

# Submission to Education Select Committee Enquiry on Career Guidance

3 September 2012

## 1. The context

- 1.1. The Careers Sector Stakeholders Alliance (CSSA), a network of 30 national organisations with an interest in career guidance, welcomes the invitation by the Education Select Committee in the House of Commons for input to its inquiry into career guidance<sup>1</sup> for young people, in the light of the new statutory duty on schools to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils in years 9-11 from September 2012.
- 1.2. This Briefing Note from the CSSA responds to the concerns outlined by the Education Select Committee, but also outlines some of the strategic challenges facing the careers sector, given that there are one million young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), and growing numbers of graduates are finding it more difficult to get work. Despite the efforts to reduce youth unemployment, concerns remain for the next generation of young people that will face extremely tough choices, not just at school in terms of their subject choices and further study choices, but also their career choices at a time when opportunities for work are limited and the medium-term projections for the economy are for stagnant growth and low levels of job creation.
- 1.3. There is much to support: the Government has issued a 'practical guide for schools'<sup>2</sup> alongside its statutory guidance to schools<sup>3</sup>; it has established the National Careers Service<sup>4</sup> (albeit its face-to-face services are for adults only);

<sup>1</sup> The reference in terminology to 'career guidance' covers a wide range of activities: some are referenced specifically and others are covered more broadly under the general term 'career guidance'. The CSSA is concerned about high-quality provision of all types of careers education, career advice and guidance, career information (including LMI data), work-based learning and work experience.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/boo211910/independent-careers-guidance>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://education.gov.uk/about/dfes/statutory/goo205755/statutory-guidance-for-schools-careers-guidance-for-young-people>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

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“We know that guidance is critical to helping young people make the right choices in education and training, that it helps reduce the number of young people that might otherwise become not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) and that it raises aspirations, increases motivation and, thereby, results in higher levels of achievement.”

- ACEG



it has created a National Careers Council<sup>5</sup> to provide oversight for the NCS and to provide advice to government on careers services more generally; it has promoted the Matrix Standard; it has supported the Careers Profession Alliance<sup>6</sup> in establishing a single professional body for careers advisers<sup>7</sup>, to be called the Career Development Institute; and it has supported Careers England in developing the Quality in Careers Standard<sup>8</sup>. But concerns remain about how career guidance provision for young people in schools and colleges will be funded, how quality in provision will be assured, and how schools will be supported to meet their statutory responsibilities.

## 2. We risk a postcode lottery

- 2.1. Preparations by schools for the new statutory duty need to be viewed in a broader context. There are concerns from head teacher bodies<sup>9</sup> that careers education programmes within schools are being weakened. The current statutory duty to provide careers education within the curriculum has been removed; funding for programmes like Aimhigher and Education Business Partnerships has been discontinued; and work experience and work-related learning pre-16 seem likely to become much less common now that the requirement for schools to offer these opportunities has been withdrawn. There is a very significant risk of inconsistent careers provision across England, with school students suffering from a ‘post-code lottery’ in relation to what they are likely to receive, depending on the resources and priorities of their particular school.
- 2.2. The rationale for many of these policies within DfE is the Government’s policies regarding school autonomy. Whilst there is strong evidence for school autonomy in terms of pupil attainment, there is no evidence whatsoever that it brings improvement to support for career choices and transitions. Indeed, the evidence is to the contrary.<sup>10</sup> International studies demonstrate that school-based guidance systems tend to have weak links with the labour market, to view educational choices as ends in themselves rather than as career choices (which they are), to lack impartiality (promoting their own provision rather than college- or work-based routes) and to be patchy in extent and quality. In two countries which abandoned the partnership model in favour of school commissioning (the Netherlands and New Zealand), the outcome was significant reductions and poorer quality in career guidance provision. This happened despite the transfer of funding to schools, whereas in England schools are being given the responsibility but not the funding. There are accordingly grounds for grave concern about the likely impact of these policies.
- 2.3. There is a risk that fragmented delivery will extend beyond schools. The shift from a partnership model towards a contract-supplier relationship means there is little incentive for collaboration. To compound confusion, some local authorities have retained an electronic prospectus and common application process; others have not. The CSSA encourages all schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to work together at a local level. This could reinforce partnership working between schools rather than them working in isolation from each other and local authorities. The concerns about the lack of cohesion at a local level are most especially felt for young people with special educational needs (SEN), those with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and those not in education, employment or training (NEET). The cuts in funding and loss of specialist skills for these services means that provision is increasingly patchy, with the interactions between clients, families, and trained professionals less attuned to meeting the specialist needs that young people have.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/national-careers-council>

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.cparegister.org/>

<sup>7</sup> The CDI is not just for careers advisers; it will also cover practitioners involved in the delivery of careers development support.

