

Social mobility of young people and adults in England:

the contribution and impact of high quality careers services

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August 2010

The contents of the paper build upon an earlier analysis of social mobility policy¹ and upon key themes emerging from recent interviews with six leading figures from within industry and education. Also, a review of research literature on the impact of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provides a strong evidence-base to help influence and inform the design and implementation of a progressive strategy for a new all-age careers service framework in England. From a combination of these sources, a compelling argument is made for timely, relevant and cost effective public, private and voluntary/community careers service delivery arrangements throughout England.

Acknowledgments:

The author wishes to formally thank the following leading figures from industry and education for kindly sharing their invaluable insights on the topic of social mobility and careers service provision: Susan Anderson, Director of Public Services & Skills, Confederation of British Industry (CBI); Nick Chambers, Director of the Education and Employer Taskforce in England; Patrick Leeson, Director of Education & Care, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills (Ofsted), Brian Lightman, General Secretary, Association of Schools and College Leaders (ASCL), Alan Tuckett, Director of the National Association for Adults in Continuing Education (NIACE), and Professor Alison Wolf, the Sir Roy Griffiths Professor of Public Sector Management, King's College, London. I am also indebted to Paul Chubb at Careers England for kindly overseeing the publication of this paper.

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Careers England *is the trade association for employer organisations in career education and guidance in England.*

12th August 2010

¹ Hughes, D (2010). *A Literature Review: Social Mobility and Careers Service Policies*. Careers England. Visit: <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/Documents/Public/DiscussionDocs/Careers%20England%20Literature%20Review%20Final%20Paper%20130510.pdf>

Executive Summary

This paper comes at a time of momentous political change and at a time when the country faces some difficult challenges, both in relation to the aspiration of increased social mobility and to the need to make significant savings in public expenditure. It is also a time of great opportunity - the new Coalition Government has expressed its desire for improved arrangements for 'all-age careers service' support to be available in England.

Aim

The project reported here aimed to build upon an earlier analysis of current social mobility policy² and upon key themes emerging from recent interviews with six leading figures from within industry and education. Also, a detailed review of research literature on the impact of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) was undertaken. From this, a strong evidence-base emerged to help influence and support the design and implementation of a *progressive approach towards achieving a new all-age careers service framework in England*. From a combination of these sources, a compelling argument is made for timely, relevant and cost effective public, private and voluntary/community careers service delivery arrangements. The responses are illuminating, and present a collective call for decisive action.

Findings

- The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2010)³ highlights issues concerning the quality of matching processes and careers information and advice. It also suggests that a broad policy principle should be developed further to *empower customers, focus on outcomes and place greater trust in providers in the delivery of skills and jobs services*, in order to achieve more and better for less.

- High-quality and high-impact careers service provision - which is *independent of learning providers, informed by the labour market and provided by specialist professional careers advisers* - represents both a personal and a public good, helping individuals to make choices and progress *and* providing an essential lubricant for the economic and social mobility necessary for a prosperous 'UK plc'

- A new era of social responsibility, accountability and added-value contributions is now a dominant policy discourse. All individuals are required by

² Hughes, D (2010). *A Literature Review: Social Mobility and Careers Service Policies*. Careers England

³ UKCES (2010) *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK*. South Yorkshire: Wath-upon-Deerne.
Accessed on 23.07.10: http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/A2020_web_final.pdf

government to make a contribution to help the country reduce its financial deficit and re-establish stability within a fragile UK economy. *Providing opportunities* for the active engagement of all individuals in some form of learning and work is a *pre-requisite for social mobility*.

- Social mobility can result in disadvantages as well as advantages for the *individual*. Hutton (2008)⁴ describes social mobility as the opportunities available to individuals to enable them 'to live a life that someone would have reason to value'. As well as its importance to the individual, social mobility is also important for *society* and for the *economy* as a whole, helping to build a more prosperous and more cohesive Britain.⁵

- In general, policy-makers do recognise the urgent need to address social mobility through a more progressive approach for a new all-age careers service framework in England. The research evidence highlights the contribution of *CEIAG as a pre-cursor to social mobility*. All three main political parties have identified that CEIAG has an important contribution to make and in this sense the notion of CEIAG 'lubricating' the wheels of social mobility and economic prosperity is an important image to promote.

- There is broad agreement that there has been *too narrow a focus on the disadvantaged minority* to the detriment of the *aspirational majority*. The need to balance and target resources effectively, particularly to those most in need, remains a key challenge for the new Coalition Government and for providers of education and employment.

- The centrality of *education as a 'catalyst for change'* in making a difference to social mobility is undisputed; however, the mechanisms deployed to encourage a more equitable social distribution of life chances and the relationship between education and the workplace remains contested territory. The *significant savings to the public purse of just a modest reduction in NEET and the costs resulting from ill-informed career or study choices* leading to course switching, non-completion of studies and/ or unemployment are apparent. Cost savings cannot be fully achieved within existing arrangements.

- *New market-based models of provision* in education and careers services are beginning to emerge in different forms. There is a growing expectation to find some form of *continuity of CEIAG* for young people and adults. *Totally separate services for young people and adults can produce duplication and wastage of scarce resources*. Also, an *opening up of the careers sector market* brings *new possibilities*

⁴Hutton, W. (2008). *Barnardos Lecture: Social Mobility*, October 2008. Accessed on 06.05.2010: http://www.barnardos.org.uk/will_hutton_lecture_summary-2.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

but also presents *potential threats*, particularly for Government, in safeguarding the interests of those most vulnerable in our society.

- A *consumer-led approach* with increased demand for accurate information, particularly on returns for investment and labour market trends, means that a closer connectivity between education, employers and careers professionals must be encouraged by the new Coalition Government. Improved data on learning outcomes, supported by impartial and accurate information on opportunities, destinations and individuals' immediate, intermediate and longer-term career trajectories are paramount.

- *Informal sources of information and advice* can, in some cases, be very helpful; however, they may not always be reliable, impartial or accurate. In this sense, the '*unique selling point*' of professional sources of CEIAG, including quality assurance kitemarks, may be the *reassurance of the authority and impartiality* that they confer.

- The actual *lack of impartiality of CEIAG* was beginning to be addressed to some extent by the previous government; however, neither the 2008 Act nor the IAG strategy had been fully supported by detailed statutory guidance to LAs nor by any form of inspection or measurement and thus had made minimal impact. The new *Academies Act (2010)*⁶ and forthcoming *Schools White Paper* and *Education and Children's Bill* due to be announced in autumn 2010 will need to shed more light on this.

- The rapid *expansion in technology* and its apparent *cost-effectiveness* within an all-age careers service framework is likely to become more prevalent and significant for a government forced to make the harsh savings in public expenditure required by the budget deficit. How the new *NEXT STEP service* and *Connexions Direct* will become *part of the new administration's* (proposed but yet to be confirmed in policy terms) *all-age careers service* remains uncertain.

- It is often difficult to *demonstrate the direct impact of CEIAG support activities* given the behaviour of individuals is complex and subject to many interacting factors. Evidence presented in section 3 of the main report, demonstrates clearly that *careers services and careers support activities can and do make a significant difference in terms of learning outcomes* such as increased self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation, and enhance decision making. There is also strong evidence that CEIAG supports significant participation in learning and educational attainment. For progression into employment, the case is less clear although there is some evidence that highly intensive support for the unemployed can make a difference.

⁶ The Academies Act (2010) received Royal Assent on 27th July 2010. Accessed on 29.07.10: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2010/ukpga_20100032_en_1

Recommendations

On the basis of evidence, and the affirmed views of the leading figures interviewed in preparing this paper, the Coalition Government is urged, as part of its all-age careers service plans, to:

- (i) **work closely with Careers England** (the leading trade association of careers sector employers whose members are major employers of careers advisers responsible for designing and delivering high-quality careers services), **the Careers Colloquium⁷, the UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum and leading representatives from industry and education**, to identify progressive approaches designed to halt the decline of opportunities and broaden access to sustainable mobility and employability for all individuals;
- (ii) support the development of **a formal partnership model** for careers professionals to work more closely with those in education and industry to help address social mobility and the active participation of all individuals in some form of meaningful learning and work. Also, to draw upon lessons learned from **impartial CEIAG** in public, private and voluntary/community sectors within and outside of England;
- (iii) help **build capacity, assure quality, and promote expansion** in careers information, advice and guidance for all UK citizens through a new and dynamic re-engineered system that takes account of both formal and informal learning support activities. In doing so, to **put in place arrangements for safeguarding individuals** from potential ‘rogue traders’ who might view government de-regulation as an opportunity to prey upon those most vulnerable in our society;
- (iv) utilise the evidence which highlights that **trained, competent and qualified careers advisers provide a powerful ‘trigger’ for motivating individuals**, including those most vulnerable in society, to engage more fully with learning and work;
- (v) develop a **new accountability framework** for careers service provision that focuses on diversity and equality with particular emphasis on narrowing the *attainment and achievement gaps* between different groups in our society, particularly those most in need.
- (vi) further develop **community learning provision and implement career literacy support strategies** to facilitate individuals’ personal and career development.

⁷ The Careers Colloquium is a newly formed careers professional associations’ body working together to provide a single voice to Government on the design and development of an all-age careers service framework in England.

These should be open to all individuals, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender and occupational status.

(vii) support the careers sector to **raise the status of the profession and improve its all-round stature** as a powerful agent for change in helping to transform people's lives. The forthcoming report from the Careers Profession Taskforce in England⁸ should be helpful in this regard.

⁸ The Careers Profession Taskforce in England is led by Dame Ruth Silver CBE, commissioned by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and is due to report to the Minister for Education in September 2010.

1. Introduction

Context

1.1 This paper comes at a time of momentous political change and at a time when the country faces some difficult challenges, both in relation to the aspiration of increased social mobility and to the need to make significant savings in public expenditure. It is also a time of great opportunity - the new Coalition Government has expressed its desire for improved arrangements for 'all-age careers service' support to be available in England.

1.2 The contents of the paper build upon an earlier analysis of current social mobility policy⁹ and upon key themes emerging from recent interviews with leading figures from within industry and education. Also, a review of research literature on the impact of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provides a strong evidence-base to help influence and support the design and implementation of a *progressive approach towards achieving a new all-age careers service framework in England*. From a combination of these sources, a compelling argument is made for timely, relevant and cost effective public, private and voluntary/community careers service delivery arrangements.

1.3 The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES, 2010)¹⁰ highlights issues concerning the quality of matching processes and careers information and advice (p. 104). More generally, the Commission suggests that a broad policy principle should be developed further to *empower* customers, *focus* on outcomes and place greater *trust* in providers in the delivery of skills and jobs services, in order to achieve more and better for less (p.106). To achieve this policy ambition, a new framework for the careers sector is required, that adheres to the principle of the well-informed consumer, and is designed to capture outcome-based performance measures with well trained and qualified individuals working to motivate and incentivise people of all-ages into learning and work.

1.4 High-quality and high-impact careers service provision - which is independent of learning providers, informed by the labour market and provided by specialist professional careers advisers - represents both a personal and a public good, helping individuals to make choices and progress *and* providing an essential lubricant for the economic and social mobility necessary for a prosperous 'UK plc'.

⁹ Hughes, D (2010). *A Literature Review: Social Mobility and Careers Service Policies*. Careers England

¹⁰ UKCES (2010) *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK*. South Yorkshire: Wath-upon-Dearne.
Accessed on 23.07.10: http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/A2020_web_final.pdf

2. Social mobility and the UK policy context

2.1 This section explores what is meant by social mobility and why it is important to both individuals and society as a whole. It summarises current mainstream UK political policy in relation to social mobility and how policy-makers view careers services within this context. From a series of specially conducted interviews, the viewpoints of leading figures from within industry and education are also presented in this paper to help illustrate some of the main challenges that lie ahead. It concludes with a suggested framework of service delivery processes and outcomes that specifies the contribution careers services can make in helping the new Coalition Government realise its ambition of effective social mobility and welfare reform. The suggested framework incorporates the type of support that careers services can and do provide, and that individuals will need, to help them become socially mobile and equipped to respond positively to uncertainty in fast changing education and labour markets. It also incorporates what policy-makers and policy-shapers can and should expect of careers services.

2.2 The new Coalition Government has already stated:

“We both want a Britain where social mobility is unlocked; where everyone, regardless of background, has the chance to rise as high as their talents and ambition allow them. To pave the way, we have both agreed to sweeping reform of welfare, taxes and, most of all, our schools.” (The Coalition: Our Programme for Government, 2010)¹¹

A new era of social responsibility, accountability and added-value contributions is now a dominant policy discourse. All individuals are required by government to make a contribution to help the country reduce its financial deficit and re-establish stability within a fragile UK economy. Lessons learned from past experience, and international research findings on career guidance and public policy from the OECD¹², highlight policy levers designed to raise aspirations, achieve sustainable growth, stimulate demand for employability and tackle welfare reform. Providing opportunities for the active engagement of all individuals in some form of learning and work is a pre-requisite for social mobility.

