



## REVIEW 2014: MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT – 11 YEARS OF CAREERS ENGLAND

We have now published a review of our eleven year history<sup>1</sup>. This review highlights the key elements from the full history.

### 1. Introduction

Established in April 2003, with 16 founding members, CE is the Trade Association representing mainly employer organisations and smaller traders across England, providing a range of careers information, advice and guidance services. Members' products and services serve to *'encourage and support the career aspirations, and increase the life chances, of young people and adults in learning and work'*.

### 2. The changing landscape

The provision of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) has been subject to regular change over the last twenty years, with centrally driven Government policies, resulting in structural changes. The 16 founding Full Members of CE in 2003 – were 'careers companies' seeking a form of association following the full implementation of the Connexions Service in April of that year (the introduction of Connexions was phased – starting in 2001 and completing its introduction in 2003). CE has had to adapt quickly to a fast changing environment, shifting political agendas and priorities.

Its growing appeal, as a trade association, is because it has been able to demonstrate its relevance, constancy and effectiveness to a *'wide church'* of traders in the careers business. As such CE has adapted and evolved both to meet the needs of its members and to strive to strengthen the provision made to the sector.

### 3. Vision, Mission and Values

CE's Vision, Mission and Values statements are reviewed and approved each year by the Board and are published on the Careers England website<sup>2</sup>. *'Careers England exists to foster, support and encourage the promotion of the economic, social and educational benefits from the products and services which its Members provide – for individuals, for communities, for the wider employer/business world and for the economy of the country.'*

### 4. Corporate Governance

CE is a company limited by guarantee. Its members appoint the Board of Directors, who are non-executives and whose role is to provide strategic direction in the planning, execution and review of the company's affairs. The Articles currently provide for a maximum of 13 Directors. The Chair of the Board is Katharine Horler, and the Executive Director (until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014) is Paul Chubb. As of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 the Executive Director will be Steve Stewart OBE, formerly Connexions CSWP Chief Executive and previously Careers England Chair.

<sup>1</sup> *MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT: The Eleven Years of Careers England's History* 1st April 2003 - 31st March 2014 (6th edition) published August 2014 – <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/index.php?page=history>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/index.php?page=vision>

Since CE began trading in 2003, Stephen Nicholson has performed the role (under a supplier contract) of Company Treasurer and continues to do so alongside his role as Company Secretary (which he also took on from October 2009).

## **5. Membership**

Although the majority of the membership comprises corporate employer organisations, because of the nature of the sector it serves, CE also includes a growing number of smaller/self-employed providers as Affiliates, and others with an interest in its activities as Associates.

Since 2012 there has been a significant increase in membership and, as of September 2014, there have been 37 Full Corporate Members, 26 Affiliates and 19 Associates – the ‘Our Members’ page on the CE website records that membership is now at a record level<sup>3</sup>. This is in part due to the impact of the reduction of the number of Connexions services operating and an increase in the number of sole-traders seeking membership as Affiliates - the category of membership which has grown the quickest in recent years.

## **6. Communication and Consultation**

Communication and consultation with Members is crucial for the success of Careers England and is constantly kept under review.

Communication both with members and, in some cases, the wider public is made through a variety of methods. This includes the CE website [www.careersengland.org.uk](http://www.careersengland.org.uk), the Twitter account @CareersEngland and the Weekly Members’ E-newsletter, with the latter two both established in August 2013. As of September 2014 over 50 Member’s E-newsletters have been published, reaching over 150 colleagues in Member organisations. The Twitter account has also proved popular and has already attracted over 600 followers from both member and non-member organisations enabling CE to promote membership opportunities, policies, publications and conferences to a wider external audience.

## **7. Task Groups**

Since 2005-6 CE has established four Task Groups: the 13-19 Task Group; the Adults Task Group (both established 2005-6); the Workforce Issues Task Group (established 2010) and the Quality Task Group (established 2009-10)<sup>4</sup>. These Task Groups have held regular meetings often with senior government officials and have not only enhanced the knowledge of Task Group members on latest policy developments, but have also acted as a significant conduit ensuring officials are made fully aware of the views of Group members as policy is shaped.

The Task Groups, involving a significant numbers of Member representatives, are a major strength in the association’s growing portfolio of activity - constituting a pool of knowledge and expertise helping to ensure not only that members’ interests are served, but also shaping the environment in which they work.