<sup>8</sup> The Quality in Careers Standard is the national validation for England’s valued and respected CEIAG Quality Awards for schools and colleges. See <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/quality.php?page=introduction>

<sup>9</sup> ASCL (2011). *Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Schools in England*. A briefing paper with ACEG, Careers England and ICG.

<sup>10</sup> Watts, A.G. (2011). *The Proposed Model for Career Guidance in England: Some Lessons from International Examples*. Paper prepared for the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.



### 3. School preparations for the new duty

- 3.1. A report by ACEG<sup>11</sup> on the emerging models in schools identified schools adopting two broadly different models of delivery. On the one hand, some schools are adopting *internally resourced models* based on one of the following approaches:
- employing a professionally qualified careers adviser;
  - supporting a teacher, or a member of the non-teaching staff, to gain a recognised qualification in career guidance;
  - giving the job of providing career guidance to someone who is not qualified or trained to do so.
- 3.2. On the other hand, some schools, in addition to their own activities, are adopting *commissioning-based models*, contracting with one or more of the following:
- individual careers advisers on a freelance basis;
  - a wide range of social enterprises, some of which have evolved from the restructuring of, and redundancies from, the Connexions service;
  - careers organisations - former Connexions partnerships and careers companies selling their services to schools.
- 3.3. Sometimes these involve consortium approaches involving collaboration between a number of schools. In addition, other players are moving into the market. Some Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) are adding to their portfolio of work with schools by entering the career guidance market. Some FE colleges and universities too are seeking to become more active providers of information and support to schools in their locality, to help students better understand the options for further and higher education.
- 3.4. Evidence from a survey of 238 schools by ICG<sup>12</sup> during early-stage planning in late 2011 showed that:
- Just under half (49 per cent) of schools were planning to buy in impartial career guidance services from external careers guidance providers, independent careers advisers, freelancers or others.
  - Just over one third (34 per cent) of schools were planning to use teachers and/or non-teaching staff to deliver career guidance.
  - Eight per cent of schools were intending to do nothing, or simply to refer pupils to websites and other online services.
  - One in three were still undecided.
- 3.5. An informal poll by Careers England confirmed these patterns and suggested:
- about a third of schools will buy in independent careers advisers (but spending much less money on this than previous Connexions provision);
  - about a third will make their own internal arrangements, of varying quality;
  - about a third will do little or nothing.
- 3.6. As yet, there is no comprehensive understanding of what schools are doing. For many, the key issue is the *level of resources* they will commit to securing quality services. The Practical Guide belatedly issued by DfE to schools will help governors and head teachers make the decisions that are needed, but we suspect that lack of resources will remain a key issue, with substantial numbers of schools either adopting low-quality school-based models, or simply referring students to websites and the NCS telephone helpline.<sup>13</sup>
- 3.7. The CSSA is aware that some of its member organisations are looking to undertake a more comprehensive assessment of school plans for 2012 and beyond. It is also hoped that the thematic review by Ofsted in early 2013 will take account of how the statutory duty is being implemented. However, Ofsted has indicated<sup>14</sup> that it will not inspect against the statutory duty. Where schools are failing to meet the duty, there are seemingly no grounds for challenge and remedial action. This could potentially make a nonsense of the duty as outlined in the Education Act.



<sup>11</sup> ACEG (2012). *The ACEG Framework: a Framework for Careers and Work-Related Education*.

<sup>12</sup> ICG (2012). *Facing Up to the Future: How Schools in England are Responding to New Responsibilities for Careers Information Advice and Guidance*.

<sup>13</sup> Watts, A.G. (2012). *Policy Commentary 17: Practical Guide for Schools on Securing Independent Careers Guidance*. Careers England.

<sup>14</sup> Speech by Karen Adriaanse, HMI to Advisers and Inspectors for Careers Education (AICE), London, 11 June 2012



### **A continuous integrated programme of career activities in schools**

In a typical school setting, this could mean exposure to understanding the world of work in career-related learning programmes in Key Stage 2, including discussions of 'what I want to be when I grow up' and 'what I might need to do in order to get there'.