Social mobility: its importance to the individual and to society as a whole

2.3 The expression ‘social mobility’ is often used to describe the opportunity for an individual’s transition in terms of personal well-being and/or employment and financial security. This makes it clear that social mobility can result in disadvantages

¹¹ Cabinet Office (2010) *The Coalition Government: our programme for government* London: Cabinet Office May 2010 p. 7.

¹² Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: OECD & OECD (2002) Rethinking Human Capital. In *Education Policy Analysis*. Paris: OECD.

as well as advantages for the *individual*. Hutton (2008)¹³ describes social mobility as the opportunities available to individuals to enable them ‘to live a life that someone would have reason to value’. The UKCES 2010¹⁴ cites literature that identifies the multiple purposes that individuals pursue through work covering: use of talents/skills, recognition and achievement; monetary compensation; interpersonal relationships and social/moral purpose.

Additionally, the new Coalition Government’s Secretary of State for Education has emphasised the importance of social mobility to address cycles of poverty and deprivation:

‘Children from poorer backgrounds, who are currently doing less well at school, are falling further and further behind in the qualifications race every year – and that in turn means that they are effectively condemned to ever poorer employment prospects, narrower social and cultural horizons, less by way of resources to invest in their own children – and thus a cycle of disadvantage and inequality is made worse with every year that passes.’
(Michael Gove, July 2010)¹⁵

2.4 In producing this paper, leading figures from within industry and education were asked to identify ways in which they believed the new Coalition Government could become better informed and supported in making key decisions for improving social mobility within a careers service context. Six semi-structured interviews were undertaken during June and July 2010, involving senior representatives from the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Education and Employers Taskforce, Ofsted, the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and a government adviser on Education and Skills issues from King’s College London. Their responses are illuminating, and present a collective call for decisive action.

The first two questions posed were as follows:

- (i) ‘What is your response, if any, to the new Coalition Government’s agenda on social mobility?’
- (ii) ‘Are there any particular definitions of 'social mobility' that resonate specifically with your current work?’

¹³Hutton, W. (2008). *Barnardos Lecture: Social Mobility*, October 2008. Accessed on 06.05.2010: http://www.barnardos.org.uk/will_hutton_lecture_summary-2.pdf

¹⁴ UKCES (2010) *Skills for Jobs Today and Tomorrow*. London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills, Vol. 2 p. 107.

http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/UKCES_NSSA_Report_23.3.10_1.pdf

¹⁵Government announces pupil premium to help raise achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Accessed on 30.07.10: <http://www.education.gov.uk/news/press-notices-new/pupil-premium>

2.5 In response to this, there was an overall perception that Ministers and their policy advisers are using *new language* when they discuss social mobility issues which, in turn, necessitates a reframing of dialogue with the new Coalition Government. The centrality of education as a ‘catalyst for change’ in making a difference to social mobility featured prominently in all of the interviews. The role of research and inspection frameworks which focus on diversity and equality were highlighted by Ofsted:

‘The current schools’ inspection framework focuses on diversity and equality with particular emphasis from OfSTED on schools’ success in narrowing the attainment gaps between different groups of pupils, especially between poorer pupils and others.’ (Patrick Leeson, Director of Education and Care, Ofsted)

The ASCL indicated the emerging role of academies as a major vehicle on the education landscape being driven forward by the new Coalition Government to address the twin goals of raising educational standards and improving social mobility:

‘New arrangements for academies seek to ensure schools work effectively and efficiently towards the common good and fullest development of all pupils. Social mobility involves not only attainment of qualifications but also raising educational standards for all.’ (Brian Lightman, General Secretary, ASCL)

The Secretary of State for Education in his recent announcement on Academies declared:

‘Schools should be engines of social mobility. They should provide the knowledge, and the tools, to enable talented young people to overcome accidents of birth and an inheritance of disadvantage in order to enjoy greater opportunities.’ (Michael Gove, July 2010)¹⁶

2.6 The inextricable relationship between *education and the workplace* in contributing to and improving social mobility was made very clear by the Education and Employers Taskforce, and reinforced by the CBI:

‘Interventions to encourage a more equitable social distribution of life chances begin at school and end in the workplace and the link between the two is of profound importance...Education must be central to any strategies to improve social mobility and the economic community has a key role to play in supporting schools to challenge and compensate for wider societal factors which shape cross-generational social reproduction.’ (Nick Chambers, Director, Education and Employer Taskforce)

¹⁶ Op.cit.

‘Educational institutions and employers have to find better ways of tackling the growing problem of mobility which impede companies’ productivity and performance. Employers have major concerns about the employability skills of young people leaving school, colleges and universities – many do not have the ‘soft skills’ required to adapt quickly to the demands of the world of work.’
(Susan Anderson, Director of Public Services & Skills, CBI)

2.7 As well as its importance to the individual, social mobility is also important for *society* and for the *economy* as a whole, helping to build a more prosperous and more cohesive Britain. It is possible to calculate the significant savings to the public purse of just a modest reduction in young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), in terms of the costs associated with educational underachievement, unemployment, inactivity, crime and health¹⁷. The Audit Commission (2010)¹⁸ reported that young people who are not in education, employment or training by the age of 16-18 have poorer life chances than their peers and are more likely to be a long-term cost to the public purse. It is estimated that the 2008 NEET cohort will cost around £13 billion in public finance costs and £22 billion in opportunity costs over their lifetimes¹⁹.

2.8 Work by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), on behalf of the Sutton Trust²⁰, has led to estimates that improving levels of social mobility for future generations in the UK would contribute between £56 billion and £140 billion to the value of the economy each year by 2050 in today’s prices - or up to an additional 4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over and above any other growth. These calculations are based on an established methodology from the USA and give a very striking picture of how much current levels of limited social mobility could be costing the UK in financial terms – added to which is the human cost associated with quality of life and living standards which affect individuals and their families.

2.9 The CBI reports that ‘business demand for lower level skills is expected to decline (-13%), with employers predicting increased demand for higher skills (+55%) and leadership and management skills (+69%). However despite this increased need, over half of employers (51%) are not confident that they will find enough people to fill high skilled jobs in future.’²¹ There are growing concerns about the perceived

¹⁷ Godfrey, C., Hutton, S., Bradshaw, J., Coles, B., Craig, G. and Johnson, J. (2002). *Estimating the Costs of Being ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ at Age 16-18*. RR 236. London: Department for Education and Skills.

¹⁸ Audit Commission (2010) *Against the odds: re-engaging young people in education, employment and training- Summary of Report (July 2010)*

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ The Sutton Trust (2010). *The Mobility Manifesto: A report on cost effective ways to achieve greater social mobility through education, based on work by the Boston Consulting Group*. Accessed 21.04.2010: http://www.suttontrust.com/reports/20100312_mobility_manifesto.pdf

²¹ Confederation of British Industry (2010) *Ready to Grow: business priorities for education and skills – Education and Skills Survey 2010*. London: CBI. p.7

status of vocational pathways²² and the overall changing nature of employment opportunities in the labour market.

'Market-led models that draw upon best practice from the private sector can help education and business to gain a better understanding of the fast changing world of work.' (Susan Anderson, Director of Public Services & Skills, CBI)

2.10 Overall, major gaps still exist in the parity of esteem given to vocational and academic routes by young people, parents, teachers, employers and training providers. It is a cause for serious concern that findings from the OECD²³ indicate that across the UK and further afield: 'Academically trained teachers have often spent most of their lives in education. Their experience of the wider work environment can be limited and their formal or informal advice to students may be biased towards general education and university pathways. They may be reluctant to recommend vocational courses, particularly to bright students.' (p.5). Linked to this is the extent to which individuals have access to information and networks:

'It is commonly agreed that many employment opportunities stem from personal contacts. This is especially the case in securing practical experience – through work experience and internships for example – as well as first hand advice which helps young people progress into university and into paid employment. All pupils have access to information and networks related to careers from parents/guardians and teachers, but children from 'privileged' backgrounds have access to significantly broader networks through both family ties and particularly through independent/private educational establishments.' (Nick Chambers, Director, Education & Employer Taskforce)

To counter this, planned universal programmes of careers support, mentoring, work experience, enterprise activities, visiting speakers, literacy and numeracy schemes can help build aspiration, underpin achievement and increase access to information and networks.

2.11 Universities are being challenged to ensure that all students have employability skills and to support diversity in the system to cater for a wider range of student and business needs²⁴. According to the Higher Education Policy Institute (2010)²⁵, unemployment among recent graduates has risen significantly, with men worse affected than women. The costs resulting from ill-informed career or study

²² Ibid.

²³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010) *Challenges and Policy Options for More Effective Career Guidance* Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development EDU/EDPC(2010)13 290310

²⁴ Confederation of British Industry (2010) *Stronger Together: Businesses and Universities in Turbulent Times – A report from the CBI Higher Education Taskforce*. London: CBI. p.5

²⁵ The Higher Education Statistics Agency (2009) show a national average of 9 per cent drop-out of students from universities Accessed on 05.07.10: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10511124>

choices leading to course switching, non- completion of studies and/or unemployment are becoming more apparent. There is growing concern about young people's state of readiness for joining the labour market:

'Young people need a core understanding of their chosen careers but too many suffer as a result of poor provision of careers advice. Close to half of employers (43%) feel young people have limited knowledge about their potential job, and too few have completed relevant work experience – half (53%) of our members cite this as a concern.' (Susan Anderson, Director of Public Services & Skills, CBI)

2.12 The need to *balance and target resources* effectively, particularly to those most in need, remains a key challenge for the new Coalition Government and for providers of education and employment. Current demographic changes are leading the UK and much of the developed world into uncharted territory. The number of older people in the UK is increasing and the number of young people decreasing. Over the last 25 years, the percentage of the population aged 65 and over increased from 15% in 1984 to 16% in 2009, an increase of 1.7million people. Over the same period, the percentage of the population aged under 16 decreased from 21% to 19% percent. This trend is projected to continue²⁶. Whilst much current attention is concentrated on pensions and a prolonged extension of working life, the agenda now needs to be broadened considerably for the economy to expand. In view of current demographic trends, there will not be sufficient younger people to meet the demands of the workplace, and consumer demand could decline substantially if increasing numbers of older people are unable to work and fall into varying levels of poverty:

'The changing nature of individuals' learning and work patterns and the realisation that more and more adults are looking for career and 're-careering' opportunities...(means that)...formal and informal systems need to be maximised, but the challenge for Government and careers professionals is to find the right balance of funding and expenditure on services for young people and adults.' (Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE)

2.13 A cross-departmental independent Commission into early intervention²⁷, which aims to ensure that children at greatest risk of multiple disadvantage get the best start in life, has recently been announced by the Government. This will look at and recommend the best models for early intervention and advise on how these could be extended to all parts of the country. It will also consider how such schemes could be supported through innovative funding models, including through non-Government streams. It is anticipated that social mobility and the role of careers education,

²⁶ Office for National Statistics (2010) Accessed 21.07.10: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id+949>

²⁷ <http://www.education.gov.uk/news/press-notices-new/early-intervention-opportunities>

information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) should feature prominently within the Commission's work.

2.14 The newly appointed Minister with joint departmental responsibility for careers advice – within both the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills - has recently outlined the necessity to focus on adult education as a major issue:

'And adult education – make no mistake – brings hope and the promise of a better society founded on social mobility, social justice and social cohesion.....It both enriches the lives of individuals and the communities of which they are a part. Adult learning is not a luxury, it is an essential component of our education system. If we want to build a bigger society as the Prime Minister has missioned us to, then we must recognise the value of community learning to civil society.' (John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning, July 2010)

It is universally agreed that the concept of having a well-informed consumer being empowered to make key decisions about learning and work is a primary objective for those working with adults and young people. Social mobility is broadly dependent on individuals being empowered to take action:

'Informed choices have to be a key goal but everyone has to take responsibility for the decisions they make.' (Professor Alison Wolf, King's College London)

'Opening up new possibilities for adults in their communities is the key to addressing social mobility. Empowering community groups to become better informed and to take action is essential.' (Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE)

A Nuffield Review (2008)²⁸ has already suggested that 'all education and training providers, in conjunction with Connexions, need to develop more effective Information, Advice and Guidance services to ensure an appropriate match between student, provider and course.'(p. 12) The UKCES²⁹ indicates an urgent need to 'transform the quality and availability of information, advice and guidance on career and learning opportunities, through high quality labour market intelligence and the use of Web 2.0 technologies to widen availability and use' (p.112).

