



“LOOKING TO THE FUTURE”

THE IMPACT OF CAREER GUIDANCE IN ENGLAND

EVIDENCE AND AN ANALYSIS

BASED UPON A CAREERS ENGLAND MEMBERSHIP SURVEY ©CAREERS ENGLAND & PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2011

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Careers England is the trade association for employer organisations involved in the provision of products and services promoting careers education and guidance in England. As the only association of specialist career guidance businesses in the country, it exists to promote the benefits to the nation of utilising the distinctive skills of such organisations.

As the informed employer voice of careers guidance businesses in England, it is from this perspective that Careers England’s strategic direction majors upon advocacy of the economic and social benefits of careers information, advice and guidance to the health of the country - together with articulating the need for an effective strategic framework for careers advice and guidance provision for people of all ages across England.

Because of its apprehension concerning what it considers to be ill-informed decisions being made about the future provision of career education and guidance for young people in England, **Careers England commissioned Leigh Henderson (of CoHesion Career Development Consultancy) to survey its members on their service provision and outcomes for beneficiaries – the public .**

This report is to be a public document. Many of its findings are relevant to the Education Bill (published in January 2011) which is currently progressing through the House of Lords. It builds significantly on Careers England Policy Commentary 15a¹ and, to enhance the analysis, further

¹ Watts, A.G., (2011) Policy Commentary 15a, The Coalition’s Emerging Policies on Career Guidance, Careers England

pertinent evidence is also referred to in this report. The results are presented as follows:

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EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THE TEXT

*I. **FORMAT AND DEFINITIONS:** Each section has a description of the issue; a summary of evidence from the Careers England Survey; examples of other evidence; a conclusion and may include one or two case studies.*

An understanding of the basic processes that underpin career development and management is also important:

*II. **CAREERS INFORMATION:** Print or ICT based services and materials providing information on learning and work, courses of study and vocational training, wider development opportunities and financial support.*

*III. **CAREERS EDUCATION:** Programmes designed to help young people to develop the skills necessary to manage their own career pathway. Adults can access programmes with similar aims through the Work Programme and in community and commercial settings.*

*IV. **CAREERS GUIDANCE:** Person-centred guidance and counselling interventions, which support and enable effective decisions by individuals about learning and work.*

*V. **IAG:** Information, advice and guidance (IAG) has been used as a catch-all term for a number of years. It is used at some points in the text, usually in a quote. The currently favoured terms are those in II – IV above.*

SECTION 2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Much of the detailed content of this report is based on a survey that Leigh Henderson undertook (on behalf of the Careers England Quality Task Group amongst all members of Careers England) during July and August 2011. One of its primary purposes is to bring together evidence relevant to career guidance provision in the light of the proposals in the current Education Bill before Parliament. The aim is to inform Peers who are considering the Bill in its final stages in the House of Lords, as well as further debates due to follow in the Commons, and the potential implementation of the Bill's provisions should it become law.

Where references are made to the Next Step Careers Service and its work with adults, they are to illustrate generic issues related to career guidance impacts on the public. They are relevant in the context of the launch of the National Careers Service which will be available to young people over the age of 19 on a face to face basis, but only on-line or by telephone to younger people.

The report's purposes also require that in the sections below it refers to evidence from other sources. Included too are a number of case studies provided by Careers England members. It focuses on six themes:

2.1 THE NEED FOR COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES (SECTION 3) (‘THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL’)

Until the advent of the Coalition Government's proposals on career guidance, the status quo has seen career guidance and allied services being provided by specialist professional agencies with expertise in career choice processes and the labour market. Schools have had a statutory duty (for careers education) requiring them to provide a grounding in career orientation in terms of skills and sources of information.

The current Education Bill proposes to replace schools' statutory duty for careers education with a duty to “*secure*” careers guidance from whomsoever/wherever they may choose - with unclear and insufficient quality assurance, likely therefore to have neither a guarantee of professional competence nor labour market intelligence and raising the most serious concerns about impartiality. It effectively removes the collaborative partnership model that is vital for all clients, particularly so for vulnerable young people.

People are complex; the labour market is complex; career advisers need to be professionally trained and to know educators and education options, work-based learning options and the labour market as well as the client. Anything less is a constricted service – and would be open to the damaging effects of partiality. It is evident that it is too much to expect for teachers to be able to fulfill the professional role of careers adviser alongside the primary roles that they have been trained to provide.

Ofsted's thematic review of 2010² concluded that whilst support from Connexions service was good, teachers, tutors and others had too little knowledge to provide quality advice and guidance support.

² Ofsted (2011) Moving through the system – information, advice and guidance.

2.2 DIRECT ACCESS TO SERVICES (SECTION 4)

The Education Bill would remove the statutory right of access to schools by careers advisers - under Sections 43-45 of the Education Act, 1997.

Career decision-making is a highly personal process that may take place over many years – rarely at one discussion with an adviser – be it a tutor, family member or career adviser. Independent professional advice, informed by the labour market and free of conflicts of interest, is a key underpinning principle of practitioner training and ethical codes; it is a key driver in the argument for access to services which are separate from education and training providers.

The impending reduced access to professional, impartial career guidance is unlikely to reduce dropout rates in further or higher education, with serious cost implications to the Exchequer as well as potential unhappiness for the individuals affected.

People need direct access to advisory services without gatekeepers that constrict the availability of career guidance in both time and expertise. As the case studies show, students, especially the more vulnerable, need continuity of support - sometimes over several years.

2.3 DEMAND FOR FACE-TO-FACE SUPPORT IN A MULTI-CHANNEL CONTEXT (SECTION 5)

There has been much discussion of the potential of web-based and telephone services to bear the brunt of careers IAG delivery. In the sense that most activity is about searching for information, that may well be true. Many people already share insights and information through social networking sites. However the process of decision-making about learning and work choices is different from simply gathering information and it can be as, if not more, difficult for people today than in the past. Career paths are more disjointed now and, as opportunity pathways and barriers increase, so does the complexity of the process.

There is significant evidence that people want personal face-to-face career guidance. They want to know the person they are having, frequently quite personal, discussions with. The evidence shows that people much prefer face-to-face interactions most of the time (and this was recently publicly affirmed by a group of young people talking to Simon Hughes MP at the LibDem 2011 Conference). That said, naturally, many do also choose to use other channels as a complementary or supplementary activity.

The Careers England membership survey shows that, currently, most career guidance interactions are face-to-face. This is reinforced by the case studies and the high satisfaction rates of the public which are reported in Section 6.

Whilst it is true that face-to-face sessions are more expensive than other channels, they are frequently more inspirational too; hence they represent good value for money compared to the cost, for example, of undergraduate and apprenticeship drop out.

2.4 IMPACT AND CLIENT SATISFACTION (SECTION 6)

The evidence from the Careers England membership survey shows that young people and adults report being overwhelmingly ‘*very happy*’ with the career guidance services they receive. People rate their readiness for career decision making as ‘*almost doubled*’ after talking with a career adviser.