In Year 7, teachers can explore how their subjects open up pathways into different careers and offer different options for transition. More active interventions based on careers education and formal career guidance from Year 8 onwards can follow, alongside 'taster' sessions from local colleges and universities, inspirational talks from alumni and employers, work experience, and career mentoring.

Responsibilities for the co-ordination and delivery of such programmes need to be clearly allocated to appropriately qualified school staff alongside independent career guidance practitioners.

3.8. The CSSA strongly supports a careers sector ecosystem based on an all-age, all-stage approach to career IAG. This means that the system needs to be interconnected, that all the players play by the same quality rules and that the new National Careers Service expands its services to young people. As part of this ecosystem, schools can be best prepared to meet the new statutory duty by adopting the following three principles:

- ensuring that external service providers comply with the Matrix Standard for career guidance providers;
- ensuring that school staff and externally employed advisers comply with professional standards – Level 6 qualifications for all careers advisers;
- complying with appropriate quality standards – embedding the national Quality in Careers Standard for CEIAG quality awards in schools and colleges.

3.9. Although these principles are endorsed in the additional Practical Guide issued by DfE to schools, they are not mandatory; it remains for head teachers and school governors to decide what is best for their students. It is crucial that the Education Select Committee endorses these three principles in its recommendations: greater visibility for these fundamental principles and endorsement by the committee will contribute to schools better understanding their responsibilities for quality career guidance provision. The careers sector has demonstrated their commitment to these standards by championing Matrix, professional standards and QiCS. The CSSA is likewise working with stakeholders, especially employers, to support the quality of careers education, career IAG and work-related learning programmes within schools by promoting the aforementioned national quality standards.

## **4. The value of face-to-face support**

4.1. Given the complexity of the choices that young people face at age 14 and beyond, relating to the different routes and pathways into further and higher education and employment, access to face-to-face guidance is essential to complement the information and advice that is available online or through other sources. The CSSA believes that independent face-to-face career guidance is relevant and valuable for most if not all young people (though especially crucial for those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs). The ICG survey shows that nearly all schools (98 per cent) said that face-to-face guidance is 'very important' or 'quite important'. Nine out of 10 schools want a combination of face-to-face guidance, visiting speakers, access to websites and telephone helplines, but face-to-face guidance from an independent careers adviser remains the most popular choice.





## 5. Extending the age of young people receiving career guidance

5.1. The general tenor of submissions from CSSA members<sup>15</sup> in response to the DfE consultation on raising the participation age is that IAG support should be extended both upwards and downwards. Career IAG for all young people should be provided from Year 8 upwards. It is crucial that young people have access to information, advice and guidance about the subject choices they face at age 14, and about post-16 and post-18 qualifications and routes and pathways into further and higher education, apprenticeships, work-based learning and employment. Extending the entitlement to a wider range of age groups is highly desirable; however, additional funding would need to be provided to cover the costs of delivering the service.

### A bridge to work

- The Education and Employers Task Force plans to recruit 100,000 people from all sectors and professions into schools and colleges to talk about their jobs and career routes.
- The Bridge Group plans to work with universities to mobilise support from university alumni in order to help students from non-traditional backgrounds better understand the world of work, provide student placement opportunities and gain access to graduate employment opportunities.
- The STEM Ambassadors programme run by STEMNET has a network of 27,000 volunteers who go into schools to provide insights to the work of STEM-related jobs.
- The Science Council has launched the Hidden Science Map to help teachers to link careers work to STEM employers in their communities.

## 6. The contribution of careers education and guidance

6.1. Beyond the areas of interest identified by the Education Select Committee for its inquiry, the CSSA wishes to draw the attention of the committee to the wide range of evidence which demonstrates the impact of careers education and guidance. Beyond the highly influential Milburn report<sup>16</sup> on access to the professions and the Wolf report<sup>17</sup> on vocational education, a number of reviews<sup>18</sup> have collated the evidence from almost two decades of research into the impact of careers education and guidance, particularly at key points of transition for young people. A literature review commissioned by CfBT<sup>19</sup> showed that: ‘...*there is a reasonably strong case to be made that careers education, information, advice and guidance-related interventions can and do make a difference in terms of increased levels of personal confidence and self-esteem.*’ The links between career IAG and the choices young people make on leaving school are not easy to demonstrate, but these research reviews provide good evidence that:

- career IAG has an impact on career exploration and decision-making skills;
- career IAG has a positive impact on participation in learning;
- careers education and career IAG are associated with improvements in retention in full-time education and reduced course-switching;
- in-depth advice and guidance is positively associated with attitudinal work-related outcomes, including increased work satisfaction and confidence in gaining a desired job.

