

Careers Profession Task Force

Progress Report to Ministers, March 2011

Background

In October 2010, the Careers Profession Task Force published its report, *Towards a Strong Careers Profession*. The report sets out the Task Force's vision for the careers profession in England. The report makes 14 recommendations that focus on the actions needed to assure a high standard of professional practice throughout the careers workforce.

This document reports on the progress made by those responsible for implementing the Task Force's recommendations.

Progress

Recommendation 1

Progress: Uncertain

The Task Force welcomes the Government's reaffirmation in principle of the partnership model. But, for the following reasons, we are concerned about whether this intent is being converted into practice:

- The Education Bill makes partnership with external organisations a part of the duty on schools, but at the same time removes the statutory duty for schools to provide programmes of careers education. We note that Ministers have started to reinforce the importance of careers education (even if it is not statutory), but recommend that they do so more assertively.
- The latest clarification from civil servants suggests that schools can employ their own careers advisers and can meet their proposed statutory duty to provide an external source of guidance through, for example, access to online resources. This would effectively allow schools to opt into the partnership model or not, as they wish. It is also questionable whether such a 'duty' is worthy of legislation.
- We are further concerned that the school-led contracting model, as proposed in the Bill, will change the nature of the relationship between schools and the external organisation, further undermining the principles of a partnership model.
- We note that the rationale for the partnership model is not only access to impartial guidance but also the proximity of the external service to the labour market and access to broader resources (which can provide not only services to pupils but also CPD to school staff in relation to their own careers education and guidance roles). These need to be attended to in framing the new arrangements, alongside the issues of quality control and professional standards. This is linked to the issue of whether the all-age service is simply an optional contractor within the proposed 'market', or has a broader strategic role, e.g. in relation to CRM/tracking systems. We strongly advocate the latter.

Recommendations 2 and 3

Progress: Good

The Task Force is pleased to report that the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA) is now established and includes six Professional Associations:

- The Institute for Career Guidance (ICG)
- Association for Careers Education and Guidance (ACEG)
- National Association for Educational Guidance to Adults (NAEGA)
- Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS)
- Northern Ireland Schools Careers Association (NISCA)
- Association of Careers Professionals International (ACPI)

The CPA has undertaken work to establish Professional Standards that cover:

- A common code of ethics
- Membership criteria and common levels of entry
- A framework for initial training and CPD
- A Register of Members that will help to set common standards across the sector and define the professional entry level at level 6 (QCF).

The CPA is acting as a single authoritative voice for the careers profession. Furthermore, it has committed itself to developing one professional body and achieving Chartered Status within three years.

With support from LSIS, the CPA has built on the excellent foundation laid by LLUK. For the first time, there will be a framework in place that has been developed by the profession itself and embraces all parts of this diverse sector.

Whilst much remains to be done, and detailed consultation needs to take place between members of the CPA and their respective memberships, there is a clear enthusiasm for commitment to meeting the requirements of a fully fledged Chartered body. This will not only raise standards in the profession but also provide consistent high level support to young people and to adults already in the labour market.

Recommendation 4

Progress: Good

The CPA has developed three levels of membership for the profession:

Professional membership: Requires a minimum authenticated Level 6 (QCF) in a relevant qualification. Members are entered onto a national Register of Members and required to uphold professional standards, a Code of Ethics and meet requirements for CPD. Membership covers Careers Educators with relevant qualifications, and the CPA is collaborating with the Welfare to Work sector to include appropriate qualifications.

The CPA is seeking to develop the Register of Members into a Licence to Practise. The CPA is also looking to develop a Level 7 minimum for professional membership, a pre-requisite for achieving Chartered Status.

Associate membership: Requires relevant qualifications at Levels 3, 4 or 5. Progression to professional status will be supported through a competence (NOS) based career progression framework. Related qualifications are being accommodated using a competence based approach and 'top up'.

Affiliate membership – This level is for all those who are interested in the profession, and will include a student membership category.

Recommendation 5

Progress: Satisfactory

The Task Force is pleased to report that the CPA has designed a new Career Progression Framework. This sets out the qualifications and competencies needed in each role, and identifies the progression pathways to higher levels of practice and specialisms such as STEM and LMI. Subject to funding, the CPA plans to develop the framework into an online system. The CPA is seeking to firmly establish the new framework ahead of the launch of the all-age careers service.

The framework will help to promote entry to the careers profession for people from diverse backgrounds. But steps have also been taken to help diversify the workforce by further developing the work-based route into the profession. For example, the ICG has recently formed a strategic partnership with the OCR Awarding Body to strengthen and expand accredited, work-based entry routes. In addition, the CPA is drawing on the good work in this area by LLUK, which has developed an equality and diversity toolkit for organisations providing careers guidance.