The evidence of client satisfaction from services provided by Careers England’s members is strong and compelling. Contrary to some media story lines, careers adviser work with clients of all abilities and backgrounds consistently produces high levels of client satisfaction. The methodologies employed in this survey and by Careers England members in gathering client feedback satisfy the requirements of the **matrix Standard** and other quality assurance processes referred to in Section 8.

Assessing impact involves a wider range of measures than client satisfaction. Evidence of changes in thinking and/or behaviour is equally important and is given below in Careers England survey evidence and the case studies provided.

2.5 THREATS TO PLACING SERVICES (SECTION 7)

Under the terms of the current Education Bill, Connexions would effectively be broken up; its current duties to support vulnerable young people and the NEET (not engaged in education, employment or training) group being retained by Local Authorities. How LAs will fulfill their residual duty remains to be seen. However, the varied quality observed by Ofsted³ after the return of the responsibility for securing the Connexions service to LAs in 2008 is a cause for some concern.

The Education Bill lacks clarity on how the Secretary of State will discharge his continuing statutory duty to “*assist*” young people “*ceasing to undergo*” education at 16+ “*to obtain*” employment, training and /or continuing education - what is called the “*placing into employment service*”. The loss of such a placing service would disadvantage young job seekers and those in transition aged 16-18.

People neither want, nor need, a fluffy, vague, service. People want concrete action and follow up, where appropriate. The Careers England case studies below provide powerful evidence of young people succeeding where they had apparently little chance at the outset.

The partnership model has also meant that careers services have worked very closely with other organisations including Jobcentre Plus. However in the case of specific groups - including those who are NEET, offenders and young people with LDD (learning difficulties and disabilities) - careers services have consistently demonstrated the expertise to support young people through the placement and settlement phases, working with stakeholders including training providers and employers.

³ Ofsted (2011) Moving through the system – information, advice and guidance.

2.6 ORGANISATIONS AND WORKFORCE (SECTION 8)

Good practice in public procurement in relation to quality is at risk of being ignored if the provisions in the current Education Bill (clause 27) become law, with potential negative consequences for safeguarding young people. This membership survey has highlighted how Careers England members have made strenuous efforts to demonstrate and maintain their competence and passion for quality delivery.

There are, however, no confirmed plans by Government to quality assure organisations from whom schools may secure the required independent and impartial careers advice and guidance services in order to fulfil their new duty should the Education Bill become law. Thus poor quality provision in many areas could well happen, with damaging consequences both for young people's lives and for the economy.

Careers England is also taking forward the development work on a proposed national "*kite mark*" to provide national validation for current Quality Awards for careers education as recommended by the Careers Profession Task Force.

“LOOKING TO THE FUTURE”: THE FULL REPORT – EVIDENCE AND AN ANALYSIS BY LEIGH HENDERSON of CoHesion Career Development Consultancy

SECTION 3. THE NEED FOR COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES BETWEEN INDEPENDENT PROVIDERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

(‘THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL’)

People are complex; the labour market is complex; career advisers need to be professionally trained and to know educators and education options, work-based learning options and the labour market as well as students. Anything less is a constricted service.

3.1 THE ISSUES

Schools will in future have a statutory duty to secure careers guidance services for their students, which might be either from the National Careers Service or from other providers (a contractor-supplier relationship); but they may also appoint their own careers adviser, so long as they provide, at a minimum, access to on-line resources - which most students have access to anyway.

This will undoubtedly undermine the collaborative approaches, frequently referred to in this context as ‘The Partnership Model’ which involves close working relationships between independent careers IAG providers, expert in the interface between education and work - with

individuals and employers; with schools, further and higher education institutions; with employers and other stakeholders; all of which are essential to providing careers guidance *'in the round'*⁴.

Not only would the removal of the existing duty to provide careers education create the real possibility that many young people would lose access to such programmes, which help develop career management skills, it would also potentially undermine the effectiveness of career advice and guidance - since young people would often be ill-prepared for making choices, decisions and effective transitions.

The proposed new arrangements raise issues about how quality is to be assured; and the minimalist option offered as fulfilling the new duty through access to a website effectively renders the statutory duty meaningless⁵. It is also clear that: *"Veiled by these changes and confusions, the existing funding for face-to-face careers guidance services for young people is being allowed to vanish without trace, without any public announcement to this effect. Such a dramatic erosion of services for young people is likely to seriously undermine the potential to build better services for adults as well"*⁶.

It should be noted that the research published by Future First Ltd.⁷ refers to career advisers as being currently *'in-school'*. This is misleading; under the Education Bill's proposals career advisers will be more *'in-school'* in the future than currently, where they have visited schools as impartial agents at the interface between education and the labour market. Furthermore, there appears to be confusion between *'information'* and *'guidance'* (n.b. the terms defined on page 2 above).

However, John Hayes MP (Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning) in proposing the changes summed up the issue thus:

*"It is crucial that we place this at the heart of our new arrangements as, with all that is expected on schools, it would be too much to ask them to provide careers guidance and keep up to date with the latest developments in careers and the labour market"*⁸.

Resolving complex career decision issues needs an understanding of:

- the labour market

⁴ As described by Jeremy Corbyn MP in the House of Commons Opposition Debate on the Careers Service on 13/9/11, and endorsed by Andy Burnham MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, to describe the need for independent inspirational career advice. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/10111111.stm> Accessed 11th October 2011 at 18.30

⁵ Watts, A.G., (2011) Policy Commentary 15a, The Coalition's Emerging Policies on Career Guidance, Careers England, p36.

⁶ Watts, A.G., (2011) Policy Commentary 15a, The Coalition's Emerging Policies on Career Guidance, Careers England, p36.

⁷ Social Mobility, Careers Advice & Alumni Networks (2011) Future First Networks

⁸ Watts, A.G., (2011) Policy Commentary 15a, The Coalition's Emerging Policies on Career Guidance, Careers England, p7.

- the many different ways in which people make decisions about career paths
- appropriate approaches to working the issues out with the student/client such as counselling, mentoring, and coaching
- the education and training worlds.

“Career interventions are not quick or simple and practitioners need to allow for less certainty in outcomes, less decidedness, and less surety”⁹

Keeping up to date across these issues is difficult, if not impossible, for a school-based teacher with other priorities. A school-based career guidance practitioner will be under pressure to provide undue prominence to certain career paths – especially continuing in the institution.

Ofsted’s thematic review of 2010¹⁰ found that: *“In all the institutions visited, links with the Connexions service were productive and the quality of support provided was good. However, in all the authorities, there were examples of carers, residential staff, teachers and tutors who were providing advice and guidance to young people but who had too little knowledge and understanding of the full range of options to do so effectively”*.

The report also concluded that: *“The quality of information, advice and guidance for young people who were not in education, employment or training, or who were at risk of not being so, was generally good. Effective inter-agency collaboration resulted in a wide range of community-based projects and programmes. The most effective of these provided personalised support and challenge to young people, helping them to improve their self-esteem and motivating them to involve themselves in learning or employment again. Community-based teams of Connexions personal advisers provided specialist support and good practical advice on housing, benefits, health and welfare”*.

On the evidence its inspectors found, Ofsted endorsed the partnership model as being good, if not essential, practice.