²⁸ Nuffield Foundation (2008) *Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training, England and Wales: Summary, Implications and Recommendations*. London: Routledge. p.12. Accessed on 23.07.10: <http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk/files/documents206-1.pdf>

²⁹ UKCES (2010) *Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK* South Yorkshire: Wath-upon-Deerne. p.112. Accessed on 20.07.10: http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/A2020_web_final.pdf

2.15 As a result of these interviews with leading figures from industry and education, it is apparent that social mobility is viewed by them all as being situated within a new political discourse focused on:

- narrowing attainment gaps between different groups in society;
- raising educational standards and reducing inequalities;
- increased diversity and the need for improved employability skills;
- rebalancing public services to help those most in need;
- opening up market-led and consumer-led models to produce timely, relevant and cost-effective interventions; and
- reducing individuals' dependency on the welfare state.

In summary, therefore, although there are slight variations in the terminology being used at the present time by 'policy-makers' and 'policy-shapers' to describe social mobility, there are clearly new 'anchor points' for review and assessment of social mobility and careers service provision.

Social mobility and the UK political and public policy context

2.16 Enhancing social mobility is crucial in ensuring fairness for individuals, prosperity for the economy, and cohesion for society as a whole. It is, therefore, not surprising that social mobility policies are central to the goals of the three main UK political parties. In the first Conservative and Liberal Democrat joint press conference³⁰, following the May 2010 General Election, the new Prime Minister spoke of the three core principles underpinning the Coalition Government – *'freedom, fairness and responsibility'* – and stressed the importance of achieving social mobility for all UK citizens.

2.17 Although enhancing social mobility is central to the goals of the three main UK political parties, the terminology used to describe their policies varies. For example, the Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2010³¹ focused on 'fairness' as in giving 'every child, no matter their background, a fair start in life' (Introduction), and most of their policies linked to social mobility sit under the headings *'Creating jobs that last'* (p.22) and *'The best chance for every child'* (p.33). In the Conservative Manifesto 2010³², the language focused more on strategies for 'tackling poverty and inequality' and of transforming 'life chances' (p.15, p.53), and most of their policies linked to social mobility sat under the headings *'Change the economy: get Britain working again'* (p.5) and *'Change society: raise standards in schools'* (p.51). In the

³⁰ BBC News online, 12 May, 2010. Accessed 28.05.10 at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/election_2010/8676607.stm

³¹ Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2010, Foreword. Accessed on 28.03.10:

http://network.libdems.org.uk/manifesto2010/libdem_manifesto_2010.pdf

³² Conservative Manifesto 2010. Accessed 28.03.10:

http://media.conservatives.s3.amazonaws.com/manifesto/cpmanifesto2010_lowres.pdf

Labour Party's 2010 Manifesto the term 'social mobility' was used five times³³ and most of their relevant measures were described in 'Chapter 2, Living standards: Prosperity for all not just a few' (p.2:2), and in 'Chapter 3, Education: Excellence in education: every child the chance to fulfill their potential' (p.3:2).

2.18 Despite slight variations in the terminology used, it is clear that all three main political parties view the following as key mechanisms for enhancing opportunities for individuals and to removing inequalities, and hence contributing to social mobility:

- strong families, good parenting and a secure start in life;
- good schools and the raising of educational standards;
- extra support for individuals when required, especially for those who are disadvantaged;
- relevant vocational education and access to lifelong learning;
- a strong and buoyant economy providing opportunities for employment, training and progression.

2.19 Of these mechanisms, it is evident that education is viewed as providing a particularly strong and significant contribution to social mobility, as demonstrated by the following extracts from the 2010 election manifestos of the two coalition partners in Britain's new Government:

- *'Improving our schools system is the most important thing we can do to make opportunity more equal and address our declining social mobility.'* (Conservative Manifesto 2010, p.51)
- *'Liberal Democrats want every child to receive an excellent education, to unlock children's potential and to ensure that they can succeed in life. Too many children are still leaving school without the knowledge and skills to be successful.'* (Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2010, p.33)

The future of the previous Labour administration's proposal to raise the participation age to 18 by 2015 is less clear. The Liberal Democrat 2010 manifesto stated it would scrap the plan to 'criminalise those who leave education between the age of 16 and 18' (p.36). The Conservatives made no such commitment in their manifesto though they appear to support raising the participation age, in principle, but oppose the use of civil sanctions because of concerns over 16 and 17 year olds truanting and becoming criminals under the law³⁴. Measures to implement the new Academies Act (2010)³⁵

³³ The Labour Party Manifesto 2010. Accessed on 29.03.10:

<http://www2.labour.org.uk/uploads/TheLabourPartyManifesto-2010.pdf>

³⁴ Raising the participation age: Keeping it on track (p.5-6). Accessed on 20.07.10:

[http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/RPA-Report_FINAL\(W\).pdf](http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/pdf/RPA-Report_FINAL(W).pdf)

and those expected to feature in the forthcoming Education Bill (due to be announced on October 2010) should shed more light on this.

Further evidence suggests that, in terms of securing a good start in life, the Coalition Government³⁶ has already committed to a refocusing of 'Sure Start' on more disadvantaged families and through the provision of new Sure Start Health Visitors.³⁷ The Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2010 committed to a 'Pupil Premium' (p.33)³⁸ to help disadvantaged children, and continuation of this policy was central to the agreement reached in forming the new Coalition Government. The first steps towards achieving this were recently announced³⁹.

2.20 It is also clear that employment policy and welfare reform are viewed as particularly significant in the drive for greater social mobility. The Conservative Manifesto 2010⁴⁰ committed to the creation of a single Work Programme for everyone who is unemployed that would include:

- the offer of personalised help sooner – straight away for those with serious barriers to work and at six months for those aged under 25;
- delivery through private and voluntary sector providers, which would be rewarded on a payment by results basis for getting people into sustainable work;
- drawing on a range of Service Academies to offer pre-employment training for unemployed and involving the development of local Work Clubs. (p. 15-16)

This Manifesto 2010 also stated that long-term benefit claimants who fail to find work would be required to 'work for the dole' on community work programmes (p.16). The policy agreement published soon after the formation of the Coalition Government has confirmed that benefits will indeed be conditional on a willingness to work⁴¹. The recent announcement by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, of plans for a fairer system to protect those in greatest need, is designed to embed more fully prevention, re-integration recovery measures to help divert people away from pathways that lead to poverty and give people living in poverty a route out.⁴² In particular, this announcement encourages consultation feedback on the impact of the

³⁵ The Academies Act (2010) received Royal Assent on 27th July 2010. Accessed on 29.07.10: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2010/ukpga_20100032_en_1

³⁶ Cabinet Office (2010). *The Coalition: our programme for government*. London: Cabinet Office, p.19 Accessed on 19.07.10: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/409088/pfg_coalition.pdf

³⁷ Op. cit.

³⁸ Op.cit.

³⁹ Op.cit.

⁴⁰ Op.cit

⁴¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8677088.stm

⁴² DWP (2010) *21st Century Welfare*. Department for Work and Pensions, Norwich:TSO. Accessed on 31.07.10: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/21st-century-welfare.pdf>

ideas on those covered by equality legislation to inform the Equality Impact Assessment.

2.21 Both coalition partners' 2010 election manifestos underlined the importance of vocational training and lifelong learning in creating a fair and prosperous Britain. The Conservatives indicated they would create 400,000 work pairing, apprenticeship, college and training places over two years, establish a Community Learning Fund to help people restart their careers, and *create a new 'all-age careers service'* (p.17). The Liberal Democrats said they would create a work placement scheme with up to 800,000 places, fund 15,000 extra Foundation Degree places, meet the up-front costs of adult apprenticeships, and increase the Adult Learning Grant for 18–24 year-olds in Further Education (p.24).

2.22 Although the full detail of the Coalition Government's policy in relation to vocational training and lifelong learning is yet to fully emerge, it is apparent from these respective 2010 manifesto statements that initiatives in this policy area will be a central feature of a new social mobility strategy. It is becoming very clear is that new market-based models of provision in education and careers services are likely to emerge in different forms which may include:

(a) *Government-financed services* which are contracted out to the private and voluntary sectors.

(b) *Services in the voluntary sector* which are financed not by government but by other sources (including charities, private-sector organisations and end-users).

(c) *Services in the private sector*, which are financed by end-users or by non-government third parties (e.g. employers).

(d) *Non-fee and fee-charged services* offered by public sector organisations.

2.23 However, a fundamental tension exists in relation to the role of Government in this regard as indicated below:

'Only Government can balance the scales in open markets i.e. they perform a weights and measures function. It's the only institution in a position to ensure clear information is provided to the consumer. It can check whether or not the consumer is being given a true measure and not being cheated by sellers. It can inspect, regulate and take action regarding investment increases or reductions. However, there is a tension because they are also providers who wish to paint themselves in a positive light.' (Professor Alison Wolf, King's College, London)

2.24 Accordingly, a major push for more genuine equality of opportunity and more accessible public information services is essential in improving opportunities for all

young people and adults. It is increasingly apparent that education, employer links and careers provision need to be re-engineered to help address social inequalities and economic concerns:

‘Practically, we need to recognise there is institutional failure to lay out more clearly the implications of choice and likely outcomes – noting that labour markets are unpredictable. Some schools are keen to push their ranking up which means they put students on easy courses i.e. the ones that are easy to pass. Bias is also inherent in the current system...the new Coalition Government needs to do more to help individuals know more about where different qualifications lead – having a well informed awareness of options available is critical.’ (Professor Alison Wolf, King’s College London)

Current careers education, information, advice and guidance policy

2.25 The three main political parties’ policies on careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) are briefly reviewed below in order to capture the essence of pre- and post- election goals. Whilst it is clear that education, training and employment policy forms the core of social mobility strategies, each of the three main parties also recognises the important contribution of CEIAG to enhancing opportunities for individuals and removing inequalities. Further views from the leading figures from industry and education interviewed for this paper highlight some main issues for consideration.

Labour Party careers information, advice and guidance policy

2.26 The former Labour Government had committed to continue with its separate but enhanced careers service provision for young people and for adults in England. Plans for a fully integrated three main channel *adult* careers service delivery system were due to be launched in August 2010 for a single, national service available on the web, by telephone, and/or face-to-face. The Coalition Government has made progress on this proposal, choosing to use the term Adult Careers Service rather than an adult advancement and careers service. The new service, known as NEXT STEP, began on 1st August 2010.

2.27 For young people’s services, Connexions organisations were repositioned back into Local Authorities as a result of legislation in the form of the Education and Skills Act (2008)⁴³. From April 2009, the contracted arrangements under local authority control, were set within the context of Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS). In the final year of its third term in office, the Labour Party concluded that Connexions delivery had become ‘patchy’ and ‘inconsistent’ in the quality of

⁴³ The Education & Skills Act (2008) made explicit ‘Careers education provided by schools for 11- to 16-year-olds is strengthened by requiring that the information, advice and guidance given is *impartial* and offers all the appropriate options. Accessed on: 20.07.10: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/educationandskills/>

provision, which needed to be comprehensively improved⁴⁴ and (subject to a quality review originally scheduled for 2011) it reserved the right to consider the breaking up of the Connexions service as recommended by the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions⁴⁵.

Liberal Democrat careers information, advice and guidance policy

2.28 The Liberal Democrat position in relation to careers information, advice and guidance has been less clearly articulated. For example, their 2010 manifesto does not contain a single reference to careers education, information, advice and guidance. However, in their January 2009 Policy Paper No. 89, the Liberal Democrats do commit themselves to ensuring an independent career and course advisory service for young people. In this policy paper, under the heading ‘Freedom for Schools, Pupils and Parents’, they indicated they would:

- ‘Require local authorities to run a truly independent career and course advisory service for young people.
- Give 14–19 year-olds the right to take up a course at college, rather than at school, if it suits them better. This will enable all children to choose to study, for example, separate sciences or modern languages at GCSE, or a vocational subject.
- Scrap the Government’s plan to criminalise those who leave education between the age of 16 and 18.’ (p.6)⁴⁶

Interestingly, the first of these commitments did not make it to the 2010 manifesto though the other two commitments did. However, there were indications that the Liberal Democrats had begun to formulate plans to support the concept of an all age careers service, though these were not published formally.

Conservative careers education, information, advice and guidance policy

2.29 The Conservative Party has made a strong and clear commitment to change and develop arrangements for careers information, advice and guidance as spelt out in its Policy Green Paper No. 7, the more recent policy document *Labour’s Failure on Skills*, and in its 2010 manifesto⁴⁷.

2.30 The Conservative Party’s core message is the requirement for a ‘revolution in careers advice’ which involves:

⁴⁴ DCSF (2009). *Quality, Choice and Aspiration: A strategy for young people’s information, advice and guidance*. London: Department Schools and Families.