However, the Task Force notes that no work has been carried out to establish concepts of Careers First or Careers Last as we recommended. We understand that work on this will follow once Career Progression Framework has been established.

Recommendations 6, 7 and 8

Progress: Good

As we note above, the professional standards developed by the CPA include a commitment to minimum levels of CPD.

There are already systems in place for members of some Professional Associations to self declare the nature and amount of CPD they have undertaken each year. However, there is significant scope to improve on this, and the CPA has developed the following requirements for its members:

- **Professional membership:** CPD will be compulsory in line with the national register requirements and monitored using random sampling.
- **Associate membership:** members will be obliged to do CPD and this may be self-declared.
- **Affiliate membership:** members will have access to CPD.

The CPD framework will include minimum hours, but the focus will be on competence and learning outcomes based on National Occupational Standards developed by Sector Skills Councils.

The CPA Executive Group has also agreed to work towards harmonising the different associations' CPD offers. Particular attention is being paid to a range of learning approaches, including online development opportunities and working with employers and other stakeholders.

With regards to training and CPD in STEM, LMI and ICT, the following progress has been made:

LMI: An LMI on-line module, developed by the University of Warwick's Institute for Employment Research and funded by the [then] SSDA in 2007, is currently being updated. Its purpose was to support career professionals in their research and use of LMI in the career guidance process. The module was made freely available through the National Guidance Research Forum website [link](#)). The volume of hits on this module has been increasing steadily since its launch and there is evidence it has been embedded in the CPD programmes of careers organisations. The module will be moved to the University of Warwick's website in the Spring of 2011, to provide stability and sustainability for the revised version. Synergies with the STEM learning module, currently under development, are being built into the LMI module, to ensure learners link between the two knowledge domains of LMI and STEM.

STEM: The STEM subject choice and careers project team (led by Sheffield Hallam University [link](#)) linked up with the Warwick IER team in autumn, 2010, to produce an on-line learning module to support the active learning through CPD of careers professionals and careers coordinators in the area of STEM. The STEM Careers Project is part of DfE STEM programme – developing a wide range of resources and support for subject teachers as well as careers professionals – so the STEM module includes awareness of the breadth of resources produced by the project and access to a wide range of partner materials including Future Morph (Science Council careers website) and Maths careers website (hosted by Maths Community). The structure for this learning resource will mirror that of the LMI module. Positioned with the National STEM website, it will have multiple links with the Warwick LMI module. Relying heavily on the resource pack produced from the STEM project, this resource will also provide LMI on STEM issues. It will support the process of learning required to think through and undertake research into current and reliable LMI on STEM on an ongoing basis. It will be available late spring, 2011.

TDA are in contact with the National STEM centre and are looking at updating the TDA CPD materials (for teachers) to include a focus on ICT and STEM. There is also the intention to explore the scope for involving the TDA in increasing teacher's knowledge and understanding of STEM careers through initial teacher training.

ICT: The UK Commission for Employment and Skills has recently published a series of reports on different aspects of integrating ICT into the career guidance process. These are all available through a common portal [here](#). The reports provide comprehensive, evidence-based research into the increased use of ICT in careers practice and provide a clear indication of the potential for extending and developing practice in this area. Whilst it is clear from the evidence that the further integration of ICT into careers service delivery is essential for effective delivery of services, a number of key issues need to be resolved before its successful implementation can be achieved fully. These include CPD support for careers professionals and the careful attention that needs to be given to the ICT specification for the all-age service to ensure this supports fully integrated provision. Progressing the details of this CPD agenda more concretely will be difficult until the precise shape, form and scope of the all-age service is known.

The Task Force notes that no work has yet been undertaken on the concept of an 'Advanced Careers Practitioner', but the CPA reports that the new framework should support the concept. The CPA plans to develop this further once a register/licence to practise has been established.

Recommendation 9

Progress: Uncertain

The CPA has reported to the Taskforce that its professional standards and the new Career Progression Framework have been designed to include both Careers Educators and Careers Advisers.

However, the Task Force considers that the lack of clarity about current policy in relation to schools and CEIAG means that the outcome for this recommendation is uncertain. As we note in the report on Recommendation 1, it is vital there is clarification from the Government about the expectations for schools, particularly whether or not they can employ Careers Advisers.

Recommendation 10

Progress: Good

There has been widespread support from the sector for the introduction of an overarching kite mark to validate the different quality awards. Careers England (the trade association of specialist careers employers) will now be helping to develop this kite mark, working with the 18 providers of CEIAG quality awards and experts in the field of careers education and guidance.

Proposals concerning the kite mark will be presented to the Task Force and the DfE by July 2011.

Once the kite mark has been developed, the TDA will assist with the communication strategy, informing the school workforce of its existence and added value (principally via the School Partnerships project and TDA Regional Leads).