There are both positive and negative lessons to learn from Connexions. Involving young people in service design certainly brought benefits, but expecting all personal advisers to be expert in all areas of knowledge, specialist skills and expertise was unrealistic, just as it is for teachers. The Coalition Government’s policy of seeking to raise the professionalism of career advisers has been widely welcomed but now seems to be compromised in the face of the Education Bill’s provisions.

Collaboration is the most effective strategy, with key stakeholders working together in their respective fields of expertise to provide resources and information to support career development and improving career management skills.

⁹ Krieshok, T. S. (2001). How the decision making literature might inform career centre practice. *Journal of Career Development*, 27(3).

¹⁰ Ofsted (2011) Moving through the system –information, advice and guidance

3.2 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Access to careers guidance services has been provided through a large range of organisations in the past, not least because career development is dependent on other life factors including family circumstances and financial resources. However the Careers England membership survey confirms that reductions in funding are already reducing the availability of many of these access points (and prime delivery sites) significantly. Up to date a typical range has included:

- For young people: Careers England members' own premises as well as schools & sixth forms, FE colleges, access points offering advice, satellite offices, youth projects, children's centres, Youth Offending Teams/prisons/probation centres, training providers, 'one stop shops' and other access points allocated by local authorities; outreach services such as home visits or community calling, courses for teenage parents, 'learn to earn' for LDD clients
- For adults: Careers England members' own premises as well as Job Centres, libraries, community centres (inc. Sure Start), training providers, FE Colleges, employers (redundancy), family learning centres, adult & community centres
- For offenders: In one region (and not untypically) in prisons and custodial institutions for juveniles and young offenders, referrals are received through Caseworker Reviews and the Electronic Asset process. The team welcomes self-referrers and referrals via all prison and community partners. In one area, offenders have their career adviser allocated on Reception into custody. Targets are set at reviews for offenders to have IAG in relation to Employment, Education and Training. When people leave custody they are referred to specialist support to help them to manage transitions and overcome barriers to accessing opportunities. Similar arrangements have applied to adults

Most career guidance providers, including those in Careers England membership, have been involved, or have led, collaborative projects especially to support young people in danger of becoming NEET. An example is given in the case study below.

Careers England members report that 68% of education providers rate the career guidance services they receive at good or excellent, indicating that they are seen as providing good or excellent services. Quality assurance processes such as the **matrix Standard** require evidence of continuous quality improvement to maintain accreditation and so further improvement in ratings should be expected.

An exit survey undertaken by a Careers England member on those dropping out of 6th form/FE and becoming NEET showed that a large majority had chosen the course on advice from teachers, peers and parents and not from a qualified careers adviser.

International evidence demonstrates that school-based provision is remote from the labour market, too subordinate to personal and study guidance if provided by those who are not

career guidance specialists, and too linked to the self-interest of particular institutions. Instead, the evidence shows that a *partnership model* is required between an external careers specialist agency and the school. The OECD recommends that links with such agencies should be complementary to, rather than a substitute for, programmes inside the school¹¹.

Experience in New Zealand and the Netherlands¹² shows a reduction in career guidance activity if schools are required to commission it (rather than it being provided by a specialist external agency), despite additional funding being provided to schools in both countries, which is not proposed in the UK. A report by the Education Review Office in New Zealand concluded that only 12% of secondary schools provided high-quality career education and guidance to their students.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The timeframe for career decision-making is too long and the process too complex for delivery by untrained practitioners. It is also difficult for one person to provide a good service across the whole range of opportunities and there remains the serious issue of impartiality for school-based as well as funded careers advisers.

3.5 A CAREERS ENGLAND MEMBER REPORTED CASE STUDY

The Connexions provider (a Careers England member) worked in partnership with schools and others to support students in danger of exclusion from education

'Open Spaces' was piloted in 2008 with KS4 students from one school. The target audience was young people on the edge of exclusion from main-stream education. The project took a small group out of the classroom and into community green spaces to support ecological and conservation based projects.

Each member of the group gains an ABC Award in Conservation & Ecology Skills if they complete the project. The interesting thing about this is that the groups tend to be 80% male and they really respond to building steps and clearing scrub, they are too busy to be disruptive and they learn to respect their local environment, so vandalism tends to drop as a result of peer pressure from group members.

We used the model in 2010 to win Big Lottery Funding for 6 further projects in NEET hotspot areas in the county; the project is collaboration between our Connexions company, Groundwork, NACRO and the schools.

¹¹ OECD (2004), Career Guidance and Public Policy, Bridging the Gap, OECD, Paris

¹² Watts, A.G., (2011) The Emerging Policy Model for Career Guidance in England: Some Lessons from International Examples, *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*.

The role of Connexions is to work alongside the group, find out what makes them tick, support individuals with barriers to progression and deliver IAG around broadening their career aspirations and horizons.

The attendance of the group improved by 30 percent, but more importantly the participants made a positive progression after the end of Year 11. In the two projects where this has been measured so far, 80 per cent re-engaged with education, employment or training after Year 11.

SECTION 4. DIRECT ACCESS TO SERVICES

People need direct access to advice services without gatekeepers that constrict the availability of career guidance.

4.1 THE ISSUES

The Education Bill would remove the statutory right of access - under Sections 43-45 of the Education Act, 1997 - to schools by careers advisers.

If enacted the Bill would also remove the current duty on schools (also under the Education Act, 1997) to provide a programme of careers education - usually a taught programme delivered directly by the school covering, for example, labour market information, interview skills, and leading to young people gaining the essential skills for career decision-making, career planning, and thus becoming well prepared for making the best use of independent and impartial careers advice and guidance from expert careers advisers when necessary.

Career decision-making is a highly personal process that may take place over many years – rarely at one discussion with an adviser – be it a tutor, family member or careers adviser. Independent professional advice, which is informed by the labour market and free of conflicts of interest, is a key underpinning principle of practitioner training and ethical codes; it is a key driver in the argument for access to services to be separate from education and training providers.

Should the provisions in the Education Bill become law, the result may well be that some careers advisers (where available in a school) will be in a weakened position to, for example, advise a student to move to an apprenticeship or to a different provider of post-16 options such as a college or a work-based learning provider to pursue a different course. Even where schools buy career guidance from an external provider the evidence from international sources is that some will put their own institutional needs (to maximise funding) before those of students, seriously undermining the impartiality of guidance.

4.2 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

A Careers England member recently undertook a survey of 1460 young people across 59 schools in a Midlands City, which found 69% saying they accessed their IAG through Connexions advisors compared with 27% from websites and 20% from teachers.

“In all areas (4 boroughs) we still have Advisers working in each school although we did not offer delivery in all FE Colleges from April 2011. In each area we work, there are either specific Connexions One Stop Shops for young people or Connexions is delivered from Youth Centres. Outreach into other delivery points (e.g. Community Centres, Hospitals) has now largely ceased as resources have reduced.

We continue to use our own on-line information service to support access to careers information for young people, parents and professionals. We continue to produce a couple of printed publications (e.g. Choices for students at 16+) whereas previously we produced suites of printed information including for LDD”.

A 2009 NFER report for the then Department for Children, Schools & Families, based on a survey of 2029 young people who completed Year 11, concluded that there was a need to provide excellent, personalised and impartial IAG support. This survey included young people with LDD and who were at risk of NEET¹³.

