

DIUS Consultation – Informal Adult learning- Shaping the Way Ahead RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION FROM CAREERS ENGLAND

1. Introduction

1.1 Careers England is the trade association for business organisations involved in careers related services. As such it is an employers' organisation. As the only association of specialist career guidance businesses in the country, we exist to promote the benefits to the nation of utilising the distinctive skills of such organisations. From our perspective as specialist career guidance businesses, our strategic direction majors upon advocacy of the economic and social benefits of career guidance to the health of the nation, and the need for an effective all-age strategy for career guidance provision in England.

1.2 All of our members provide publicly-funded careers education & guidance services for young people, and most of our members also provide publicly-funded IAG services for adults.

1.3 For more information on Careers England please see www.careersengland.org.uk

1.4 Please contact us via PAUL CHUBB, Director and Professional Adviser, Careers England on 07976 575536 or mail to paul@boundarypartnership.co.uk

2. Our Response

2.1 This response to the Shaping the Way Ahead (SWA) consultation on Informal Adult Learning (IAL) highlights the importance of career guidance, advice and information in making an essential contribution to the personal fulfilment, health and well-being of adults in England and therefore should be an embedded element within all IAL.

2.2 While SWA gives a clear picture of the growth, value and history of informal adult learning and poses important questions for its future, it is disappointing to note that although the Leitch Report is mentioned in the context of formal

learning, there is no acknowledgement of the benefits to adults (which Leitch recognised) that impartial advice and guidance consistently makes including making the best use of limited resources.

2.3 Although the SWA consultation is about informal learning (IAL) i.e. learning for enjoyment, personal fulfilment, intellectual, creative and physical stimulation, it is just as important as in the formal learning or work context that individuals can access the right information and advice on how to make the right choices for them to develop their capabilities and how to make plans on progression to the next stage of their learning. Additionally, adults may well need help to know how best to make use of their own financial contributions towards their learning.

2.4 It is recognised that for many the first step on the adult learning path is often through informal routes and the ability to make that connection is a crucial part of the choice process. This can also be the first step in sharing learning and expertise to move into the self directed/self funded activity phase the SWA report would like to see using for example, the U3A model.

2.5 The new arrangements for the next**step** service 2008-10 with the Universal Service available to all adults should be reflected in any policy and planning by DIUS.

2.6 The SWA report makes the point that many individuals access their informal learning in isolated communities or using technology from their own homes and the Universal part of the next**step** service is currently envisaged to be offered in groups, not to individuals; this should be reconsidered by DIUS/LSC.

2.7 IAG empowers individuals which can only help in making best use of both personal and government resources.

2.8 We would strongly advise that impartial career guidance and advice and information should be an embedded element of all publicly-funded learning including informal adult learning.

27th May 2008

PAC/JCH.AF/CE.ADULTS TG 27.5.08