A major achievement of the Task Groups is demonstrated by the formation of the Quality in Careers Standard (QiCS) ‘kite mark’ for England’s CEIAG Quality Awards – initiated by the Quality Task Group after the recommendations of the Careers Profession Task Force<sup>5</sup> and now overseen by the Quality in Careers Consortium<sup>6</sup>. During 2013-14 and 2014-15 National Validation Panels have taken place to assess whether a CEIAG Quality Award provider meets the exacting criteria for QiCS

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/index.php?page=our-members>

<sup>4</sup> Details of membership to all Task Groups can be found at [www.careersengland.org.uk](http://www.careersengland.org.uk) – Task Group pages

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/documents/Public/Quality%20Assuring%20CEIAG%20In%20Schools%2010.11.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/documents/public/QiCS%20Members%20of%20the%20Board.pdf>

validation; and by the end of July 2014 eight CEIAG Quality award providers had achieved QiCS national validation. This is a tremendous achievement in the first 18 months of QiCS' existence and has significantly contributed to raising both the standard of CEIAG in schools and colleges alongside Careers England's profile.

The CE Board is committed to the continuation, during the 2014-15 business plan year, of the four Task Groups, including increasing their frequency of meeting where possible, since their involvement of significant numbers of representatives from Members is acknowledged as being an undoubted major strength in the association's growing portfolio of activity.

## **8. Policy Commentaries and Policy Briefing Notes**

Given the importance attached to evidence-led policy and practice, and the need to articulate an authoritative informed voice for its members and the sector, Careers England has commissioned and published an authoritative series of independent policy commentaries on key policy developments related to the future of all-age career guidance services in England. Since 2005 the Board has published 27 Policy Commentaries, with significant inputs from one of the leading international experts on CEIAG, Professor Tony Watts, OBE.

During 2013-14, in addition to continuing to publish detailed Policy Commentaries<sup>7</sup>, an occasional series of shorter Policy Briefing Notes<sup>8</sup> was introduced covering current topical issues along with the long-established regular media and public affairs monitoring service exclusively available to CE's Full Members. As of September 2014, 20 Policy Briefing Notes have been published, the most recent of which was published in August 2014.

## **9. As we look towards the future....**

It is evident Careers England has become a recognised and informed, collective, authoritative professional voice for the sector. It is now the '*go to organisation*' on CEIAG, realising its vision '*to be recognised as the informed corporate voice of the career guidance industry in England*'. Clearly, though, Careers England's members believe there remains much which is unsatisfactory about national policy for careers guidance provision, with significant challenges to be addressed. The challenges remain significant - not least to ensure sound evidence of '*what works*' (internationally as much as in this country) informs both policy and practice in CEIAG.

CE has been supportive of, and its members provide much of the backbone for, the National Careers Service (principally in provision for adults) established in 2012. However it still remains under-resourced and under publicised as a national brand. During 2014-15 we will be calling for stronger cross-Government support for NCS including greater collaboration and better ways of addressing future funding.

The Education Act 2011, which made schools directly responsible for "*securing access to independent careers guidance*" for their students, was a major policy shift regrettably not backed by empirical evidence.

Careers England's submission to the House of Commons Education Select Committee 2012 review of careers guidance in schools highlighted concerns about the lack of robust quality assurance of careers guidance policies and practices amongst too many schools, and a far too laissez-faire approach by Government to measures of accountability for how schools are discharging their duty. The Select Committee 2014 follow-up inquiry into careers guidance for young people will see Careers England again call for the duty to be better quality assured and regulated, with a need for stronger accountability and increased consistency.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/papers.php?page=commentaries>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/papers.php?page=commentaries>

During 2014-15 we will continue to advocate a stronger professional careers service provision for all ages.

And as we look ahead to 2015 and the coming General Election, the CE Board remains resolute that the responsibility of CE will be to continue to promote the economic, educational, social and personal benefits which effective career guidance providers can bring to individuals, communities and consequently the health of the country. In so doing, CE will be serving not only the legitimate interests of its membership, but more importantly contributing to the economic recovery of the nation, thereby, playing a key part in supporting increased social mobility and economic success.

**Steve Stewart, Sarah Hope and Paul Chubb**  
**August 2014**

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For more information on Careers England visit [www.careersengland.org.uk](http://www.careersengland.org.uk), follow us on Twitter @CareersEngland or contact us on the details below:

Steve Stewart  
Executive Director  
[steve.stewart@careersengland.org.uk](mailto:steve.stewart@careersengland.org.uk)

Sarah Hope  
Communications Co-ordinator  
[sarah.hope@careersengland.org.uk](mailto:sarah.hope@careersengland.org.uk)