**Aimhigher London Diversity in Practice:**
**Developing meaningful encounters with employers**

*'Everyone has the right to a good career regardless of background and we must remove hurdles for young people who have the talent, but may lack the network of guidance, support and connections to get ahead.' Catherine McGuinness, Policy Chairman at the City of London Corporation*

The Gatsby Benchmarks state:
'Every student should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace', *Gatsby Benchmark 5*

' Every student should have first- hand experience of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks' *Gatsby Benchmark 6*

**But what do meaningful encounters look like? And how can they support the diversity of learners' needs?**

**Schools, virtual schools, universities and employers worked together during this conference to develop an employability agenda based on:**

- An understanding of how **employers** are engaging with learners to raise awareness of apprenticeships, supported internships, graduate programmes. Colleagues from Atkins Global including a current degree level apprentice outlined the work Atkins Global are doing to Unlock Talent.

- What **Higher Education providers** are doing to support all graduates into employment. **London Southbank University** introduced delegates to the range of employability intitiatives they have developed contributing to their being voted University of the Year for Graduate Employment for the second consecutive year.

- Understanding what **schools** require in order to deliver meaningful encounters with employers; John Cadogan, Vice Principal, **Logic Studio School** shared his successful approach to building relationships with a vast range of employers and how to develop employability as part of the Careers agenda which has led to their careers offer being judged Outstanding by Ofsted

- Learning how Aimhigher collaborative projects support **targeted learners** to progress to higher level skills and into employment: the Aimhigher **SEND and LAC** Working groups along with the NCOP teams shared the barriers and opportunities of working with these groups and how providers and employers working together can add value to programmes