



Press release

The Career Development Institute welcomes the Government's new careers strategy but is disappointed about the lack of support for impartial careers guidance

Two years ago the then Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, acknowledged that the school-based approach to careers guidance was not working effectively for all young people and announced that the Government would be publishing a strategy for improving careers guidance in schools. In January of this year the Government re-stated its intention to publish a comprehensive careers strategy later in the year. The Minister now responsible for careers, Anne Milton, launched the long awaited strategy today at the CDI's annual conference in Solihull.

The CDI is pleased to see that the strategy picks up several of the points that we have been recommending. It sets out a 'platform for change' that should lead to significant improvements in careers education and guidance in schools. The strategy endorses fully the eight benchmarks of good practice developed by the Gatsby Foundation and provides funding to extend the current successful pilot in the North East to twenty more areas of the country. This should help us move towards the CDI's goal of funded support across the whole of England.

CDI President, Virginia Isaac said: "The CDI has been arguing for some time that the school-based model, introduced five years ago, requires strong leadership from within the school, as well as support from outside. We are pleased, therefore, to see that the strategy promotes the idea that all schools and colleges should appoint a careers leader, and we welcome the £4million that is to be made available for training for this key role."

The strategy also includes refreshing support for young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and we are particularly pleased to see the announcement of projects to develop best practice in learning about work and careers in primary schools.

All these changes are welcome but we should not forget that the statutory duty placed on schools is to secure access to independent, impartial careers guidance, and we know that the Government recognises that the current provision is patchy and inconsistent. As the professional body for everyone working in the field of career development, we are also

acutely aware that the number of qualified careers advisers has fallen significantly in recent years, as a direct result of schools not buying in services at the levels that were available to young people from the Connexions service, before responsibility was transferred to individual schools.

We are disappointed that although the Minister talked about the importance of personalised career guidance in her conference speech, the new strategy does not include any specific measures to ensure greater consistency or investment in the level 6 route or the level 7, Qualification in Career Development, so that that all young people benefit from personal guidance from a professionally qualified careers adviser. We will continue to press the Government on the need for such action. The tailored advice at the heart of the new strategy, cannot be delivered by teachers and employers alone. Both teachers and employers have vital roles to play, and it is the job of the careers leader to harness their contributions, but these must be complemented by access to informed and impartial careers advice and guidance from a qualified careers adviser.

Much of the strategy is focussed on careers education and guidance in schools. We remain concerned about access to careers guidance for young people who, for whatever reason, are not in school. We note also that the strategy pays scant attention to careers guidance for adults. In this sense the strategy cannot be considered 'comprehensive' and we believe that this can only be achieved by introducing the all-age careers guidance service announced by the Coalition Government in November 2010.

Looking ahead, we believe that the strategy represents a significant step in the right direction and we look forward to continuing to work with the Department for Education, The Careers & Enterprise Company and the Gatsby Foundation to implement the various measures. At the same time, we will continue to lobby for further changes to ensure that each and every young person and adult has access to the good quality careers guidance they need.

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1. The Career Development Institute is the UK-wide professional body for the career development sector, with a membership of 4,500 career development professionals working in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
2. For more information on the work of the Career Development Institute please visit our website www.thecdi.net or contact chief executive jan.ellis@thecdi.net