⁴⁵ DBIS (2010). *Unleashing Aspiration: The Government Response to the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*. London: Department for Business Industry and Skills. Accessed 11.04.10: <http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/unleashingaspiration/wp-content/uploads/Unleashing-Aspiration.pdf>

⁴⁶ Op. cit.

⁴⁷ Op.cit

- the creation of an all-age careers service⁴⁸ that would replace the careers advice offered to young people by Connexions, currently run by local authorities, and the national Careers Advice Service for adults;
- funding for a careers adviser in every secondary school and college in the country; and
- investing in a new web-based skills matching service, revolutionising people's ability to access information on jobs, training and apprenticeships⁴⁹.

2.31 The creation of an all-age careers service that would replace/incorporate the careers advice offered by to young people by the Connexions, currently run by local authorities, and the national Careers Advice Service for adults has yet to be fully articulated by the new Coalition Government, nor have plans been discussed yet with employers in the careers sector and allied careers professional associations. The leading figures from industry and education were asked the following two questions:

- (i) 'What are the merits, if any, of having an all-age careers service in England?'
- (iv) 'How should the careers service articulate more clearly the added-value and impact of its work?'

2.32 Their individual responses highlight similarities and some differences in opinion. A common strand highlighted in all of the interviews was the need to ensure continuity of services to the consumer .Whilst Ofsted would not expect to make any formal comment on all-age careers service structures, it would:

'...expect to see some form of continuity of CEIAG for learners of all abilities as they move through the education and training system. Changes in staying on rates and new learning pathways beyond 18 require overall good quality CEIAG provision.' (Patrick Leeson, Director of Education and Care, Ofsted)

2.33 All of the interviewees firmly supported the new Coalition Government's intention to establish an *all-age careers service*. Given detailed plans are not as yet very clear, the majority felt this presents real opportunities to influence and guide Ministers and their policy advisers in shaping and creating a new system:

'I can see no reason why the system for careers services for young people and adults should be separate. However, the system should not be over-regulated given individuals' increased access to technology and freedom of choice to make decisions in relation to paying for careers expertise or

⁴⁸ Contracts for the newly branded 'NEXT STEP' fully integrated online and face-to-face Adult Careers Service have recently issued by the Skills Funding Agency. As yet, no policy statements have been issued which make explicit or otherwise the funding of careers education and guidance services for young people.

⁴⁹ Policy Green Paper No. 7, p.8

making use of freely available public services.’ (Professor Alison Wolf, King’s College London)

‘An evidence-based model of excellence operates in Wales whereby an all-age careers service operates to improve individuals’ attainments, achievements and social mobility. Some useful lessons could be learned from this experience by policy makers in England.’ (Brian Lightman, General Secretary, ASCL)

‘Employers have a clear message to the new Coalition Government which is to pay greatest attention to ensuring young people and adults are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to apply themselves effectively to fast changing and unpredictable labour markets. We recognise that an all-age careers service would be beneficial, but the government should prioritise those of greatest need – young people in school, NEETs and the long-term adult unemployed.’ (Susan Anderson, Director of Public Services & Skills, CBI)

2.34 A more cautious stance was adopted by Alan Tuckett and Nick Chambers, whereby each was keen to ensure services and budgets for either adults or young people were not compromised by the formation of a single all-age careers service:

‘Whilst an all-age careers service system is desirable, services for adults must not be eroded to compensate for failure in the education system lower down the supply chain.’ (Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE)

‘The Taskforce is currently considering all-age careers service proposals...the advantage of an all-age careers service would be to optimise access to knowledge and advice concerning careers advice in a single service. It would however be necessary to avoid diluting the effectiveness of the specific information advice and guidance required by young people as driven by their decision making in choosing subjects and qualifications to study and whether and where they might progress post-16 and post-19.’ (Nick Chambers, Education and Employer Taskforce)⁵⁰

2.35 These wise words of caution that an all-age service must ensure sufficient support for both adults and young people, without disadvantaging either, came through loudly and clearly in these interviews. The extent to which Government ‘front loads’ the education system with CEIAG, whilst simultaneously prioritising career services for adults, is very delicate balance to achieve, especially in the current fiscal

⁵⁰ In January 2010 the Education and Employer Taskforce Board of Trustees commissioned Deloitte to consult with key stakeholders on strategies for increasing and improving employer involvement in providing young people with careers education, information, advice and guidance. The findings are due to be published in autumn 2010.

climate. In summary, there was broad consensus that totally separate services for young people and adults can produce duplication and wastage of scarce resources.

2.36 Speaking at a Times Higher Education debate soon after the launch of a new website, ‘*bestcourse4me*’⁵¹, David Willetts (the then Conservative Shadow Universities and Skills Secretary) affirmed his commitment for the publication of all data potentially of interest to students, including that collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the UK Labour Force Survey. Quoting the example of the publication of mortality rates within the NHS, he argued that making information more accessible enables consumers to question the services they receive⁵². From the interviews for this paper, it is clear that there is a role for Government in ensuring accurate information is more readily available in order to help raise investment in skills throughout England and further afield:

‘Consumer behaviour and attitudes are changing with the vast majority of adults using digital facilities confidently. The UK has close to the highest level of penetration in the world i.e. individuals making purchases, checking directions etc....Public services online are generally lagging behind and so a central question for Government is what are they doing about this? The new Coalition Government should create a really good user friendly system that is updated regularly and ensure all organisations providing education and training have really good information...not just destinations but information on class sizes, qualified professionals, where people move on to e.g. their learning and work trajectories.’ (Professor Alison Wolf, King’s College London)

2.37 Making more accurate information readily available as part of a well informed consumer approach was universally welcomed; however, a note of caution was made in relation to centrally driven policies becoming overly-directive in this regard:

‘...the maximum amount of information about school performance should be available to parents and to the public, but that internal management information, such as some self-evaluation data (lessons grades etc) should not have to be divulged publicly.’ (Brian Lightman citing the ASCL Policy Statement on ‘Intelligent Accountability in practice’, June 2010 - para.38)

There was general support for a renewed focus on *lighter touch accountability frameworks* that move away from Government setting narrow performance indicators linked to targeted provision to focusing on *learning outcomes* and feedback from the consumer. The Government’s role in regulation and quality assurance was stressed:

⁵¹ <http://www.bestcourse4me.com/>

⁵² Quoted in a Times Higher Education article, 25 February 2010. Accessed 23.04.10:
<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=410576>

‘They must assure quality so that people know what they’re getting in an open eyed way. Systematic approaches to gathering intelligence on career trajectories could help tremendously to support social mobility.’ (Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE)

Improved data on learning outcomes, supported by impartial and accurate information on opportunities, destinations and individuals’ immediate, intermediate and longer-term career trajectories were viewed as paramount.

2.38 The significant potential to make better use of virtual learning environments and labour market intelligence was highlighted by ASCL as a key area yet to be fully exploited, particularly in reaching out to marginalised young people and adults:

‘There is growing expertise in developing virtual learning environments which can potentially link with unique learner numbers with more sophisticated tracking systems. Over time, this may help monitor social mobility and individuals’ career trajectories as they unfold.’ (Brian Lightman, General Secretary, ASCL)

Harnessing digital technology is key factor for consideration in the design and delivery of careers services using internet-based facilities:

‘Access to on-line services can be problematic especially for the migrant and immigrant population which includes marginalised groups such as Bangladeshi women, Somalians, and Pakistani men and women. The linguistic barriers and support required by those in marginalised situations must not be overlooked. A conversation to build confidence and motivate individuals to learn remains constant. Triggers are needed to stimulate interest and market demand with greater investment needed in community learning’ (Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE).

Whilst there is some evidence that those experiencing social exclusion are less likely to be digitally literate, this is by no means a general rule. The Next Step telephone service and on-line resource currently offers adults access to information in up to eight different languages. Research evidence on socially excluded young people suggests that many of the benefits of internet access are available to this group through mobile technologies.⁵³ Here it is argued that a new era of *career literacy* is now required that combines digital usage and individuals’ exposure to career exploration activities.

⁵³ Marschalek, I. & Unterfrauner, E. (2009). *Social inclusion of young marginalised people through online mobile communities*. In IDC 2009: The 8th International Conference on Interaction Design and Children.

2.39 Apart from ICT opportunities and barriers, other alternative policies from the private sector were identified:

‘Those who need most help generally receive the least help. For social mobility to be fully realised models of best practice from the Independent Schools sector should be transferred into the state system. Also, greater use needs to be made of leading employers’ willingness to provide role models and experiential learning opportunities often overlooked within the current state system.’ (Nick Chambers, Director, Education and Employer Taskforce)

2.40 The relationship between the Conservatives’ earlier proposal to fund *a careers adviser in every school and college*, and the proposal to create a new all-age careers advice service, was not clearly spelt out in the Green Paper, nor the manifesto, neither has it been properly clarified in these first months of the Coalition Government being in office (as noted above). As Watts points out⁵⁴, this could mean that the new Coalition Government is proposing to locate within schools and colleges what would have been in the past an externally based careers adviser, with the adviser working either as part of, or separate from, the new all-age service. Alternatively, it could mean that the careers advisers within schools and colleges should work in partnership with the new all-age service with a role closer to that traditionally carried out by careers teachers and careers co-ordinators within schools and colleges.

2.41 Leading figures from industry and education held some firm views on this. Ofsted (2010)⁵⁵ reported that ‘when careers education was provided by the schools themselves, its quality varied considerably and the provision was perfunctory in some of the schools visited. Not all the staff teaching it had enough knowledge or experience to do this effectively. The provision of information, advice and guidance about the options available to students at the age of 16 was not always sufficiently impartial.’ (p.6) As indicated below the role of good quality impartial and universal, not simply targeted, CEIAG is viewed as paramount:

‘The key is to provide good quality impartial CEIAG to help individuals make progress, improve staying on rates, inform curriculum development so that the right pathways are made available to learners of all abilities.’ (Patrick Leeson, Director of Education & Care, Ofsted)

‘In general schools do not want the responsibility of having to plan, fund and deliver their own careers service. A partnership model is preferred with an

⁵⁴ Watts, A.G. (2008). *Careers England Policy Commentary 11: Conservative Party Policy Statement on Skills (including key references to career guidance provision)*. Careers England. Accessed 23.04.10:

http://www.careersengland.org.uk/Documents/From%20Old%20Site/204_Policy%20Commentary%2011/Policy%20Commentary%2011.pdf

⁵⁵ Ofsted (2010) *Moving Through the System – Information, Advice and Guidance*, Manchester. Accessed on: 27.07.10: [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Moving-through-the-system-information-advice-and-guidance/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Moving-through-the-system-information-advice-and-guidance/(language)/eng-GB)

external agency such as Connexions so that young people and parents can be assured of impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance. This operates well in other parts of the UK but the past emphasis on targeted careers services rather than a universal approach needs to be reversed.' (Brian Lightman, General Secretary, ASCL)

International research on effective careers work in schools⁵⁶ shows from experience in the Netherlands⁵⁷ and in Sweden⁵⁸ that impartiality can be severely compromised if schools are given sole responsibility for the development of career aspirations, career management and employability skills by young people. The evidence-based conclusion is that a partnership model is required, with careers advisers working within institutions from their position of independence by being employed by the all age careers service, and bringing labour market and wider opportunity market information into every school and college. **On the basis of evidence, and the affirmed views of the leading figures interviewed in preparing this paper, the Coalition Government is urged to affirm that this is the model it will establish for its all-age careers service plans.**

2.42 The links between education, employer and careers professional activities were confirmed and interviewees identified a number of emergent issues:

'Education and employer activities can be poorly related to formal careers advice and guidance and are weaker for it. Developments which would allow a more integrated, coherent resource to be made available to young people would be beneficial, optimising the relevance of provision offered and so securing maximum added-value benefits for all'. (Nick Chambers, Director, Education & Employer Taskforce)

'Careers professionals from the public and private sector do offer invaluable services to employers but the reach of Connexions services has been limited by the recent focus on targeted support mainly for vulnerable young people. We would like to see more being done to educate young people, teachers and parents on the wider range of opportunities in industry, especially STEM jobs and apprenticeships. There is an opportunity to open up the market to careers advice so that more people can access this on an ongoing basis.' (Susan Anderson, Director of Public Policy & Skills, CBI).

⁵⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: OECD. p.42.

⁵⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2002). *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies: Netherlands Country Note*. Paris: OECD.

⁵⁸ Sweden has been decentralising its school system, with much more autonomy for municipalities and for individual schools. This has resulted in significant weakening of its career guidance provision.

