



PRESS NOTICE

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“Government Policy Requires More Urgent Action:

THE EDUCATION BILL and the NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE”

Today Careers England publishes a detailed and comprehensive review of the Coalition Government’s emerging policies for careers advice and guidance for young people and adults. The Board calls upon the Government to act, quickly.

The Policy Commentary concludes:

If the main elements of the Government’s policies are to be implemented as planned, in a way which improves rather than damages services, there are a number of steps that need to be taken. These include not only establishing the National Careers Service (NCS), but also persuading schools to pay for services they have previously received free of charge. There are grave doubts about whether these steps are achievable within the timetable Ministers have set. There are also concerns that:

- **By the time the new market is established, much of the expertise for its professional base will have disappeared.**
- **In the meantime, there will have been a widespread collapse of careers help for young people.**
- **The original Department for Business, Innovation and Skills vision for the all-age service will have been fatally eroded by lack of serious engagement from the Department for Education, with adverse impact on the services for adults too.**

Allister McGowan, Chairman of the Board of Careers England, said:

“In publishing this detailed review commissioned from Professor Tony Watts, we reaffirm that as the trade association for employers in the careers guidance business in England, we have supported the Government’s proposals for an all-age Careers Service (aaCS) from the time it was first announced in November 2010.”

“Whilst we welcome some of the clarifications given by the Government in announcements on 13 April 2011 (including the naming of the aaCS as the National Careers Service), we remain deeply concerned that over the past few months very little progress has been made on turning the Government’s vision for a world-class all-age strategic careers service into reality.”



“There are pressing, urgent and important matters which the Government must address. These are covered thoroughly in this Policy Commentary.”

“ They include the urgent issues of transition from current arrangements and statutory duties to the new proposals for careers services for all age groups, alongside the need for absolute clarity about the support to be available to young people in schools in the future. The announcements on 13 April clarified some of these, but raised alarm on others.”

“At a time of growing youth unemployment, the serious cuts by many local authorities to the Connexions Services – which it remains their statutory duty to provide until the new laws are in place – risk exacerbating the damage to many young lives”.

“All local authorities are accountable to Parliament and their local electorates for the fulfilment of these duties, informed by local circumstances as well as national priorities. The unprecedented cuts made by many local authorities to careers support for young people in their areas also undermine the steps required to improve social mobility and achievement for these young people”.

“By default rather than design, these cuts also weaken insidiously the foundations upon which the future careers support for adults through the National Careers Service should be built.”

“The Government says it wishes to re-professionalise careers guidance in England. We support this goal wholeheartedly. But without investment in the careers profession workforce, such a goal is no more than an empty aspiration. A professional careers service, properly resourced across England, is a crucial component in promoting employability skills for all age groups, reducing unemployment, and securing the economic and social health of the country.”

“We remain fully committed to help the Government to make its new policies for career guidance work. However, as this Policy Commentary demonstrates, there are grave doubts about whether the changes envisaged by the Government are achievable within the timescales set and the still uncertain resources that seem likely to be available.”

ENDS.



FURTHER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. *Careers England is the Trade Association for employers in the careers advice and guidance industry in England. The concerns of Careers England are shared by colleagues across the careers sector, at strategic and operational levels.*
2. *Whilst the views expressed below in this Policy Commentary are those of its author, the Careers England Board commends this careful and thorough analysis to all who care for the future of careers services for all age groups in England.*