workshops during the year. Our Team will help 50 employers complete the standards, strengthening the quality, relevance and impact of employer engagement with education. Finally, the West London Roadmap will provide a shared regional direction for careers education and employer engagement. It will be aligned with the Inclusive Talent Strategy, the Growth Plan and the wider West London Alliance Strategy.

Collectively, these priorities and projects are intended to create a more joined-up careers system across West London. Through stronger collaboration between education leaders, teachers, employers and regional partners, the strategy aims to improve careers provision, expand access to meaningful workplace experiences and ensure that more young people—especially those who are disadvantaged—can progress into positive education, employment and training pathways.

Meet the team

From September 2026, West London Careers Hub will move forward with a refreshed team structure, welcoming new colleagues. These changes will strengthen our capacity across key areas including Alternative Provision, work experience and education partnerships, helping us continue to provide joined-up support for schools, colleges, employers and partners across West London.



Resources for the year ahead

1. Internal Leadership Review (ILR)

The Internal Leadership Review, completed annually, is a useful starting point for schools and colleges to reflect on how careers education is embedded across the whole institution. It supports senior leaders and Careers Leaders to identify strengths, areas for development and next steps linked to the Careers Impact System and the updated Gatsby Benchmarks. Find out more [here](#).

2. Gatsby Benchmark updates

The Gatsby Benchmarks were updated, in Autumn 2025, to reflect the changing needs of young people, education and the labour market. Schools and colleges are encouraged to review their careers provision against the updated framework and consider how careers can be embedded across the whole institution. Read more [here](#).

3. Compass+ updates

All Compass users have migrated to **Compass+**, The Careers & Enterprise Company's single platform for education settings to use when evaluating, managing and reporting on their careers provision.

Compass+ includes a range of tools to help schools and colleges plan, track and evaluate careers provision. Features such as Activity and Encounter Tracking, Learner Profiles, reporting tools, Compass Evaluations, Future Skills and Your Child's Future questionnaires, and OnTrack+ (NEET indicator) support Careers Leaders to use data and evidence to inform planning, identify learner needs and reflect on progress as part of the Careers Impact System Internal Leadership Review.

- » Read more [here](#) and check out the [Compass+ Feature Focus sessions](#).

4. OnTrack+ from CEC*

OnTrack+ has been designed to help educators identify emerging support needs for learners in Years 7-11, strengthening sustained learner engagement and post-16 transition. It highlights learners who may be at increased risk of becoming NEET and is designed to help institutions better understand

progress, identify priorities and use data more effectively to support young people's next steps. Find out more [here](#).

5. Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ)*

The Future Skills Questionnaire helps schools and colleges capture student voice and better understand learners' career readiness at key transition points. The insight gathered can support planning, targeted interventions and evaluation, helping Careers Leaders identify where young people may need additional guidance or experiences. Find out more [here](#).

6. Modern Work Experience and workplace experiences

Modern work experience will continue to be a key national priority. From September 2026, schools and colleges should begin considering how workplace experiences are planned, recorded and evaluated, particularly in relation to Gatsby Benchmark 6 and the wider Work Experience Guarantee ambition. Read more [here](#).

7. Upcoming events, webinars and resources

- » [Compass+ support and guidance – Webinars](#) (live and on-demand)
- » [Careers & Enterprise resources directory](#)
- » [Compass+ Help Centre](#)
- » [Compass+ 5 Steps to Success](#)
- » [CEC funded Careers Leader training](#)
- » [The CEC Academy - online training](#) for Careers Leaders and educators
- » [Future Skills Questionnaire 5 steps to success](#)
- » [How? | CEC Resource Directory](#) Workplace experiences step-by-step

Look out for your Career Leader Network Meeting for your Autumn Term from your Education Partnership Coordinator.

* Note: Feature available to settings that have connected their Management Information System (MIS) to Compass+



Contact us

e: info@wlcareershub.com

w: wlcareershub.com

LI: [wl-careers-hub](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wl-careers-hub)