6.2. The role of careers education in complementing career IAG is strongly supported by this evidence. Initiatives involving employers and alumni have an important contribution to make, but should be part of a coherently managed careers



<sup>15</sup> Submissions were made by AELP, AoC, ASCL, Careers England, City & Guilds, Pearson Think Tank, TUC and Unison.

<sup>16</sup> Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (2009). *Unleashing Aspiration: the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions.*

<sup>17</sup> Wolf, A. (2011). *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report.*

<sup>18</sup> EPPI (2004). *A Systematic Review of Recent Research (1988-2003) into the Impact of Careers Education and Guidance on Transitions from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4.* EPPI (2005). *A Systematic Literature Review of Research (1988-2004) into the Impact of Career Education and Guidance during Key Stage 4 on Young People’s Transitions into Post-16 Opportunities.* See also Morris, M. (2000). *School Improvement: the Contribution of Careers Education and Guidance.* A Background Briefing Paper to accompany a talk given at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), Edinburgh, 20-23 September.

<sup>19</sup> Hughes, D. & Gratton, G (2009). *Literature Review of Research on the Impact of Careers and Guidance-Related Interventions.* CfBT



programme, linked to the curriculum. A new research review by iCeGS and the Pearson Think Tank indicates that the most effective mode of delivery for careers work in schools is a curriculum-led approach, in which career is seen as an important focal point for learning, with a body of knowledge, skills and pedagogic approaches connected with it.<sup>20</sup> The need to help young people develop the necessary career management skills they are going to need to help them plan, manage and develop their careers throughout out their lives is even more acutely relevant today, at a time when the job market is changing so rapidly and the economic climate is increasingly uncertain and difficult.

- 6.3. We encourage the Education Select Committee to reflect on these different sources of evidence about the contribution of careers education and IAG to the choices that young people make. Certainly, the evidence also shows that there are challenges with ensuring consistency in the quality of support provided and that the progress achieved to date is not sufficient. However, the careers sector is committed to ensuring that the career guidance needs of young people are met.

## 7. The actions

7.1. The Careers Sector Stakeholders Alliance urges the Education Select Committee to ensure the following steps are taken:

- Reinforce the changes in policy introduced by Minister John Hayes by making recommendations about the importance of enforcing quality standards to make the market (in careers support for schools) work.
- Emphasise the development of a more sophisticated narrative by policy-makers on the positive role that career IAG can play in helping young people make more informed choices about their future options for further study, employment and career development.
- Support the Careers Profession Alliance and its work to establish a new professional body, the Career Development Institute, to champion the professionalisation of careers advisers.
- Emphasise the importance of improved co-ordination between employers, professional careers advisers and schools for greater employer involvement in careers education and guidance, so ensuring that businesses are able to recruit from a wider talent pool.

### A three-pronged approach to ensure quality

- Firstly, every school should be encouraged to achieve a recognised CEIAG Quality Award for its internally provided programme of provision, which should be nationally validated against the over-arching Quality in Careers Standard.
- Secondly, the externally-secured careers guidance should be procured from a provider which meets the Matrix Standard - this is required of all NCS providers already and should become a requirement for schools to adhere to.
- Thirdly, the deliverer of the externally-secured careers guidance should be a recognised professional with appropriate qualifications in career guidance as recommended by the Careers Profession Alliance (soon to be a single professional body for careers advisers called the Career Development Institute), and listed on the national Register of QCF Level 6 professional advisers.



Convened under the auspices of the CIHE, the Careers Sector Stakeholders Alliance is a strategic leadership network of careers sector stakeholders. It aims to formulate a national strategic framework for careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) to address the issues of access, transparency, quality, equality, and continuity, and to identify areas where UK-wide co-ordination would be helpful.

Chair: Sir Martin Harris

Convening Committee: Keith Herrmann (Convenor), Ian Borkett (TUC), Vivienne Brown (Scotland), Margaret Dane (AGCAS), Sarah Finnegan-Dehn (Careers Wales), Paul Holme (British Chambers Manchester), Prof. Tony Watts  
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<sup>20</sup> Hooley, T., Marriott, J., Watts, A.G. & Coiffait, L. (2012). *Careers 2020: Options for Future Careers Work in English Schools*. Pearson & iCeGS.