Making the link between careers education, information, advice and guidance and social mobility policy

2.43 A number of influential independent bodies – ‘policy-shapers’ - have highlighted the contribution that CEIAG can make to enhancing social mobility. For example, in a report on widening access to the more selective universities, the Director of the Independent Office for Fair Access has recently stressed the importance of giving *comprehensive and impartial* advice and guidance over a period of years in order to *increase aspiration* and attainment and *guide students in choosing the right subjects*⁵⁹. In its final report⁶⁰, the independent cross-party ‘Panel on Fair Access to the Professions’ made a number of recommendations that focused on *transforming careers advice in schools and colleges* as an important part of a strategy for widening access. The report also affirmed the importance of raising the *self-esteem* and *aspirations* of individuals, and of developing their *decision-making skills* particularly in relation to *information about vocational relevance and employability*. The very title of the Skills Commission’s report on their inquiry into the provision of information, advice and guidance (IAG) - *Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our Potential in the 21st Century* - underlined the importance that the education and skills sector attaches to high quality IAG in *motivating* individuals to thrive and prosper.

2.44 These themes of raising *aspiration, self-esteem* and *motivation*, and of providing individuals with the *vocationally relevant information* to make appropriate *career decisions* and *choices*, are also reflected in the main parties’ social mobility strategies. For example, in their Policy Green paper No. 7⁶¹, the Conservatives stated they ‘*want to unleash a new era of rising aspiration and choice, where the old bureaucratic barriers that restrict opportunity are swept away by the power of ambition, aptitude and endeavour.*’ (p.5). They also referred to the dangers of the use of unqualified staff where ‘*poor advice is given, with the full consequences of making different GCSE choices – for example, giving up STEM subjects – insufficiently explained.*’ (p.17) The Liberal Democrats in their Policy Paper No. 89⁶² stated they ‘*are not willing to underwrite a culture of low aspiration and achievement in schools in deprived areas.*’ (p.18)

2.45 It was noted that there were differing expectations and perceptions of careers advisers and their work. The expansion of private and community/voluntary sector careers provision (working alongside public sector provision) was anticipated by the leading figureheads from industry and education interviewed in preparing this paper. For example:

⁵⁹ Director of Fair Access sets out way forward for widening access to highly selective universities. Wednesday, May 19th, 2010. Accessed 18.05.10: <http://www.offa.org.uk/press-releases/director-of-fair-access-sets-out-way-forward-for-widening-access-to-highly-selective-universities/>

⁶⁰ Cabinet Office (2009). *Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*. London: Cabinet Office. Accessed 21.03.10: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/227102/fair-access.pdf>

⁶¹ Op. cit.

⁶² Op. cit.

‘The market in careers services comprises private sector organisations, many of whom are operating productively in a range of employer-based settings – this is likely to expand. We would not wish to see tight regulatory controls introduced by Government but we would expect the consumer to be well-informed about who is qualified as a careers professional and what these services can realistically deliver.’ (Susan Anderson, Director of Public Policy & Skills, CBI)

‘The state should also help to clarify the different levels of information, advice and guidance available to the consumer. Some form of regulation might be needed to strengthen the overall profile and image of careers advisers working alongside others in formal and informal settings.’ (Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE)

2.46 A remodelling and ‘opening up’ of the market on the basis of a model of differentiated service delivery⁶³ which distinguishes between those able to operate largely on a ‘self-help’ basis, those requiring brief ‘assisted’ services, and those requiring ‘in-depth’ support is gaining momentum. A version of this model is currently being implemented in Scotland and Northern Ireland. A significant challenge in England will be how best to ensure that those most vulnerable in our society are not exploited by ‘rogue traders’ coming into the careers sector.

2.47 The traditional notion of expertise from professionals (*experts*) set alongside the experience of individuals (*consumers*) was presented as a serious challenge for those working in the careers sector:

‘Careers advisers need to be realistic about what they can do and promise to deliver i.e. accept labour markets are unpredictable and that an army of careers advisers will never be able to match people into exactly the right jobs Sometimes their clients will know more than them!’ (Professor Alison Wolf, King’s College London)

The extent to which social mobility and careers provision is viewed as a straightforward matching process was contested:

‘The simplicity of viewing careers specialists’ work as an immediate matching process is fundamentally flawed.’ (Alan Tuckett, Director of NIACE)

2.48 In summary, there are differing expectations in relation to what policy-makers and policy-shapers expect of CEIAG. To help address this, the benefits of careers-related support services are explored using a framework of processes and outcomes

⁶³ Sampson, J.P. (2008). *Designing and Implementing Career Programs: a Handbook for Effective Practice*. Broken Arrow, OK: National Career Development Association

that careers services need to provide in order to help individuals become more socially mobile.

What ‘policy-makers’ and ‘policy-shapers’ expect of careers services

2.49 The possible benefits of careers services and allied careers support activities are often described in terms of outcomes ranging from *immediate* attitudinal and motivational outcomes, observable at, or soon after, the intervention, to *intermediate* and *longer-term* outcomes, such as progression into education/training and/or employment⁶⁴. Several features of this model resonate with what ‘policy makers’ and ‘policy shapers’ expect of careers services, as indicated in the previous paragraphs. From this, it is possible to construct a framework of processes and outcomes that careers services need to provide in order to help individuals become more socially mobile. This framework consists of two broad areas: first, the personal qualities and skills that enable individuals become more mobile and that careers services can help to develop (*internal to the consumer*); and second, the nature and quality of CEIAG and how it is delivered and made available (*external to the consumer*).

2.50 The ***personal qualities and skills*** that enable individuals become more mobile, and that careers services can help to develop, include:

- *increased self-confidence and self-esteem* – a ‘can do’ approach; overcoming class, race and gender stereotyping;
- *career management, employability and decision-making skills* – developing new skills, and applying this to personal and/or vocationally relevant goals;
- *active participation in learning and educational success* – achieving qualifications, attainment of new knowledge and/or skills and raised aspirations;
- *enhanced motivation* – wanting to learn something new; feeling supported and more positive about personal and/or vocationally relevant targets.

The ***nature and quality of CEIAG*** and how it is delivered and made available, includes:

- careers information that is relevant, accurate and up to date – including information linked to labour market trends and longer-term earnings potential;
- careers education, information, advice and guidance that is impartial (free from any potential for bias from any particular opportunity

⁶⁴ Killeen, J. (1996). The learning and economic outcomes of guidance in Watts, A.G., Law, B., Killeen, J., Kidd, J. and Hawthorn, R. (Eds) *Rethinking careers education and guidance: theory, policy and practice*, London: Routledge.

provider) and high quality – aimed at the best long-term interests of the individual;

- services that are provided by specialist professionally qualified careers advisers; and
- delivery mechanisms that are open, accessible, cost-effective and fit for purpose – including differentiated self-help and assisted services, labour market information and intelligence and the appropriate use of information communication technology.

This framework provides a structure for the review of research evidence, presented in the next section, that both reflects what ‘policy-makers’ and ‘policy-shapers’ expect of career services and other outcomes and themes that emerge from the research literature. It should be noted that the vast array of literature on social mobility is not reviewed in this report due to the original remit, as well as time and resource constraints. Instead, the focus is primarily on the research evidence-base for CEIAG so that the impact and outcomes from this can be fully understood by policy-makers and policy-shapers.

3. The impact of policy and the CEIAG research evidence-base

3.1 This section begins with a discussion of the drive for ‘accountability’ and ‘value for money’ in the delivery of public services, including careers education, information, advice and guidance. It highlights some of the challenges in demonstrating the impact that services have and, in particular, in the interpretation of research evidence. It then reviews a wide range of research evidence published on the impact of careers services and related support activities. Examples of the research are presented under a series of thematic headings that broadly reflect the framework of careers service outcomes and processes as indicated earlier. This is not an exhaustive listing.

Public policy and value for money

3.2 The public-sector reforms begun by the Thatcher Conservative administration (1979-1990) and continued by John Major (1990-1997) focused on ‘value for money’ and ‘accountability’, which included the privatisation of the Careers Service, with the introduction of competitive tendering and the setting of performance targets for public and private sector service delivery. From 1979 onwards, all successive Governments have articulated the need to demonstrate that their policies are evidence-based and are backed up by research. This theme of public-service scrutiny is a concern ‘shared by all three political parties’ (Thomson, 1992, p.37)⁶⁵; it continues to this day and it is clear that this will be a central focus of the new Coalition Government as it seeks to deal with the current inherited budget deficit.

3.3 CEIAG services have not been exempt from this regime of monitoring, inspection, reporting and accountability. The range of variables and outcomes that the main providers of careers / Connexions services are required to monitor and report on includes:

- customer characteristics and intervention histories;
- volumes and types of service interventions;
- penetration of services within targeted population groups;
- user satisfaction levels; and
- a variety of service outcomes, usually in terms of employment and education/training outcomes⁶⁶.

3.4 An accurate assessment of the impact of services needs to go well beyond quantitative measures:

⁶⁵ Thomson, P. (1992). *Public sector management in a period of radical change, 1979-1992*. Public Money and Management, 12(3), 33-41.

⁶⁶ Hughes, D. and Gratton, G. (2006). *Performance Indicators and Benchmarks in Career Guidance in the United Kingdom*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies (CeGS), University of Derby. Available from: http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/icegs_performance_indicators_and_benchmarks2006.pdf
Accessed on 15.03.10.

'Understanding social mobility, individual well being, stable families: these are challenges where strong social science can really contribute.' (David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, July 2010)⁶⁷

It is important that qualitative research findings are given due attention. This includes focusing on the consumer and the professional to help clarify what practitioners should strive to achieve, and can realistically achieve. For example, Watts (1991)⁶⁸ argued that there are important practical and ethical reasons to trust the career guidance professional to serve the needs of the individual, as the primary client, rather than the needs of funding bodies and agencies. This is a professionally sound approach, because it relates closely to what most CEIAG services are attempting to achieve which is to influence the process rather than the content of the individuals' career decisions (i.e. not with telling people what to do but with helping them to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to make their own decisions in a well-informed way). This argument points to the conclusion that careers services should focus more on *empowering the consumer, focusing on learning outcomes* and placing greater *emphasis on their professional judgment* in the delivery of skills and jobs services, in order to achieve more and better for less.

3.5 Despite the imperative to demonstrate that a particular policy has been cost-effective, it is not always easy or straightforward to do so. Demonstrating the effectiveness of policies designed to support social equity and lifelong learning is highly problematic territory for two important reasons. Firstly, the reality is that all political parties will seek to exploit any available evidence to support their own particular policy perspective, placing an appropriate 'spin' on the story to their advantage. Secondly, it is often difficult to demonstrate the impact of policy is that the behaviour of individuals is complex and subject to many interacting factors, hence reaching clear conclusions about the effect of a particular measure can be 'hazardous', to say the least. As a result, research evidence needs to be interpreted with great care. For example, a common challenge in the interpretation of evidence is when two variables, or events, are seen to be associated together but where it is not clear *which* caused *what*?

3.6 Recognition of the challenges associated with interpreting evidence is well illustrated by the new Minister for Universities and Science:

'The surprising paths which serendipity takes us down is a major reason why we need to think harder about impact. There is no perfect way to assess

⁶⁷ Speech delivered at the Royal Institute, London – 09.07.10. Accessed on: 15.07.10:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-science-innovation-and-the-economy>

⁶⁸ Watts, A.G. (1991). The impact of the 'new right': policy challenges confronting careers guidance in England and Wales. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 19(3), 230-245.

impact, even looking backwards at what has happened.’ (David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, July 2010)⁶⁹

Nonetheless, it is possible to review research studies in terms of reliability and rigour using both qualitative and quantitative data⁷⁰. These range from ‘opinion studies’, where users of guidance services say what they *believe* are the benefits and outcomes of the services they have received, to studies that involve random assignment of individuals to a guidance group (the ‘experimental’ or ‘treatment’ group) whose outcomes can be more objectively compared with those of a non-guidance group (the ‘placebo’ or ‘control’ group).

3.7 Over the past two decades there has been a wide range of research into the benefits of CEIAG, mainly within the UK and further afield. Generally, this evidence has shown that careers support activities do make a significant difference in terms of an individual’s self-confidence, motivation, and career management and decision making skills. There is also evidence that career exploration, information, advice and guidance helps participation in learning and supports educational attainment. Additionally, there is some evidence that highly intensive support with the unemployed can make a difference, although it is *more difficult to demonstrate* the connection with longer term employment outcomes. This is not to say that careers support activities have no value in producing longer-term employment outcomes, but that it is more difficult to demonstrate a connection. This is an important theme that is discussed more fully in the final section of this paper.

3.8 A framework was outlined earlier to describe what careers services need to provide in order to help individuals become more socially mobile. Under the two broad areas of this framework, the more specific headings below reflect both what policy makers and policy shapers expect of professional careers services, and a number of other key outcomes and themes that emerge from the research literature. The impact of careers support activities is reviewed and summarised below using the two broad areas outlined earlier in paragraph 2.41.