Recommendation 11

Progress: Uncertain

The Task Force welcomes plans for a national quality standard to be applied to the all-age careers service. The Task Force is concerned that no decision has been taken on what that national standard will be but understands that recommendations will be made to Ministers in May 2011 based on the results of the trial of the enhanced matrix Standard. Government has confirmed that it will establish a quality standard, which will assure schools that providers of careers guidance are delivering a high quality service. The Task Force recommends that this should be the same national quality standard to be applied to the all-age careers service.

The Task Force considers that in making arrangements for the provision of career guidance to young people and adults, all organisations must ensure that there are strong links between the three elements of the quality assurance framework:

- professional standards for the careers advisers delivering the services
- CEIAG quality awards for schools and colleges which meet the proposed new kite mark
- a single national quality standard for all providers of careers services for young people and adults (whether procured directly by Government or secured by schools under their proposed new duty).

The CPA and Careers England are preparing a joint statement on these three elements of the quality framework.

The Task Force notes that questions also remain about HE institutions' adherence to a quality standard for the provision of their careers services (AGCAS currently requires

the matrix Standard for membership). In addition, questions remain about how the current *Quality Standards for Young People's IAG* will fit with the new era; most of these standards have much merit in terms of being strongly focused on serving young people's needs, which will be important to address once schools have new responsibilities under their proposed new duty.

Recommendation 12

Progress: Good

The Task Force is aware that there is now a clear expectation for careers professionals to share their knowledge and expertise, helping to ensure that young people receive the best possible CEIAG. In addition there is a strong expectation upon schools to continue to work closely with careers professionals.

In addition to these general principles, the following work is being developed and undertaken:

- The TDA, National College and LSIS have been working with the DfE, BIS and the CPA to support CEIAG in schools and colleges, and to help ensure a coherent, cross-sector approach. There has been regular communication with the DfE to scope possible ways in which each organisation could support the Task Force's recommendations.
- The TDA is working with 260 School Partnerships to support 3000 schools in collaborative approaches to professional development and school improvement. There is potential to use this network as a vehicle to communicate government expectations regarding careers education, to develop a learning community of careers educators, and to raise awareness of CPD resources and effective practice.
- The TDA hold a CPD Database which can be used to hold and share information and resources. There is also a dedicated web page for School Partnerships.
- The National College will shortly publish a research paper, *Leading CEIAG in Secondary Schools*, which brings together good practice from six schools. This will be followed by a report on good practice in Independent Schools, and on employer engagement in nine schools. Good practice is promoted through a network of School Associates (Head Teachers).
- LSIS is working with the learning and skills sector to gather and disseminate good practice.
- Ofsted involvement is being taken forward through Recommendation 13.

Recommendation 13

Progress: Good

It has been reported to the Task Force that Ministers are considering asking Ofsted to carry out a thematic review of CEIAG in September 2012, to coincide with the commencement of the proposed duty on schools.

The Task Force welcomes this approach. A thematic review at this time will help to identify good CEIAG provision and establish a baseline for subsequent reviews on the quality of careers advice in schools and colleges. Following publication of the thematic review, Ofsted and the careers profession should work together to disseminate examples of good practice to a wide audience, including parents, young people and practitioners.

The Task Force recommends that its members – as representatives of the careers community – are given the opportunity to work with Ofsted to agree its lines of inquiry for the thematic review. Following the publication of the report, the careers profession should work closely with Ofsted to disseminate good practice, providing evidence of what good looks like to a wide audience, to include parents, practitioners and of course young people.

Conclusion

The Task Force is pleased to report that good progress has been made on a majority of its recommendations in the six months since we reported.

In particular, excellent work has been undertaken by the Careers Profession Alliance. It has already helped to establish many of the essential characteristics of a strong, autonomous profession, such as professional standards, a code of ethics and a register of members. In addition, it is going beyond our recommendations and is now working towards a single professional body and Chartered Status.

However, we are concerned that there is uncertainty about the potential to implement fully some of our recommendations. It seems that much of this uncertainty is due to the changes in policies and arrangements for careers services that are currently underway.

In addition to building on the good progress already made, the Task Force considers that Government and the careers community needs to pay closer attention to the following areas:

- **The partnership model:** clearer communication is needed from Government on the new arrangements for schools – particularly in relation to careers education, and how the partnership between schools and an external organisation will function under the new arrangements.
- **Quality assurance:** it is important that credible, national standards are established across all three strands of quality assurance: professional standards, quality awards and the quality standard.
- **ICT:** it is vital that the careers community continues to develop and expand the use of ICT in the provision of CEIAG.
- **Changes in the workforce:** clearer communication is needed from Government on the transitional arrangements for CEIAG to avoid losing talented individuals from the careers profession.