The evidence confirms that all young people need access to accurate, high-quality, impartial information about their options post-16 and what they need to do to enter their chosen career. The lack of information about the choices available to them is seen by young people themselves as one of the main barriers to their participation post-16. An even greater number (19%) see this lack of information as having placed constraints on their choices post-16¹⁴.

Career decision-making takes place over extended periods as shown by the longitudinal study of career guidance conducted for the then named Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills. The issues are personal and complex¹⁵.

MORI research shows that 49% of people access career guidance services between 3 and 11 times¹⁶. The same study found that people expect trained practitioners to be accessible; well-informed and professional, as the most highly rated traits.

The Browne report on higher education suggested that: *‘Every school will be required to make*

¹³ Spielhofer, T et al (2010) Barriers to participation in education and training. DfE RR009.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S A. and Hughes, D. (2008) Adult Career Progression and Advancement: A five year study of the effectiveness of guidance. Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research & and Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills

¹⁶ Taylor, J. et al (2005), Demand for, and Perceptions of, Information, Advice and Guidance, The Guidance Council and DfES

*individualised careers advice available to its pupils. The advice will be delivered by certified professionals who are well informed, benefit from continued training and professional development and whose status in schools is respected and valued. Similar careers advice will be available to older people as well*¹⁷.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency reports an 8.7% overall dropout rate from undergraduate courses in 2007-8¹⁸; many have rates of more than 10% and as high as 20%; apprenticeship rate dropout rates are up to 25%.

There is a real possibility that dropout rates amongst HE students could increase under the new arrangements proposed by the Education Bill without the required strengthening of access to impartial careers advice and guidance from professionals prior to entry. As an example, one Careers England member estimates that in a Midlands city, there are 300 drop outs from further education courses annually. If the average cost per course is circa £4,000 p.a. then this amounts to a wastage of circa £1,200,000 annually. If rolled out across the country the costs would be approaching £400 million p.a.; twice the previous £200 million budget of career guidance for young people that has been cut.

There is also evidence for a link between career goals and educational attainment; with young people that have clear career goals are more likely to believe they have some control over their future. Likewise, young people with better career exploration skills are more positive about their post 16 choices¹⁹.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Direct access to careers guidance over an extended period is critically important, not only for those in danger of becoming NEET, but also those who leave school or college and are still not completely decided or change their minds.

National branding is an important issue for the future of support for both young people and adults given the numerous instances of people crossing boundaries when seeking help, as the Connexions brand demonstrated.

¹⁷ Browne of Madingley et al (2020), *Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education*, Independent Review of Higher Education Funding & Student Finance

¹⁸ Dropout rates for every university, Guardian; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2009/jun/05/accesstouniversity-higher-education>. Accessed 18/9/11

¹⁹ Inter-Ed (2004) Career Goals and Educational Achievement; what is the Link? Glasgow Careers Scotland

4.5 CAREERS ENGLAND MEMBER CASE STUDIES

Case Study One

An example of how direct and early access to a career adviser helped a shy and difficult young female student to gain a place on an Entry to Employment course and become a positive member of the group.

BACKGROUND

Since the age of eleven, this client had been having the support of a Personal Adviser. The client had many issues to address, including being extremely shy, literacy problems, bad school attendance and violence towards her mother. The client had always had an interest in beauty.

INTERVENTION

When the client left school Connexions continued to be in touch with her and she would regularly visit the Connexions Centre. She always came with her mother. After spending quite a considerable amount of time with the client to explore interests, skills and aspirations and assess the client's needs, the Adviser made a referral and arranged for the client to attend an interview to go on an Entry to Employment course. This provider offered tasters in various areas, including beauty. This was probably instrumental in motivating the client and in her eventually agreeing to go there.

OUTCOME

The client turned up for the interview - which was an achievement in itself and started the programme. The Personal Adviser visited the training provider on a couple of occasions and the client was doing really well. Her attendance had been excellent. She was mixing with the other students. The students were getting ready to be involved in a fashion show. The client in question was designing the make up for the day, using her own ideas and also ideas from magazines. She will be their makeup artist for the day. She was so much more confident. She had been involved in a trip where she had to go to London. This was also a huge achievement for this client.

Case Study Two

A vulnerable young person joined a Careers England member led project, making significant progress after an extended career guidance process. He is now living independently.

JD joined the Connect to Your Future Now (cyfnow – later Coolit) project on 3rd June 2009 after leaving College due to non-attendance. When JD started on the Coolit project he lacked self confidence and had low self esteem. He also found social situations difficult and did not know how to interact with peers. JD has had many issues in his past, the major one being that

he was asked to leave home in February 2009 and had nowhere else to go, so stayed at the YMCA.

The first time JD attended a Coolit group work session it was clear that JD lacked confidence. He kept quiet and did not interact with other young people in the group. Five days later JD attended his first Coolit induction. JD did not stay the whole time as he said he felt uncomfortable being in a group. Following conversations with JD and staff members it was decided that the best way for him to continue training would one-on-one with the trainer until JD felt comfortable doing training in a group environment.

On 23rd July 2009 JD got a volunteer job at the local charity shop, where he could gain his NVQ in retail. This was a huge achievement for JD as it would help him to build confidence as he would have to talk to strangers that came into the shop. Throughout his Coolit training, JD continued to work at the charity shop and his confidence grew and grew. There was a difference that was noticeable every week.

At a project review interview less than three weeks later it was recorded that, "JD is very happy on the project. He told me that he flew through his homework and enjoyed the work search tasks. He is confident about using the phone and now competent. He is working on his basic skills and aiming at Level 2. He has enjoyed working with new professionals and particularly enjoys his training sessions with Dan the trainer". Due to JD's history it had been a huge achievement that he had continued training continuously as in the past his attendance was a major issue.

Early in 2010 JD passed his Level 1 test in literacy, this is equivalent to a D to G grade GCSE, and on 3rd March 2010 JD received his certificate Preparation for work. JD did sit some of his GCSEs but failed them, so achieving a Level 1 in Literacy was a huge step forward. It not only boosted his self confidence but also his employability in the future. Finishing the Preparation for work was a big achievement as well, as it was to achieve JD had to think about what career he wanted to do in the future and what qualification he had to complete for the career, he also had to write a CV.

In July 2010 JD moved into his own independent flat.

When JD first started on the Coolit project he lacked all self confidence and had trouble interacting socially. He also had no qualification and no idea what he wanted to do in life. Since joining the Coolit project JD has so far gained his Level 1 in Adult Literacy and his Preparation for Work Certificate. He now has confidence in himself and is happy to interact with people, even strangers. JD is continuing on the Coolit and is hoping to get a job in the retail industry as he is really enjoying his volunteer job.

SECTION 5. DEMAND FOR FACE TO FACE SUPPORT IN A MULTI CHANNEL CONTEXT

Career guidance is a personal process and fundamentally depends on a trusting relationship between client and adviser established by face-to-face contact. Once trust is established, the other channels than face-to-face can be invaluable. Helplines and internet channels are of limited use without established trust.