The role of careers services in developing the personal qualities and skills that help individuals become more socially mobile:

3.9 The range of research evidence is broad ranging in relation to increasing self-confidence and self-esteem as outlined below:

Increasing self-confidence and self-esteem

⁶⁹ Keynote speech delivered at the Royal Institute, London – Science, Innovation and the Economy, 9th July 2010. Accessed on 12.07.10: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-science-innovation-and-the-economy>

⁷⁰ Hughes, D. & Gration, G. (2009). *A Literature Review of Research on the Impact of Careers and Guidance-Related Interventions*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust.

- Hughes et al. (2002)⁷¹, in their review of the research-base, cite seven studies published between 1992 and 2001 that provide evidence for the motivational and attitudinal benefits of guidance, particularly in terms of increased self-confidence and self-esteem. The studies cited reported gains in self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation in a variety of contexts ranging from specific targeted programmes such as New Deal and Skills Choice to more generalised services such as careers education and guidance in schools.
- SQW with TNS (2005)⁷² report an evaluation of the Scottish All Age Guidance Projects (AAG) involving an initial telephone survey of 596 AAG participants three months after clients' contact with Careers Scotland (CS) and a second telephone survey of most of the same participants (506) carried six months later. The majority of clients reported that CS, and the guidance provided, had influenced their career decisions and felt that they now had more confidence to make career development decisions. The majority believed that the support had provided a significant enhancement to their career prospects; for those who had made a number of positive career changes a significant number believed that the intervention of CS had been a critical factor.
- Bimrose et al. (2006)⁷³ in their study of the effectiveness of careers guidance in the development of career 'trajectories' over five years, report that guidance was found to be particularly useful when it enabled participants to focus ideas, provide insights, and improve their self-confidence. A number of participants felt that the guidance had helped their self-esteem and their prospects for the future. In this sense, it could be argued that increased self-esteem and self-confidence could act as 'precursors' helping to facilitate longer-term outcomes in terms of, for example, progression to work or better employment.
- NFER (2006)⁷⁴ research shows that pupils place high regard on professional expertise and value opportunities to learn from adults (who are not teachers or parents) who can help contextualise learning experiences.⁷⁵ This provides a motivating effect, and often leads to improved behaviour and application, underpinning academic success. While it is recognised that data in this field is under-developed, evidence of real impact is mounting.

⁷¹ Hughes, D., Bosley, S., Bowes, L. & Bysshe, S. (2002). *The Economic Benefits of Guidance*. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby

⁷² SQW with TNS (2005). *Evaluation of the All Age Guidance Projects*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research, Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department.

⁷³ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A. and Hughes, D. (2006). *Developing Career Trajectories in England: The Role of Effective Guidance*, Coventry, Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

⁷⁴ Lord, P. & Jones, M (2006), *Pupils' experiences and perspectives of the national curriculum and assessment – final report of the research review*. National Foundation for Educational Research.

⁷⁵ Whilst this is not solely related to careers professionals it highlights the added-value of third party intermediary.

- Springate et al (2008)⁷⁶ highlight that engagement from employers in the educational experience of young people has demonstrably positive impacts on pupil aspiration, including influencing the decision to stay on in education through to university study providing gateway access to many well paying professions. Through these means, for example, non-traditional students have been successfully encouraged to consider further study and careers in STEM subjects.⁷⁷ Careers professionals work with employers to increase individuals' exposure to work scenarios and professionals across a wide range of employment areas.

Supporting the development of career management, employability and decision-making skills

3.10 There is a vast array of research literature on career management, employability and decision-making skills, therefore, the examples below provide a 'taster' of relevant evidence:

- Morris et al. (1999)⁷⁸ examined the impact of careers education and guidance provision on young people's transition post-16 and found that young people with more highly developed career exploration skills were more positive and confident about the choices they made post-16 and were more likely to make a successful transition. 'The key factor that seemed to underpin successful transition at 16 was the level of young people's career exploration skills. Those who demonstrated such skills by the end of Year 11 were the least likely to have made significant changes to their courses, post-16. They were also more likely than other young people to have made a transition that indicated progression; that is, to be working towards a qualification at a higher level that which they attained at GCSE.' (p.3)
- Killeen & Kidd (1991)⁷⁹ in their review of the research literature examined 46 studies from which they identified 17 studies that reported gains on one or more measures related to rational decision making and implementation: 8 studies reported gains in decision making skills; 12 studies reported gains in self-awareness; 13 studies reported gains in opportunity awareness (and information search); 10 studies reported gains in certainty or decisiveness; and 4 studies reported gains in transition skills. Only 4 studies reported no gains, and a further 10 reported null results in addition to significant gains.

⁷⁶ Springate, I., Harland, J., Lord, P., & Wilkin, A. (2008). *Why choose physics and chemistry? The influences on physics and chemistry subject choices of BME students*. National Foundation for Educational Research. Accessed on 25.07.10: http://www.plasma.org/activity/policy/Publications/file_36117.pdf

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Morris, M., Golden, S. and Lines, A. (1999). *The Impact of Careers Education and Guidance on Transition at 16*. RD21. Sheffield: DfEE.

⁷⁹ Killeen, J. and Kidd, J.M. (1991). *Learning Outcomes of Guidance: A Review of Research*. Research Paper No.85. Sheffield: Employment Department.

- Blenkinsop et al. (2006)⁸⁰ found that schools can make a difference to how young people make decisions. They found that young people in schools which did not appear to have support strategies and careers education and guidance provision in place were more likely to have varied approaches to decision-making, to change their minds about their decisions over time, and to have mindsets that reflected a ‘comfort seeking’ or ‘defeatist’ approach to decision-making.
- Whiston et al. (2003)⁸¹, in their systematic review of impact, provided valuable evidence of the positive impact of career interventions upon career planning and decision-making skills. In addition, it was noted that the resulting enhanced career planning and decision-making skills could provide the necessary precursors leading eventually to longer-term education/training and economic outcomes. The work carried out by Whiston et al. involved a review of some 57 separate research studies that involved a random assignment of participants to different types of career intervention. Findings confirmed that ‘counsellor-free’ interventions were less effective than interventions involving a ‘counsellor’. It also indicated that computer interventions supplemented by ‘counselling’ were more effective than computer interventions on their own.

Supporting participation in learning and educational success

3.11 Many young people, employers, and colleges themselves have endured regular changes in the structure, content and titles of vocational qualifications. There is huge potential for waste of human potential which it is bad for our economy and the lives of individuals. The evidence-base for CEIAG in supporting participation in learning and educational success so that children and young people understand the importance of the choices they make in school and college is expansive. Some examples include:

- Pollard et al. (2007)⁸², in a study of over 4,000 adults, found that recipients of advice and/or guidance were more likely to engage in informal learning than those accessing information only; they were also more likely to make successful job changes, perhaps reflecting an increased focus on their careers. It is important to recognise that the skills required to provide good quality information, advice and/or guidance are greater than to give information only – a crucial factor in staffing careers services.

⁸⁰ Blenkinsop, S., McCrone, T., Wade, P. and Morris, M. (2006). *How do young people make choices at age 14 and age 16?* RR 773, London, DfES.

⁸¹ Whiston, S.C., Brecheisen, B.K. and Stephens, J. (2003). Does Treatment Modality Affect Career Counseling Effectiveness? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62(3), 390-410.

⁸² Pollard, M., Tyers, C., Tuohy, S. and Cowling, M. (2007). *Assessing the Net Added Value of Adult Advice and Guidance [online]*. RR825A. London: DfES.

- Milburn Trinnaman LaCourt (2008)⁸³ report findings from a national telephone survey of 1,823 adults of working age who received information and advice (IA) services. The most important medium-term and broader impact of IA was to encourage and support clients to engage in learning; 66% of users indicated that this was the case. The same proportion of IA users felt that their career and job prospects had improved.
- Findings from surveys of 'learndirect' users (Tyers & Sinclair, 2004)⁸⁴, suggested that the learndirect helpline had helped to increase participation in learning. Although helpline users were less likely to have had a recent learning experience than people in general, their participation in learning 18 months after their initial call to the helpline was much higher than average.
- Martinez & Munday (1998)⁸⁵ reported the findings of one of the largest studies of student retention and drop-out carried out in further education in the UK. They found that one of a number of key factors associated with the likelihood of dropping out of college was when students did not feel they had enrolled on the most appropriate course. They also found other evidence that indicated the importance of advice and guidance support in preventing drop out and excessive course switching.
- Research commissioned by Careers Scotland (Inter-Ed 2004)⁸⁶ found a link between careers education and guidance and career goals and educational attainment in secondary schools. The research also found strong evidence that pupils with clear goals derive some benefit in terms of subsequent educational performance, in part explained by pupils with goals being able to link the relevance of school study to life beyond school. There was also some evidence that those with clear goals are more likely to believe they have some control over their future, whereas those without clear goals are more likely to include some people who believe they are victims of fate.
- Ofsted (2010)⁸⁷ recently reported that Year 11 students interviewed did not always have a full picture of the range of options available to 16-year-olds. 'In four of the seven secondary schools visited which had a sixth form, more guidance was available for students about transferring into the sixth form than for the wider opportunities outside the school. Students in schools with a sixth

⁸³ Milburn Trinnaman LaCourt. (2008). *The Impact of nextstep Adult Information and Advice Services: National Analysis 2007*. Coventry: National Learning and Skills Council.

⁸⁴ Tyers, C. and Sinclair, A. (2004). *Tracking Learning Outcomes: Evaluation of the Impact of Ufi*. RR 569. London: Department for Education and Skills.

⁸⁵ Martinez, P. and Munday, F. (1998). *9,000 voices: Student persistence and drop-out in Further Education*. London: Further Education Development Agency.

⁸⁶ Inter-Ed (2004). *Career Goals and Educational Attainment: What is the Link?* Glasgow: Careers Scotland.

⁸⁷ Ofsted (2010) *Moving Through the System – Information, Advice and Guidance*, Manchester. Accessed on: 27.07.10: [http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Moving-through-the-system-information-advice-and-guidance/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Moving-through-the-system-information-advice-and-guidance/(language)/eng-GB)

form were too often unaware of the range of courses offered in further education colleges or of the opportunities for work-based learning. Three of the seven schools with sixth forms provided structured programmes of careers education for those going on to higher education but nothing comparable for other students. Advice was more impartial where schools did not have a sixth form and all pupils were transferring elsewhere’.

Supporting the employment prospects of young people and adults

3.12 There are several studies that show a link between information, advice and guidance and participation in employment and/or improved employment:

- Reed et al. (2005)⁸⁸ reported how the majority of respondents surveyed said that following a guidance interview they had carried out actions to achieve their career plans, and had experienced significant life-changes some of which included moving into employment.
- Milburn Trinnaman LaCourt (2008)⁸⁹ found that one of the benefits associated with information and advice was progression to employment, although the percentage progressing to employment was not as great as that progressing to learning as indicated in paragraph 3.18 above. A majority of the survey respondents who progressed to employment say they *believe* the information and advice they received had been influential.
- Pollard et al. (2007)⁹⁰ carried out a more rigorous study in which the outcomes for a large number of adults receiving careers information only, were compared with the outcomes of those who received more in-depth advice and guidance. They conclude that in-depth support is not associated with any observable labour market outcomes in the medium term, that is: participation in the labour market, participation in paid work or movement into paid work from unemployment, or (continued) household reliance on state benefits. However, they do say that in-depth support is positively associated with three attitudinal work related outcomes: satisfaction with a current job; confidence in gaining a desired job; and increases in confidence over time. The authors also concluded that information provision (as opposed to the more in-depth support) was useful to many individuals, in that it either provided them with what they needed at the time when they could act upon it or it spurred them on to seek further support. They suggested that it could be that careers information is better than is traditionally regarded by the guidance community:

⁸⁸ Reed, K., Mahoney, K. and Gratton, G. (2005). *Career Guidance for Adults in Wales: Making a Difference*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

⁸⁹ Op.cit.

⁹⁰ Op.cit.

‘Indeed, the giving of really good information could be guidance in disguise’ (p. 107).

- Azrin et al. (1975)⁹¹ provide evidence on the impact of the intensive Job Club method on reducing unemployment in the USA. Matched pairs of job seekers were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. The median period that elapsed before entry into full-time work was reduced from 53 days (control group) to 14 days (experimental group) and after three months 93% of the experimental group were in full-time employment compared to 60% of controls.
- Pearson (1998)⁹² explored the impact of a ‘bridge’ guidance programme on the re-employment rates of unemployed managers and professionals and concluded that the provision of guidance can have a positive impact. The re-employment rate of those on the programme was 92% at six months, significantly higher than the re-employment rate of the general unemployed population. However, these results need to be interpreted with some caution; unlike the study by Azrin et al. (1975)⁹³, the comparison was not with a matched ‘control group’.

