



Gatsby Benchmark Updates

Gatsby Benchmarks and Provider Access Legislation Comparison

This table compares the evolution of Gatsby Benchmark requirements and Provider Access Legislation across three key timeframes: before 2023, the changes introduced in 2023, and the updates effective from September 2025.

Area	Pre-2023 Requirements	2023 PAL Changes	September 2025 Updates
Legal Framework	Baker Clause required schools to allow provider access.	PAL introduced under Education Act 1997 and Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.	PAL embedded in statutory guidance; applies to wider range of institutions and learners.
Number of Provider Encounters	No fixed number; general encouragement.	Six mandatory encounters: 2 in Years 8–9, 2 in Years 10–11, 2 in Years 12–13.	Same structure retained; emphasis on meaningful delivery and monitoring.
Year Group Coverage	Focused on Years 8–13.	Mandatory encounters for Years 8–13.	Expanded to include Year 7 and learners aged 19–25 with EHCPs.
Types of Providers	Encouraged inclusion of FE and apprenticeship providers.	Must include approved providers of apprenticeships, T Levels, HTQs.	Continued emphasis on technical education and broader pathways.
Delivery Format	Flexible formats (talks, fairs, visits).	Encounters must be meaningful, during school day, with student interaction.	Same format; additional guidance on quality and accessibility for all learners.
Monitoring & Evaluation	Self-evaluation via Compass tool.	PAL-specific questions added to Compass (not scored under Benchmark 7).	Monitoring aligned with updated Gatsby Benchmarks and statutory guidance.



SEND Inclusion	Inclusion encouraged but not detailed.	PAL applies to all learners, including SEND.	Explicit inclusion of learners with EHCPs and emphasis on equitable access.
Work Experience Guarantee	Not previously required.	No formal guarantee introduced.	Government plans to guarantee 2 weeks' work experience for every young person.
Gatsby Benchmarks	Original benchmarks from 2014.	Benchmarks used as framework for careers provision.	Benchmarks updated to reflect labour market, technology, and learner needs.