5.1 THE ISSUES

There has been much discussion of the potential of web-based and telephone services to bear the brunt of future careers IAG delivery. In the sense that most activity is about searching for information, that may well be true. People already share insights and information through social networking sites.

However the process of decision-making about learning and work choices is different from simply gathering information; and it can be as, if not more, difficult for people today than in the past. Career paths are more disjointed now and, as opportunity pathways increase, so does the complexity of the process.

There is significant evidence that people want personal and face-to-face career guidance. They want to *know* the person they are having, frequently quite personal, discussions with. The evidence shows that people much prefer face-to-face interactions most of the time (and this was publicly affirmed by a group of young people talking to Simon Hughes MP at the LibDem 2011 Conference). It is also clear that, naturally, many also choose to use other channels as a complementary or supplementary activity.

Whilst it is true that face-to-face sessions are more expensive than other channels per contact, they are frequently more inspirational too; hence they represent good value for money compared to the cost, for example, of undergraduate and apprenticeship drop out.

Multi-channel approaches are highly desirable and improve productivity and flexibility of service, if they are based on an established professional relationship with between client and practitioner. Recent work by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills makes the case for *'blended guidance'*; that is, a mix of different delivery channels²⁰.

Simon Hughes MP, in his recent report²¹, recommended that the Government should act urgently to:

'guarantee face to face careers advice for all young people in schools. Government should also guarantee careers information, advice and guidance up to 17 and then 18 in line with the increase in the compulsory schooling age'.

There is no sense in the Education Bill's provisions of the potential of the emerging Internet technologies being harnessed to enhance students' career guidance experience through supporting career advisers in identifying areas of expertise and growing LMI organically. Such things are unlikely to happen at school or LA level.

A paper prepared for David Willetts MP before the last General Election explored these issues²² and commented that: *'the technological solutions set out in this paper reflect the*

²⁰ Helping individuals succeed: Transforming career guidance through technology, UKCES August 2011

²¹ Hughes S., (2011) Report to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister from the Advocate for Access to Education. The Cabinet Office

²² Dickinson, D., Henderson, L. and Vervenne, L., (2009), Information systems to support all-age continuing personal development. Unlike Minds/FEdS.

unprecedented opportunities to improve the whole career planning process for individuals as a key part of an human capacity building ecosystem'. The leading edge technical proposals were predicated on the need for human face to face interactions as a foundation for best use of the other channels.

5.2 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Every Careers England member responding to the survey reported that face-to-face interactions was the most common current method of delivery of their services, with interaction by the telephone rated second. Websites were generally 3rd ranked – with email in one case, though generally the latter was ranked 4th, or 5th. Some reported using Facebook as part of their service mix where it is rated between 3rd and 5th. Twitter is currently usually rated 6th or 7th. At least one Careers England member has developed a virtual learning environment for young people, teachers and advisers.

As a simple example of young people's preferences - in a survey, held on a single day, at a Careers England member's centre, 33 young people rated their preferred ways of getting information, advice and guidance: 1st face to face; 2nd internet; 3rd leaflets and magazines.

Statistics supplied by DfE show that, last year, out of 4.8 million career guidance sessions in England, a total of 1,590,254 (33%) were face-to-face interventions.

Nationally collated Next Step Careers Service figures for last year, gathered from all contractors, reinforce the Careers England evidence:

- Over 620,000 adults received face-to-face advice locally from Next Step
- Over 240,000 adults received advice over the telephone
- Over 2.8 million visits were made to the Next Step website
- Over 1,700 followers of Next Step used the Next Step social media pages on Twitter and Facebook
- Over 155,000 'My Next Step' accounts were created
- The service is also available over the telephone through bi-lingual advisers in: Punjabi, Sylheti, Somali, Urdu, Gujarati, Polish, French and Farsi

A longitudinal qualitative study which followed individuals, who used advice and guidance, over a five-year period provided evidence of what comprised effective one-to-one interventions that were regarded as useful by individuals. The characteristics of "*useful guidance*" were consistently identified as: providing access to specialist information, providing insights, focus and clarification, motivating, increasing self-awareness and self-confidence,

and/or structuring opportunities for reflection and discussion.²³

Simon Hughes MP recommended in his report to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister²⁴ that: *'the government should act urgently to guarantee face to face careers advice for all young people in schools. Government should also guarantee careers information, advice and guidance up to 17 and then 18 in line with the increase in the compulsory schooling age'*.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Access to face-to-face career guidance is beyond doubt a key issue to be resolved. Discussing personal matters with an unknown person is bound to be sub-optimal. The House of Commons Education Select Committee made this a key recommendation in its July 2011 report²⁵. The evidence is that people of all abilities and backgrounds want help with their career planning and decision-making; the majority wants some of that help face-to-face.

The case is made for a personal service which is centred upon face-to-face career guidance, as well as including a multi-channel delivery as an optimal blended service mix. Too often the continuity of support provided by face-to-face contact with an adviser is undervalued or overlooked.

SECTION 6. IMPACT AND CLIENT SATISFACTION

The evidence is that young people and adults are overwhelmingly very happy with the career guidance services they receive. People rate their readiness for career decision making as almost doubled after talking to a career adviser.

6.1 THE ISSUES

The evidence from the Careers England membership survey shows that young people and adults report being overwhelmingly *'very happy'* with the career guidance services they receive. People rate their readiness for career decision making as *'almost doubled'* after talking to a career adviser.

The evidence of client satisfaction from services provided by Careers England members is strong and compelling. Contrary to some media story lines, careers adviser work with clients of all abilities and backgrounds consistently produces high levels of client satisfaction. The methodologies by Careers England members in gathering client feedback satisfy the requirements of the **matrix Standard** and other quality assurance processes referred to in

²³ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S A. and Hughes, D. (2008) Adult Career Progression and Advancement: A five year study of the effectiveness of guidance. Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research & and Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills

²⁴ Hughes, S. (2011) Report to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister from the Advocate for Access to Education. The Cabinet Office.

²⁵ Education Select Committee, 'Participation by 16–19 year olds in education and training', House of Commons 2011. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/850/850i.pdf> Accessed 20/9/11 at 15.30

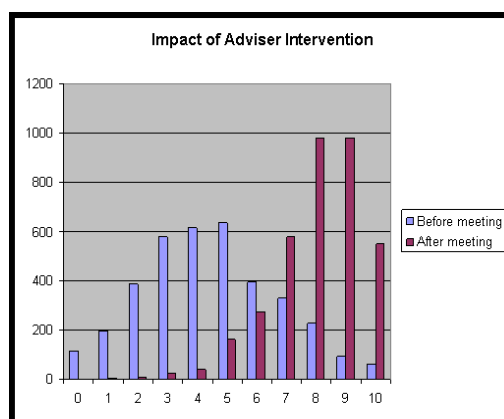
Section 8.

Assessing impact involves a wider range of measures than client satisfaction. Evidence of changes in thinking and/or behaviour is equally important and is given in the Careers England membership survey evidence and the case studies provided below.

