

## Key issues for career IAG provision in the Education Bill

30th June 2011

### 1. Introduction

1.1. Alongside the briefing notes already issued to date by Careers England<sup>1</sup>, the Institute of Career Guidance<sup>2</sup> and the UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum<sup>3</sup>, it might be useful to identify what Strategic Forum members might realistically hope to achieve during the Education Bill's passage through the House of Lords. There would seem to be five main issues.

### 2. Assuring the quality of IAG provision

2.1. First, in terms of amendments, the one which some members have been developing is on *quality assurance*. The proposal is that in respect of the new duty on schools to 'secure... independent careers guidance', the following should be added:

*'... from persons who shall meet such national quality assurance criteria as the Secretary of State shall require'.*

2.2. Contacts have been made to secure that an amendment along these lines is put down for debate at the House of Lords Committee Stage<sup>4</sup>. It has also been suggested that the peer tabling this should add the raising of the age of the duty from 16 to 18 (Ministers have promised to consult on this, but it needs further debate since young people aged 16+ look likely to be excluded from the National Careers Service except via the helpline/website).

### 3. Securing face-to-face guidance

3.1. Second, in the Second Reading in the Lords on 14 June, Lord Haskel indicated his interest in a further amendment on the need to secure *face-to-face* guidance. There seem to be two options here:

- a. To move an amendment to alter 'independent careers guidance' to 'independent face-to-face careers guidance'.
- b. To ask ministers to amend or 'clarify' the crucial sentence in the April communication to schools ('This might include web-based or telephone services, and/or face-to-face guidance from a specialist provider'), to read: 'This should include face-to-face guidance from a specialist provider, supplemented by web-based or telephone services.'

3.2. Some members of the Strategic Forum, however, might be concerned that this would make it more difficult for schools to appoint their own careers advisers, which is an important 'escape route' for some Connexions Personal Advisers trained as careers advisers.

<sup>1</sup> Careers England (2011). *The Education Bill: Briefing for the Next Steps*. Also Watts, A.G. (2011). *Careers England Policy Commentary 15: the Coalition's Emerging Policies on Career Guidance*.

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Career Guidance (2011). *Submission of Evidence by the Institute of Career Guidance to the Public Bill Committee (Education Bill)*.

<sup>3</sup> UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum (2011). *Briefing Note 6: Budget Allocations and Arrangements for Careers Services for Young People within the New All-Age Careers Service in England*. Also UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum (2011). *Briefing Note 7: Draft Summary of the Career Guidance Provisions in the Education Bill (England)*.

<sup>4</sup> In pursuing this, it would be helpful to distinguish between (a) the professional standards for individual career practitioners (currently being developed by the Careers Profession Alliance) and (b) the organisational standards for career guidance providers. It would be helpful if a commitment could be made by Ministers that all services in receipt of public funding will in future be required to meet both sets of standards. These should be further distinguished from (c) voluntary kitemarks for organisations wishing to indicate their commitment to the career development of their students or employees (e.g. the overarching kitemark currently being developed under the aegis of Careers England to validate the various existing quality awards for schools, colleges and work-based learning providers).

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## 4. Transitions to employment

- 4.1. Third, an issue which Strategic Forum members might want to pursue is that of **placement services** for young people. Ministers might be asked to clarify how the Secretary of State's duty under the 1973 Employment and Training Act to "assist persons ceasing to undergo relevant education to obtain employment, training and education" is to be discharged under the new arrangements.

## 5. Accountability for schools

- 5.1. Fourth, Strategic Forum members might want to pursue the issue of **accountability**. John Hayes in his University of Derby video<sup>5</sup> referred to Ofsted and to the destinations measure; he further indicated that in addition the Government would in future 'take further steps if necessary to secure that the right advice is given at the right time'. Peers could ask for clarification from Ministers on:

- a. What form the Ofsted inspection of career guidance provision would take, and how to avoid the danger that this area of schools' work is given little if any attention, by inspectors with no expertise in this field.
- b. How the destinations measure is expected to provide any serious accountability in relation to career guidance provision when as currently designed, it is expected to measure only the proportions entering a 'positive destination', with no indication of the appropriateness of that destination to the talents, interests and ambitions of the individual concerned.
- c. What other steps Ministers are proposing to consider.

## 6. Appropriate resourcing for careers education and IAG

- 6.1. Finally, there is the crucial issue of **funding**. Certainly the points about the removal of all funding for face-to-face services for young people need to be made clearly and unequivocally. But to achieve more than this, it is important to be clear about:

- a. The context for pursuing the issue. The £200m was only a notional amount within the Local Authority Early Intervention Grant. This is to be reduced by 10.9% in 2011/12, and then increased by 3.8% to £2,297 in 2012/13. No rationale appears to have been given for the reduction, or any indication of how much of it is a public-expenditure cut, and how much of it is justified by a transfer of powers (i.e. services which the Local Authority is no longer expected to provide).
- b. What might be feasible. Could the Department for Education be persuaded to commit some money to the National Careers Service for an interim period, to support continuity of services, and then transferred to schools?

## 7. Progress to date

- 7.1. On all these matters, it is important to distinguish between:

- a. Ensuring that there are clear critiques, in the public domain, of the fundamental flaws in the Government's policies.
- b. Identifying areas where significant modifications might be achieved within those policies.

- 7.2. Strategic Forum members, including Careers England, the National Connexions Network, ICG, ASCL, ACEG, Unison and others, have been briefing Peers in the House of Lords about the career IAG aspects of the Bill. Partly as a result of these efforts, amendments have been submitted by various different Peers to require:

- a report to Parliament on transition arrangements (including funding and provision) from Connexions to the new National Careers Service;
- quality-assurance criteria for external providers of career guidance in schools;
- standards for provision of career guidance in schools, to include the quality and frequency of careers guidance, and the need for it to be face-to-face, to be delivered by trained persons, and to include both academic and vocational options;



<sup>5</sup> Video presented as the iCeGS Annual Lecture, 16 June 2011.



- careers education to be contained within mandated delivery of PSHE in schools;
- the appointment of a board to provide advice on matters relating to careers education and guidance;
- career guidance provision to be assured to 16-18 year olds, not only pre-16;
- the need for job/training vacancy services to remain available to 16-18 year olds.

7.3. Strategic Forum members are encouraged to secure support from as many Peers as possible for these proposed amendments, especially from Peers on the Conservative benches. In addition, providing Peers with evidence (e.g. case studies) which they can reference in speeches at the Committee stage is crucial.

7.4. We expect the amendments on the career guidance provisions of the Education Bill to be debated in the Committee stage in the House of Lords towards the end of July.