Tackling youth unemployment

3.13 In-depth reviews of youth unemployment and training programmes highlight useful lessons learned from past experience:

- Kewin et al. (2009)⁹⁴ found that access to careers information and progression routes was a vital component of some programmes, e.g. the Youth Training Scheme (1983–1990), and that a lack of such access was a weakness of others, e.g. the Community Industry Scheme (1972–1995). They also identified a number of lessons for policy-makers that included the importance of high quality information and one-to-one support. Specifically, these include the importance of:
 - accurate programme information and effective management of participants’ expectations to avoid disillusionment and drop out;
 - one-to-one support from individual mentors to help sustain the engagement of participants;

⁹¹ Azrin, N. H., Flores, T. and Kaplan, S. J. (1975). Job-finding club: a group assisted programme for obtaining employment, In *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, Vol 13, pp 17-27

⁹² Pearson, R.W. (1988). ‘Creating flexible careers: some observations on a ‘bridge’ programme for unemployed professional’, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, Vol. 16 No.3, pp.250-67.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Kewin, J., Tucker, M., Neat, S. & Corney, M. (2009). *Lessons from history: Increasing the number of 16 and 17 year olds in education and training*. Reading: CfBT. Accessed 15.05.10:
http://www.cfbt.com/evidenceforeducation/our_research/evidence_for_government/national_policy_reforms/lessons_from_history.aspx

- individual plans, with incremental targets, to promote confidence amongst participants and allow their progress to be monitored.
- Sachdev et al. (2006)⁹⁵ highlighted the concern of many agencies that funders place an emphasis upon ‘hard outcomes’ at the expense of ‘soft outcomes’, such as motivation, self-esteem and the development of a trusting relationship with young people – these soft outcomes, in the long-run, can provide the basis for progression to employment and/or training.
- Hoggarth & Smith (2004)⁹⁶ emphasised that a trusting relationship between the Personal Adviser (PA) and the young person is key to impact on those at risk; it is important to bring young people who need it into the Connexions process as early in their ‘risk career’ as possible to provide the time to build up trust. SQW (2004)⁹⁷ found that young people at risk of exclusion particularly valued the emotional support provided by Careers Scotland Key Workers (an equivalent of a Connexions PA) and that, as a result, there had been a noticeable improvement in time-management and self-control.
- Nuffield Review/Rathbone (2008)⁹⁸ found that many NEET young people suffer from a lack of belonging and of failed relationships and need someone they can trust and rely on, to help them re-engage. They reported that much of this may often be related to a pronounced feeling of alienation from school and an inability to cope with the necessary authority structures that underpin the structures of schooling. The support from youth workers, Connexions PAs and from the voluntary and community sector, is particularly valued, often above that of teachers and other authority figures.

The nature and quality of careers information, advice and guidance and how it is delivered/made available:

Providing careers information that is relevant, accurate and up to date – including information linked to labour market trends and longer-term earnings potential

3.14 It is widely acknowledged that labour markets are fluid and unpredictable, therefore, information as a ‘stand alone’ has its limitations on encouraging individuals to adapt their behavior or attitudes:

⁹⁵ Sachdev, D., Harries, B. and Roberts, T. (2006). *Regional and sub-regional variation in NEETs – reasons, remedies and impact*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

⁹⁶ Hoggarth, L. and Smith, D.I. (2004). *Understanding the Impact of Connexions on young people at risk*. London: DfES.

⁹⁷ SQW (2004). *The National Evaluation of the Careers Scotland Inclusiveness Projects*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research, Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department.

⁹⁸ Nuffield Review/Rathbone. (2008). *Rathbone/Nuffield Review Engaging Youth Enquiry: Final consultation report*. London: The Nuffield 14 – 19 Review.

- The Skills Commission (2008)⁹⁹ reported how the internet has increased the fusion of broad information about different career pathways with specific details about particular job vacancies. Whilst public and private sector sites provide information on different careers, they also list vacancies. Findings indicate that the integration of guidance with information about vacancies better reflects the way people want to manage their careers, acting on specific circumstances and opportunities as they arise.
- Foster (2005)¹⁰⁰ review the future role of further education colleges reported that ‘consistently, learners report that information advice and guidance is out of date, fragmented and ill informed’ (para.123). Foster recommends that as a condition of receiving public funding, providers should also be under an obligation to keep the information for these external signposting services current and helpful to potential learners. It is suggested that three things are needed: ‘first, improved relationships and coordination of what is there; secondly, better public information about it; and thirdly, a gradual evolution of provision to be better matched to need, including opening up the market to new provision’ (para.160).
- UKCES (2010)¹⁰¹ highlights we can use intelligence about the operation and structure of the economy and labour market, to inform the choices and decisions of all the relevant key players – individuals (and their advisors); employers; providers; intermediaries; funders; public agencies; and government. Individuals are more likely to make better informed decisions if we have access to the same high quality information and ‘*intelligence*.’ Markets work best when information is rich, dense and available and when actors are able to respond to the ‘signals’ provided. This national information, when enhanced by more detailed local intelligence, may alone be enough to encourage actors to adapt their behaviour, to stimulate dialogue and to identify and anticipate priorities.

Providing information, advice and guidance that is impartial, up-to-date and vocationally relevant

3.15 From the series of interviews conducted in preparing this paper, it is clear that the value that policy-makers and leading figures from industry and education place on ensuring systems are in place for information and advice that is *impartial*,

⁹⁹ The Skills Commission (2008) *Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our Potential in the 21st century*, London: The Skills Commission Accessed on 30.07.10:

http://www.employersforapprentices.gov.uk/docs/research/Research_1_502.pdf

¹⁰⁰ Foster, A. (2005) *Realising the Potential: a review of the future role of further education colleges*, DfES/LSC. Accessed on 25.07.10: <http://www.dius.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/reforms/future-role-fe-colleges/final-report>

¹⁰¹ UKCES (2010). *Skills for Jobs: Today and Tomorrow*, South Yorkshire: Wath-upon-Deerne. p.36. Accessed on 27.07.10: http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/NSSA_Volume%201_FINAL_BOOKMARKED_110310.pdf

vocationally relevant which works in the best long-term interests of the individual, is broadly undisputed. There is additional research evidence which highlights the importance of independent, impartial and professional careers services in providing such information and advice:

- Wright (2005)¹⁰² in a review of research on 14-19 transitions and the decision individuals make highlighted evidence that many schools do not provide information on post-16 options that is either comprehensive or impartial, and that some teachers rarely offered direct advice and guidance on what to do at the end of compulsory schooling, except advising some of the more academically able to stay on in the school sixth form.
- Morgan et al. (2007)¹⁰³ emphasised the importance of the impartiality of information, advice and guidance provided by Connexions as a means of balancing or offsetting the influence of less reliable, informal sources of information; for example, information supplied by a young person's family or friends may be out of date, incorrect or based on hearsay.
- Bimrose et al. (2007)¹⁰⁴ identified the extent to which CEIAG took account of the changed and changing labour market for which young people are being prepared as one of the key factors in the successful delivery of CEIAG programmes in schools. In particular they emphasised the importance of the extent to which labour market information (LMI) is available; and, (even more importantly) the confidence with which PAs and/or careers coordinators feel able to use LMI.
- Mayston (2002)¹⁰⁵ developed a framework for the monetary benefits from different levels of quality of career guidance, and associated career guidance interview, based upon the added-value which it achieves in the value of human capital. He also extended the framework to include the analysis of the extent to which career guidance improves career choices of individuals under conditions of uncertainty. Reaping the potential benefits of high quality career guidance, through reducing the frequency and magnitude of Type I and Type II¹⁰⁶ errors by individuals in their career choices, can in itself contribute

¹⁰² Wright, S. (2005). *Young people's decision-making in 14-19 education and training: A review of the literature*. Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training Briefing Paper 4, London, Nuffield Review of Education.

¹⁰³ Morgan, S., Hutchinson, J. and Crompton, N. (2007). *Effective transitions for year 8 students*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

¹⁰⁴ Bimrose, J., Barnes, S-A. and Marris, L.(2007). *Establishing world class Careers education and guidance in Kent and Medway: A literature review*. Coventry: Warwick Institute for Employment Research.

¹⁰⁵ Mayston, D. (2002). *Evaluating the Benefits of Career Guidance*. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies Research Report, University of Derby.

¹⁰⁶ A Type I error occurs if the individual *rejects a career move even though it would have been beneficial for the individual*. A Type II error occurs if an individual *decides to make a career move for which they do not have the capacity to succeed*. They then incur a cost involved in the career move, but do not receive a positive return on this investment.

directly to government goals to help build a competitive economy and inclusive society.

It is interesting to note that a recent DfE-funded research project¹⁰⁷ (designed to estimate how much difference the availability of CE/IAG makes to young people's attitudes to school and expectations for post-16 activities, and to the actual decisions they take after reaching the minimum school-leaving age, with data drawn from wave 5 of the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England and linked data from National Pupil Data set) produced broadly inconclusive evidence given difficulties associated with accurate and consistent measures of CE/IAG inputs derived mainly from survey questions. The questions used to collect information on CE/IAG about plans for future studies from family members, school teachers and Connexions advisers are not comparable across years. This is often a common difficulty in large-scale quantitative research.

Delivery mechanisms that are open, accessible, cost-effective and fit for purpose

3.16 Clearly, there is a need to move towards a differentiated service delivery model in an all-age careers service context. Regardless of which market-based model of provision in education and careers services is likely to emerge the principle of not over-serving or under-serving the consumer must underpinning high quality CEIAG for young people and adults. The new Coalition Government may find it fruitful to examine the approaches adopted in Scotland and in Finland, where services were substantially remodelled on the basis of a model of differentiated service delivery developed at Florida State University in the USA. For example:

- Sampson et al. (2004)¹⁰⁸ in their chapter on accountability and evaluation in career services, considers cost-effectiveness linked to 'the ratio of client gain to dollars invested in the service' (p. 278)

The impact of technology in the development and delivery of services

3.17 Whilst CEIAG delivered electronically is becoming increasingly important and deserves a specific attention, it is important to remember that it is a part of the total delivered service, not necessarily sufficient alone. A 'balanced diet' of provision would offer accessibility and choice to individuals. The digital revolution is continuing apace affecting all areas of modern life including the delivery of public services; governments will continue to look to technological solutions particularly if there are cost-benefits to be achieved:

¹⁰⁷ Nicoletti, C. & Berthoud, R. (2010). *The Role of Information, Advice and Guidance in Young People's Education and Employment Choices*. DfE Research Report DfE-RR019, Sheffield.

¹⁰⁸ Sampson J.P., Reardon, R.C., Peterson, G.W. & Lenz, J.G. (2004). *Career Counselling and Services: a Cognitive Information Processing Approach*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

- Bimrose & Barnes (2010)¹⁰⁹ have highlighted how rapidly services have been transformed by digital technology over the last decade and how, in particular, the use of digital technology has been completely normalised for young people. The contents draw attention to the distinction between young people who have grown up with the digital revolution over the last decade, the so-called ‘digital natives’, and older people, the so-called ‘digital immigrants’. Their paper makes the interesting observation that, specifically in relation to services for adults, both the majority of clients and practitioners delivering services will be digital immigrants, at least in the short to medium term, and hence that this has profound implications for service design and delivery.
- The National Audit Office (NAO, 2005)¹¹⁰ highlighted the effectiveness of the mass-marketing of the then learndirect service in providing millions of advice sessions for adults each year, by telephone and via the internet. It noted the potential cost-effectiveness provided by mass-marketing and mass-communication technology, and identified further cost saving associated with the rationalisation of supply chain arrangements.
- Watts and Dent (2007)¹¹¹ highlighted there are very few studies on the effectiveness and efficiency of career interventions by telephone or email. The authors indicate that if the aim is to provide the greatest gain in the shortest amount of time for the client, individual counselling is far the most effective intervention. But if the criterion is the greatest gain for the greatest number of clients per unit of counsellor resource, then other interventions provide higher levels of productivity.

3.18 With regard to potential cost-effectiveness, research findings show that guidance delivered remotely by communication technology can be of a high quality measured against standards used in the assessment of face-to-face guidance:

Page et al (2007)¹¹² in their evaluation of the learndirect telephone guidance trial found that the majority of users were satisfied with all key aspects of the service, with a quarter of calls surveyed being graded ‘excellent’.