6.2 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The Careers England membership survey revealed that:

- Young people reporting satisfaction rates of “good” or “excellent” were better than 74% cent on large sample sizes of between 259 and 5749
- 59% or more parents felt services were good or excellent
- At least 85% of young people felt that the career guidance process had an immediate positive impact on their thinking and/or actions. The samples ranged from 114 to 3636
- One Careers England member reported that the “*immediacy effect*” of a career adviser intervention on a scale of 1-10 moved from average of 4.5 before intervention to 8.5 after as illustrated in the diagram below:



The blue bars are client self assessments of their career preparedness before seeing a career adviser and the purple bars show clients’ assessments after discussion(s) with a career adviser.

In another Careers England member’s area, 91% of young people felt that they had received [career] IAG that would be of benefit to them.

In a co-financed project in the Midlands, a Careers England member reports that the impact of

careers adviser interactions with vulnerable young people resulted in the following:

- 189 young people received Participant Assessment Planning & Support (against a target of 186).
- Of these, 172 young people started on accredited programmes, (target 172)
- 139 completed non accredited programmes (target 139)
- 38 participants progressed onto further learning courses (target 38) and 25 into employment (target 23).
- A total of 77 young people achieved one or more qualifications as part of the project.

A major literature review of research on the impact of career guidance interventions²⁶ found that:

- the unique selling point of career guidance interventions may be the reassurance of professional authority and impartiality
- evidence shows that teachers in 11–18 schools, in general, show a lack of impartiality by encouraging some students to stay on in their school sixth forms
- ‘external’ advice, i.e. that provided by professional careers advisers, is often cited as a valued and useful information source of career education and guidance, partly because they are based outside school and therefore are seen to be more ‘independent’
- there is also compelling Government policy and research evidence which points towards the need for young people to be introduced to exploring careers and options much earlier than from Year 9 onwards.

A longitudinal study of career guidance²⁷ illustrated the significant range of client career decision making approaches that need to be understood by the practitioner in order to provide a personalised and effective service. Significant training and continuing professional development is required to operate at that level. Instead up to 4,000 careers advisers have

²⁶ Hughes, D.H, and Gratton, G. (2009). Literature review of research on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions DMH Associates for CfBT Education Trust.

²⁷ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S A. and Hughes, D. (2008) Adult Career Progression and Advancement: A five year study of the effectiveness of guidance. Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research & and Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills

been made redundant in England following in-year cuts and the announcement of the breakup of the Connexions Service during 2010-11 and the first half of this current year.

Simon Hughes MP noted in his report²⁸ that: *“There is widespread concern amongst careers professionals and in schools that the lack of a structured transition between the old and new arrangements for providing careers advice may lead to a loss of human capital as careers advisors and careers professionals leave the profession between the closure of local authority careers services in 2011 and the new all age career service beginning in 2012”*.

He went on to recommend that: *“The government should urgently publish a plan of how it intends to maintain the expertise of current careers professionals between the closures of local authority careers services in 2011 and the beginning of the all age-careers service in 2012.”*

6.4 CONCLUSION

Satisfaction rates are consistently high as reported by Careers England member organisations that all hold quality awards, including the **matrix Standard** for advice and guidance on learning and work - which focuses on robust processes for assessing client satisfaction. Other impact and outcome measures show how careers guidance has supported clients in engaging with learning and employment – participating, achieving and progressing.

As noted above in Section 5, too often the continuity of support provided by face-to-face contact with a careers adviser is undervalued or overlooked – the first case study below provides further evidence of the real value and impact of such support.

Without addressing the issues identified by Simon Hughes MP in his report, it will be difficult to maintain the satisfaction rates reported by the Careers England Survey.

6.5 CAREERS ENGLAND MEMBER CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY ONE

An example of a student who was very satisfied with career guidance support after being helped to decide on her career direction and to find a job.

Lizzie is a white British, female, age 22. Since leaving school after A levels, she had drifted into a succession of part time jobs in the hospitality and catering trade. She said her dream job would be to work with primary school children and she was particularly interested in working with children with special needs.

She did not have any idea how to get into this type of work and, due to financial commitments, could not afford to go to college full time. Lizzie found out about Next Step from a friend and asked for an interview for careers advice and guidance on how to work towards this type of work.

²⁸ Hughes, S. (2011) Report to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister from the Advocate for Access to Education. The Cabinet Office.

A Careers Adviser had a complete review with Lizzie looking at all her skills and experience gained over the past five years. The Adviser then identified her career interests and helped her update her CV to emphasise the relevant skills and experiences.

The Adviser followed this up by sending Lizzie information about apprenticeship vacancies in childcare and about a Teaching Assistant post at a special needs school. The Adviser kept in touch via email, checked Lizzie's applications and supported her with interview advice and practice questions. Lizzie got the Teaching Assistant post and went back to the Next Step Adviser to say that she was really pleased with the support and service given.

CASE STUDY TWO

This study demonstrates collaborative working led by a Careers England member to support different groups of disadvantaged young people with three positive endorsements by trainees

A Careers England member was engaged in three projects in the South West for those not engaged in education or training (NEET) which delivered packages of training and the positive impact of these is shown below. They were:

“Newleaf” - which designed bespoke courses for young people in the NEET group such as a Community Sports Leader Award.

“Activity Agreement” - for those who were unemployed with additional barriers.

“Learning Agreement” - for those in jobs with no training.

NEWLEAF

Newleaf was an ESF funded programme for unemployed young people. The results up to the project end in December 2010 were as follows:

- *803 young people started Newleaf; 105% of target*
- *591 accredited learning activities were started; 120% of target*
- *358 accredited learning activities were achieved; 108% of target*
- *381 young people have moved into a positive outcome of education, employment or training within 6 weeks of leaving Newleaf; 100% of target*
- *365 young people either sustained the positive outcome for a minimum of 13 weeks or moved into a positive outcome within 6 -13 weeks of leaving Newleaf; 100% of target.*
- *Provision was delivered by 46 sub-contractors across the SW region. Throughout the*

project, advisers provided the young people taking part with support they needed to participate in the learning activities and to move into and sustain a positive outcome. "Newleaf was brilliant," said Kyrien. "I came out of it with qualifications and that was really good. I'm doing really well now. I have a flat, a job, ambition and I'm feeling really positive about myself".

LEARNING AGREEMENT PROJECT

In the Learning Agreement Project:

- *1,944 young people signed up and to date 807 have completed the project with 89% successfully achieving a qualification.*
- *39% of completers have progressed from the project onto further structured learning.*
- *161 young people have embarked on an Apprenticeship as a direct result of LAP intervention either by starting an Apprenticeship as part of their Learning Agreement or progressing onto an Apprenticeship after leaving the project. This figure is over 10% of the current number of 16-17 year olds on an Apprenticeship in the South West.*

ACTIVITY AGREEMENT PROJECT

In 2010/11, over 1600 young people signed up to the Activity Agreement project and to date almost 1500 have completed, with nearly 50% of these achieving a positive outcome.

- *304 young people started an AA, which was 15.6% above target*
- *205 young people who started AA during 2010/11 moved into a positive outcome within 13 weeks of leaving, which was an achievement of 67.4%. Since the AA pilot began in 2006 over 1,900 young people have signed up to the project, with nearly 50% achieving a positive outcome. Throughout the lifetime of the project it has been one of the top performers nationally.*
- *"The Activity Agreement is helping me figure out what I want to do with my life and career. I enjoy it because it helps me know my choices and also my PA is good to talk to." (Jade)*
- *"I had to get back into education before going to college. Activity Agreement helped me a lot and I did a work experience with the Met Office. I'm now at college doing my A levels. Activity Agreement is one of the most amazing things I've ever done. It's built my CV up for getting a job." (Josh)*
- *"The Activity Agreement helped me to about my personal issues feel better and helped believe in me to myself. I got lots of support from my adviser and did activities that I enjoyed and also that helped me get into College". (Matt)*

SECTION 7. THREATS TO PLACING SERVICES

People do not want a fluffy, vague, service. People want concrete action and follow up, where appropriate. Careers England case studies provide powerful evidence of young people succeeding where they had apparently little chance at the outset.

7.1 THE ISSUES

Under the terms of the proposals in the current Education Bill, Connexions would effectively be broken up; its current duties to support vulnerable young people and the NEET (not engaged in education, employment or training) group being retained by LAs, and the Bill proposes a new duty upon all schools to “*secure*” independent careers advice and guidance for all students aged 13-16.

This duty upon schools would become the new way in which the Secretary of State would discharge his continuing duty under Sections 8-10 of the 1973 Employment & Training Act to provide careers advice and guidance (“*a careers service*”) for young people.

There is no clarity, however, on how the Secretary of State will discharge his continuing duty to “*assist*” young people “*ceasing to undergo*” education at 16+ “*to obtain*” employment, training and /or continuing education - what is called the “*placing into employment service*”. The loss of such a placing service would disadvantage young job seekers aged 16-18.

People neither want, nor need, a fluffy, vague, service. People want concrete action and follow up, where appropriate. Careers England case studies provide powerful evidence of young people succeeding where they had apparently little chance at the outset.

The partnership model has also meant that careers services have worked very closely with other organisations including Jobcentre Plus. However in the case of specific groups including those who are NEET, offenders and young people with LDD (learning difficulties and disabilities), careers services have consistently demonstrated the expertise to support young people through the placement and settlement phases, as clearly evidenced by this Careers England survey.

Effective guidance secures a positive outcome for clients. The desired outcome will vary between individuals ranging from a link to the UCAS website to extended support through community projects for offenders.

7.2 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

One Careers England member reported that (in the area it served) 6 out of 7 young people who left education, employment or training (EET) early were placed into alternative EET by the careers adviser working with them and focused upon retention in learning and preventing becoming NEET. The impact was that only 1/41 became NEET.

A programme designed and run by another Careers England member had a dramatic effect on NEET reduction – from 6.9% in January 2010 to 4.4% in December 2010. Young people engaging with learning undertook accredited qualifications, learned employability skills and received on-going IAG. The result was that 85% accessed employment, education or training on completion.

7.3 CAREERS ENGLAND MEMBER CASE STUDIES

The two Case Studies below illustrate the importance of offering placing services as an integral part of a careers service. They show the need for detailed information and follow up in cases where the client needs placing action as an integral element of the guidance process. These also reinforce the positive impact careers services can make for vulnerable young people such as JD (the case study shown earlier in Section 5 on page 13) where placing, guidance, mentoring and collaborative working were critical to his success.

CASE STUDY ONE

Miss A (19) is studying for an NVQ Level 3 qualification in Business and Administration in a London Borough. She left school with 12 GCSEs and 3 A-Levels and wanted to gain some valuable work experience and another qualification before either applying to university or going travelling.

She said, "At the moment I am still not sure what career path I would like to go down, and that is why I decided to do this apprenticeship and gain practical experience and valuable skills from the workplace. I heard about the Apprenticeship Scheme through my local Connexions Centre and they gave me valuable advice which really helped me prepare for my interview.

I am really enjoying the apprenticeship so far and I'm kept busy doing a variety of different things each day and have already learnt so many new skills that employers are looking for."

"One of the good things about working in local government is that there is a lot of opportunity to progress and see how different departments are run. I am very much enjoying my apprenticeship so far; all my colleagues have supported me and taught me so much in the short space of time that I have been here. It has made me rethink my career prospects and I am now considering a career in Human Resources."

CASE STUDY TWO

A large national retail outlet asked for use of local premises to interview for 15-20 potential staff for a new store opening in the area. Jobcentre Plus was unable to offer the space and asked us at Connexions to host. Interviews were therefore held at the Connexions premises with Connexions and Jobcentre Plus working together to manage the reception and timings.

Potential applicants (adults registered with Jobcentre Plus and young people) were notified of the vacancies and Connexions staff made contact with young people in the NEET group who were registered as looking for retail work.

Over 100 applicants came to the interviews, including large numbers of adults.

On the day, the recruiter's interviewers commented particularly on how well prepared the young people put forward by Connexions were for interview - well presented, keen, motivated and not afraid to ask questions.

Connexions was contacted by the employer a few days later to tell us that 19 people had been appointed, of which 8 were young people from Connexions who would be starting retail careers in the new store the following week.

SECTION 8. ORGANISATIONS AND WORKFORCE

Good practice in public procurement in relation to quality is at risk of being ignored, with potential consequences for safeguarding young people. Careers England members have made strenuous efforts to demonstrate and maintain their competence and passion for quality delivery. Careers England is also taking forward the development work on a proposed national "kite mark" to provide national validation for current Quality Awards for careers education as recommended by the Careers Profession Task Force.

8.1 THE ISSUES

There are no confirmed plans by Government to quality assure organisations from whom schools may secure the required independent and impartial careers advice and guidance services in order to fulfill their new duty should the Education Bill become law. Thus poor quality provision in many areas could well happen, with damaging consequences both for young people's lives and for the economy.

In relation to aspects of assuring quality, there are precedents which it is suggested the Government should follow in respect of careers advice and guidance. It is standard practice in public procurement (especially by the Department for Work and Pensions and by the Skills Funding Agency on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills) that organisations need to have secured a place on an 'approved list' (often termed a 'framework') in order to be considered for contracts.

This begs the question; why should the service area of career advice and guidance to be 'secured' by schools be different, and why do Department for Education Ministers seem so resistant to such a tried, tested and established practice?

The second key point to consider is in relation to safeguarding young people - all current providers of publicly-funded careers advice to young people have a workforce which is compliant with this area of legislation, and are often exemplars of good practice.

It is a real concern that Government is not being mindful of its own responsibilities here, and will not be assisting the thousands of Head Teachers and Governing Bodies who will need to prepare to discharge their new duty. By ensuring that there is a register of 'approved suppliers' (who meet quality measures, professional standards and are compliant with safeguarding

regulations) Government would manifestly be assisting schools to secure services from quality providers. The **matrix Standard** is to be required by Government of all providers involved in delivering the new National Careers Service. The compelling case is that all young people, as well as adults, should be assured of provision – whether it is accessed face-to-face, on-line, or by the telephone - which meets such a national measure of quality.

In respect of the future quality of careers education underpinning IAG, Careers England has recently facilitated work to seek to reach agreement on a proposed national 'kite mark' to validate the existing quality awards for CEIAG (following the recommendation 10 of the Careers Profession Task Force²⁹).