¹⁰⁹ Bimrose, J. and Barnes, S.A (2010). *Careers Information, Advice & Guidance: the digital revolution and repositioning of labour market information - An Expert Paper for UKCES*. Coventry: Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick. Accessed on 21.07.10: [http://www.ukces.org.uk/reports/labour-market-information-\(lmi\)-information-communications-and-technologies-\(ict\)-and-information,-advice-and-guidance-\(iag\)](http://www.ukces.org.uk/reports/labour-market-information-(lmi)-information-communications-and-technologies-(ict)-and-information,-advice-and-guidance-(iag))

¹¹⁰ National Audit Office (2005). *Extending Access to Learning Through Technology: Ufi and the Learndirect Service*. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General. HC 460 Session 2005-2006. 4 November 2005. London: National Audit Office. Accessed 18.04.10:

http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/05-06/0506460.pdf

¹¹¹ Watts, A.G. & Dent, G. (2006) *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, Vol. 34, No. 2, May 2006

¹¹² Page, R., Newton, B., Hawthorn, R., Hunt, W. and Hillage, J. (2007). *An Evaluation of Ufi/Learndirect Telephone Guidance Trial*. DfES Research Report RR833. London: DfES. Accessed 21.04.10: <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pdflibrary/rr833.pdf>

- Hooley et al. (2010)¹¹³ indicate that the online environment for career exploration is far broader than that provided by public-sector careers services. This also includes private-sector career consultants, employers, recruitment companies and learning providers. Drawing upon earlier work on the functioning of a market in careers services¹¹⁴, they reaffirm that there is a regulatory role that government could and should perform in relation to the rapidly expanding ICT careers service market by:
 - stimulating the market in order to build its capacity;
 - regulating the market and assuring the quality of services; and
 - compensating for market failure where this is appropriate.

They suggest a fourth role for ‘policy-makers’ and ‘policy-shapers’ which is to consider maximising the value that individuals can draw from this online market by supporting the growth of well-informed consumers. There is a vast and potentially confusing array of web material available and the main challenge for the consumer to find, navigate, prioritise and evaluate resources. It is suggested that Government can support the growth of an informed consumer by growing ‘digital literacy’ to support career management, by supporting the technical up-skilling of careers professionals, and by developing mechanisms for quality assurance. This could be extended further to embrace the concept of improved *careers literacy* for all young people and adults.

3.19 Building upon the examples of research findings presented above, it is clear that careers services and careers support activities straddle both the education and industry divide. The careers profession performs an important role in improving social mobility and individuals’ life chances. It is apparent that three common features unite all those working with young people and adults in order to improve social mobility include raising *aspirations* and *achievements* as well as facilitating *access to information and networks*. Individuals’ decision-making processes are influenced by many sources of information and advice including family, friends and the media, with the internet fast becoming a particularly significant influence. These informal sources of information and advice may not always be reliable, impartial or accurate. In this sense, the ‘unique selling point’ of professional sources of CEIAG may be the reassurance of the authority and impartiality that they confer.

¹¹³ Hooley, T., Hutchinson, J. & Watts, A.G. (2010) *Careering Through The Web: The Potential Of Web 2.0 And 3.0 Technologies For Career Development And Career Support Services - An Expert Paper prepared for UKCES*. Derby: University of Derby, International Centre for Guidance Studies

¹¹⁴ Watts, A.G., Hughes, D. & Wood, M. (2005) *A Market in Career? Evidence and Issues*. CeGS Occasional Paper. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 This section draws together the key emergent themes on social mobility and careers service provision drawing upon the:

- discussion on social mobility policy and the link to CEIAG;
- viewpoints of leading figures from industry and education; and
- a review of research evidence on the impact of careers service and related careers support activities.

4.2 Generally, policy-makers do recognise the urgent need to address social mobility and to design and implement *a progressive approach for a new all-age careers service framework* in England. Leading figures from industry and education have identified ways in which they believe the *new Coalition Government could become better informed and supported* in making key decisions for improving social mobility within a careers service context. The research *evidence highlights the contribution of CEIAG as a pre-cursor to social mobility*. In bringing together the key findings, it is apparent that increased dialogue and shared expertise between the policy-makers and policy-shapers is now required.

4.3 Perry et al. (2010)¹¹⁵ recommend that the *prime role of Ministers is to bring their values to inform goals and ambitions*, rather than tactics and methods, where expert analysis should play a larger role. The evidence presented in this paper, combined with the expertise which Careers England and leading figures from industry and education could offer, is ready and available to assist Ministers now to design and establish the required new system offering all-age all-stage careers service support in England.

4.4 All three main political parties have identified that CEIAG has an important contribution to make and in this sense the notion of *CEIAG 'lubricating' the wheels of social mobility and economic prosperity* is an important image to promote. In connection with the role of guidance within the labour market, Watts¹¹⁶ noted that: 'career guidance needs to be viewed not as a direct instrument of public policy, but more as a lubricant of such policies and of the operations of the labour market' (p. 233).

4.5 There is broad agreement that there has been *too narrow a focus on the disadvantaged minority to the detriment of the aspirational majority*. Lessons learned from past experience demonstrate that building careers service provision based upon a

¹¹⁵ Perry, A., Amadeo, C., Fletcher, M. & Walker, E. (2010) *Instinct or Reason: How education policy is made and how we might make it better*. Perspective Report. Reading: CfBT Education Trust

¹¹⁶ Watts, A.G. (1991). The impact of the 'new right': policy challenges confronting careers guidance in England and Wales. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 19(3), 230-245.

universal approach, and additionally including targeted provision for the most vulnerable, would provide optimal reach to individuals and more effective and intelligent use of available resources. The need to *balance and target resources* effectively, particularly to those most in need, remains a key challenge for the new Coalition Government and for providers of education and employment.

4.6 The broad policy principle to be further developed is three-fold: *empowering the consumer, focusing on learning outcomes and placing greater trust in providers in the delivery of skills and careers services* in order to achieve more for less. High-quality and high-impact careers service provision that is *independent of learning providers, informed by the labour market and provided by specialists professional careers advisers* – represents both a personal and a public good. Providing opportunities for the *active engagement of all individuals in some form of learning is a pre-requisite for social mobility*.

4.7 The centrality of *education as a 'catalyst for change'* in making a difference to social mobility is undisputed; however, the mechanisms deployed to encourage a more equitable social distribution of life chances and the relationship between education and the workplace remains contested territory. The *significant savings to the public purse of just a modest reduction in NEET and the costs resulting from ill-informed career or study choices* leading to course switching, non-completion of studies and/ or unemployment are apparent. This cannot be fully achieved within existing arrangements.

4.8 *New market-based models of provision* in education and careers services are beginning to emerge in different forms. Leading figures from industry and education have indicated their expectation to find some form of *continuity* of CEIAG for young people and adults. There was broad consensus from the interviewees that *totally separate services for young people and adults can produce duplication and wastage of scarce resources*. *An opening up of the careers sector market brings new possibilities* for the design and implementation of a progressive approach to an all-age careers service in England. This also presents *potential threats*, particularly for Government, in safeguarding the interests of those most vulnerable in our society. There is a call for a *new accountability framework* that focuses on diversity and equality with particular emphasis on narrowing the *attainment and achievement gaps* between different groups in our society, particularly those most in need.

4.9 *A consumer-led approach with increased demand for accurate information, particularly on returns for investment and labour market trends*, means that a closer connectivity between education, employers and careers professionals must be encouraged by the new Coalition Government. A *partnership model* is also required, with careers advisers working within institutions from their *position of independence* by being employed by the all age careers service, and bringing labour market and wider opportunity market information into every school and college.

4.10 The decision-making processes of young people and adults are influenced by many sources of information and advice including *family, friend, the media and the internet*. These *informal sources of information and advice* can, in some cases, be very helpful; however, they may not always be reliable, impartial or accurate. In this sense, the *'unique selling point'* of *professional sources of CEIAG*, including quality assurance kite-marks, may be the *reassurance of the authority and impartiality* that they confer. This is particularly true within the context of schools with sixth forms, and for pupils whose parents/carers may have limited career horizons; but it is also true for adults seeking reassurance or clarity and whose horizons can be widened by interaction with an informed and impartial professional adviser.

4.11 The actual *lack of impartiality of CEIAG* was beginning to be addressed to some extent by the previous government through legislation contained within the Education and Skills Act 2008¹¹⁷; further supported through its IAG strategy and quality standards for schools, colleges and Local Authorities (LAs)¹¹⁸. However neither the 2008 Act nor the IAG strategy had been fully supported by detailed statutory guidance to LAs nor by any form of inspection or measurement and thus had made minimal impact. The new Academies Act (2010)¹¹⁹ and forthcoming Schools White Paper and the Education Bill due to be announced in autumn 2010 will shed more light on this.

4.12 Given the rapid *expansion in technology* and its apparent *cost-effectiveness*, it would be reasonable to conclude that its use within an all-age careers service framework may become even more prevalent and significant for a government forced to make the harsh savings in public expenditure required by the budget deficit. For example, although no longer in power, the Labour Party's blueprint for the proposed adult advancement and careers service (now titled NEXT STEP, the adult careers service by the new Coalition Government) aimed to maintain capacity in the face-to-face at current levels, but to *increase* the capacity of the telephone channel to process 1 million calls per annum and to *increase* capacity of the online channel to process up to 20 million online sessions per annum¹²⁰. How the new *NEXT STEP service* will become *part of the new administration's* (proposed but yet to be confirmed in policy terms) *all-age careers service* remains uncertain.

4.13 It is often difficult to *demonstrate the direct impact of CEIAG support activities* given the behaviour of individuals is complex and subject to many interacting factors, hence reaching clear conclusions about the effect of a particular measure can be 'hazardous', to say the least. As a result, research evidence needs to be interpreted with great care. The evidence presented in section 3 of this report,

¹¹⁷ Op.cit.

¹¹⁸ Op.cit.

¹¹⁹ The Academies Act (2010) received Royal Assent on 27th July 2010. Accessed on 29.07.10:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2010/ukpga_20100032_en_1

¹²⁰ Op. cit.

demonstrates clearly that *careers services and careers support activities can and do make a significant difference in terms of learning outcomes* such as increased self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation, and enhance decision making. There is also strong evidence that CEIAG supports significant participation in learning and educational attainment. For progression into employment, the case is less clear although there is some evidence that highly intensive support for the unemployed can make a difference. This is not to say that careers support activities have no value in producing longer-term employment outcomes, but that it is more *difficult to demonstrate the unequivocal connection*. CEIAG can and does play a significant role in supporting individuals' attainment, achievements and access to information and networks.

4.14 As has been noted above, policy statements published to date from the Coalition Government *do not yet contain any detailed response on careers information, advice and guidance provision*. Hence this paper offers both evidence for how the new service should be designed and specific recommendations for urgent and important action.

Recommendations

On the basis of evidence, and the affirmed views of the leading figures interviewed in preparing this paper, the Coalition Government is urged as part of its all-age careers service plans to:

(i) **work closely with Careers England** (the leading trade association of careers sector employers whose members are major employers of careers advisers responsible for designing and delivering high-quality careers services), **the Careers Colloquium¹²¹, the UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum and leading representatives from industry and education**, to identify progressive approaches designed to halt the decline of opportunities and broaden access to sustainable employability for all individuals;

(ii) support the development of **a formal partnership model** for careers professionals to work more closely with those in education and industry to help address social mobility and the active participation of all individuals in some form of meaningful learning and work. Also, to draw upon lessons learned from **impartial CEIAG** in public, private and voluntary/community sectors within and outside of England;

(iii) help **build capacity, assure quality, and promote expansion** in careers support activities for all UK citizens through a new and dynamic re-engineered

¹²¹ The Careers Colloquium is a newly formed careers professional associations' body working together to provide a single voice to Government on the design and development of an all-age careers service framework in England.

system that takes account of both formal and informal careers services and careers support activities. In doing so, to **put in place arrangements for safeguarding individuals** from potential ‘rogue traders’ who might view government de-regulation as an opportunity to prey upon those most vulnerable in our society;

(iv) utilise the evidence which highlights that **trained, competent and qualified careers advisers provide a powerful ‘trigger’ for motivating individuals**, including those most vulnerable in society, to engage more fully with learning and work;

(v) develop a **new accountability framework** for careers service provision that focuses on diversity and equality with particular emphasis on narrowing the *attainment and achievement gaps* between different groups in our society, particularly those most in need.

(vi) further develop **community learning provision and implement career literacy support strategies** to facilitate individuals’ personal and career development. These should be open to all individuals, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender and occupational status.

(vii) support the careers sector to **raise the status of the profession and improve its all-round stature** as a powerful agent for change in helping to motivate and transform people’s lives. The forthcoming report from the Careers Profession Taskforce in England¹²² should be helpful in this regard.

¹²² The Careers Profession Taskforce in England is led by Dame Ruth Silver CBE, commissioned by the former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and is due to report to the Minister for Education in September 2010.