Most careers service delivery organisations have extensive experience in delivering careers education and/or guidance contracts in schools, colleges and the community. They have therefore held a wealth of expertise in their 'corporate memory', regrettably much of this is being diminished through the large scale redundancies which have followed the cuts to local authority budgets and the savage impact many have passed on to Connexions contractors/suppliers in their areas.

Most Careers England members have held and successfully delivered significant Connexions contracts and, of those, many are also experienced deliverers of Next Step services to adults as well as a number providing services to offenders under the National Offender Management Service's OLASS programme. Many are also involved in work experience and have held important DWP contracts and now are involved with the Work Programme.

Considerable work on developing better structures for staff in the sector within which Careers England members operate was undertaken by the Sector Skills Council LLUK (now part of LSIS). This work has been built upon by the nascent Careers Profession Alliance under funding by LSIS. Many of the recommendations of the Careers Profession Task Force relate to enhancing the profession, and Government policy is to encourage a strengthening of the career guidance profession. It is not clear how these welcome developments will be impacted by the provisions of the Education Bill and the lack of a plan for transition to the new arrangements.

There are estimates that up to 8,000 career advisers have been made redundant thus far due to in-year cuts and restructuring of services in anticipation of the Education Bill becoming law. Whilst some may return as school commissioning of suppliers gets underway, there is a serious risk that there will be a shortage of qualified career advisers in the short to medium term.

8.2 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

²⁹ Careers Profession Task Force, Towards a strong careers profession, p31, DfE 2010

Careers England members hold a number of quality standards awards beyond the Next Step contractually required **matrix Standard**. These include:

- Investors in People
- Investor in Careers
- Investors in Diversity
- ISO9001, ISO14001, ISO27001
- Award for Education Business Excellence
- Best Companies
- Positive About Disabilities.

As a result, Careers England members – and many other career guidance providers - can demonstrate real quality improvements over time and commitments to treating their staff as they would expect other employers to. Nevertheless, funding reductions and over application of market structures have reduced members' ability to develop staff as they think is essential.

All Careers England members hold professional indemnity insurance. It is to be hoped that all future providers to schools and colleges are to be required to have similar arrangements in place in order to be enabled to provide careers advice and guidance services which directly affect young people's lives - and have impact upon their families, including financially.

All Careers England member organisations conduct performance reviews with all their staff, using their own company criteria, and some use career guidance sector national frameworks. Between 59% and 95% of staff employed by Careers England members are rated as “good” or “excellent” in performance reviews (which comply with expectations of the IIP standard).

A small number reported circa 10% in a “satisfactory” category, requiring support and development. The overwhelming majority reported on-going need and commitment to provide further staff development opportunities.

8.3 CAREERS ENGLAND MEMBER CASE STUDY

One Careers England member received the following comments after an IIP assessment:

“X company is very strong at evaluation on all fronts and has robust processes for collecting feedback from users of the service and fund holders and contractors. The company certainly has continuous improvement at the centre of everything. X is an organisation with strong values and these are evident through everyday decisions and actions of staff and management alike. Managers demonstrate a mature and trusting approach and provide appropriate levels of support to their team members using the Performance & Professional

SECTION 9. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE SURVEY AND FROM THIS ANALYSIS BY THE AUTHOR, LEIGH HENDERSON

“My conclusions are drawn from the evidence gathered from Careers England members as well as from further authoritative published sources. Evidence has consequently been presented in this report with a particular focus on the interests of Careers England members’ clients – the young people and adults they serve across much of England.

The evidence and the analysis highlight the pressing need for the policies of the Coalition Government - with regard to all-age careers information, advice and guidance - to take close cognizance of the impact of specialist high quality careers service provision.

Anecdotal evidence can always be brought forward to criticise any profession or service. The consistent facts presented here, from quality assured sources, reveal something of what will be lost with the Education Bill in its present form unless it can be amended in its provisions in current clause 27.

These include:

- Removal of the right of access for young people to locally provided, labour market informed, impartial guidance. The marketisation of the education and training markets requires access to impartial support now more than ever. Evidence presented in my report shows the power of collaborative working and this is supported by the Ofsted report and the Hughes Report. (Section 3)***
- Serious reductions in the access to face-to-face professional career guidance. The likely ongoing impact on dropout rates from work-based learning, further and higher education and universities should urgently be considered. Estimates of the cost of wasted fees, let alone the human cost, as the evidence in my report indicates, clearly show the serious implications for the economy. (Section 4)***
- Careers England evidence, the Education Select Committee and the Hughes Report all argue for retaining access to face-to-face support for young people from career advisers. It is obvious that most people use the Internet and social networking sites to find information and there is the prospect of ever more functionality for the individual. The flexibility to be able to use many channels to communicate with career advisers is well established and will improve.***

However, none of this replaces the need for face-to-face interactions to establish

trust and real communication services. People need to talk through issues with significant personal content with someone they can trust; the web and telephone help lines alone cannot do that. The case study on JD on page 14 of my report could not have had the outcome achieved by guidance by other channels. (Section 5)

- **It would be easy to seek to dismiss the evidence on satisfaction rates presented by Careers England members. Books could be written on how simple it can be to internalize helpful guidance and not acknowledge the support given. The facts remain that response rates to these satisfaction surveys were highly positive; and Careers England members are evidently committed to identifying areas for improvement for the sake of their clients, not just to meet the requirements of matrix and other quality standards.**

The immediacy effect diagram in Section 6.2 is more specific in its questioning on impact and shows that many people can work through career planning for themselves. However, many cannot. (Section 6)

- **Serious reductions in placing and supportive activity at a time when many young people at all levels need support not only to enter employment, education and training opportunities but to be retained in learning and work. The case studies included in my report show how many young people need significant counselling, advocacy and mentoring support if they are to make effective transitions into learning and work; and not only to participate but to achieve and to progress. (Section 7)**
- **A dilution of quality assured procurement, with serious concerns about public protection issues, all of which could be found wanting by independent scrutiny. The proposed arrangements are likely to exacerbate the variations in quality already noted by Ofsted after the devolution of Connexions to LAs in 2008. (Section 8).**

The weight of evidence I have gathered from a variety of sources in preparing and presenting this analysis makes powerful arguments against the arrangements proposed in the Education Bill for the future of careers education and IAG for young people, and I have not listed individual sources contained in the Hughes and Gratton literature review³⁰.

My overall conclusion is this: if we are really concerned about providing young people with the best support for career planning, we will neither argue for the status quo nor for the proposals as they currently stand in the Education Bill. Rather we will argue for universally accessible specialist professional career guidance services. Such services for the future need to be based on the principles of impartiality, professionalism (with the resources to express that professionalism), informed by the labour market and complemented by intelligent application of web technologies to optimise efficiency and effectiveness. The

³⁰ Hughes, D.H, and Gratton, G. (2009). Literature review of research on the impact of careers and guidance-related interventions DMH Associates for CfBT Education Trust.

costs involved in such a solution should be set against the structural wastage in transitions as demonstrated by the evidence presented in this report.”

Prepared by Leigh Henderson, NICEC Fellow

CoHesion Career Development Consultancy

For Careers England, October 2011

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