

### Introduction

The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the UK-wide professional body for everyone working in careers education; careers information, advice and guidance; career coaching and career counselling. We have 5,000 members, working with people of all ages, from young people in schools and colleges through to adults both in work and looking for work.

The Institute is pleased to have this opportunity to contribute to the consultation on building a modern industrial strategy. While we agree that all ten pillars of the proposed strategy are important, our particular focus is on the central role of career advice and guidance in ensuring a good match between the supply of skills and the demand for labour. We are, therefore, especially interested in the second pillar 'Developing Skills', and wish to comment specifically on the Government's commitment to publish a comprehensive careers strategy (ref: page 48 of the Green Paper). This is long overdue and we feel we can best make our points by sending this separate response, rather than answering the consultation questions, as there is no specific question related to careers advice and guidance.

### The challenge

We agree with the analysis in the Green Paper that the proposed improvements to the education and skills system must be supported by high quality careers provision but that current information, advice and guidance continues to be patchy and inconsistent – not only in schools but also for adults. We welcome the fact that the Government is reviewing the current careers offer for people of all ages and we would be pleased to contribute to the development of the comprehensive strategy the Government has committed to publish this year. In a later section of this response we set out the main points the CDI wishes to see included in the new strategy.

We strongly agree that the quality of careers information, advice and guidance must be higher. The roots of the problems concerning support for young people lie firmly in the Coalition Government's decisions to, firstly, remove the statutory duties on schools to provide careers and work-related learning in the curriculum and, secondly, to devolve responsibility for careers guidance to individual schools and colleges, with no funding, little support and weak monitoring.

The removal of a national service, delivered locally, has resulted in the current patchy and inconsistent provision. The quality of support that young people receive is dependent entirely on which particular school they attend. In some schools provision is good, and occasionally better than what was in place immediately before the change in policy that took effect from September 2012, but in too many others it is poor. Furthermore, the dismantling of the universal Connexions service has resulted in many of the high street centres being closed, leaving young people who have left school with no obvious place to go for information, advice and guidance. We are now in the fifth year of these arrangements, so a whole generation of 11-16 year old secondary school pupils has experienced an inadequate service.

As the Green Paper rightly highlights, we need not only to get careers guidance right for young people setting out from school or college but also to continue to provide high quality support throughout adult and working life. We welcome the importance the Green Paper places on lifelong learning. For such up-skilling and re-skilling to work effectively, and for people to find the right employment opportunities in an ever-changing labour market, there needs to be lifelong access to careers guidance. The introduction of the National Careers Service in 2012 was a welcome step forward in the provision of careers support for adults but the current funding arrangements and targets are not fit for purpose. We need a service that is available to all adults, not just certain priority groups.

The current, separate arrangements for careers guidance for young people and for adults serve some people well but they do not constitute a careers provision that works for everyone. We, therefore, welcome the promise of a comprehensive strategy and ideally an all-age career development service.

### **Careers guidance in the context of an improved system of technical education**

The Green Paper sets out the Government's commitment to improving the careers offer in a chapter on developing skills. We fully support the proposed changes to technical education and the introduction of a simplified framework of qualifications, with clear routes of progression. We welcome also the proposal to develop a 'UCAS-type' information, support and application process for apprenticeships. The creation of this new suite of qualifications further underlines the need for good quality careers education and guidance to help students make informed choices about what to study.

We also suggest that when the new 'T' levels are being designed, each of the 15 routes should include a core module on career exploration and planning. This should be credit-bearing and count towards the final qualification. The module would help students to think about how they wish to use the qualification to support their progression and to develop the career management and employability skills needed to secure a job and to succeed in the workplace. The module could also be offered as a free-standing award to students following other post-16 courses such as A levels. It would be helpful too if 'lesson insert' materials, similar to those produced by Skills Development Scotland, could be developed for teachers of the technical and vocational components to use to help link students' learning in those modules to the workplace and career-related matters: the materials would complement and reinforce the career planning module.

We are particularly pleased to note the plans to introduce a new 'transition year' at 16 for students with basic skills gaps and who are not ready for more advanced study or employment. We hope that the transition year will focus on more than literacy and numeracy, and will pay equal attention to digital skills and employability skills. It will also be important to provide opportunities, in the transition year, for students to try out different vocational and technical areas, so that they can develop an achievable career plan. The transition year should build on the best of practice in pre-vocational education.

We have just one cautionary note and that is, not to associate improved provision of careers support only with apprenticeships and technical education. We understand completely why developing skills provides the context for discussing careers provision in a Green Paper on building an industrial strategy, but it will be important to remember that careers information, advice and guidance should be readily accessible not only to people of all ages, but also to individuals pursuing all routes through education.

## Components of a comprehensive careers strategy

The Government now has a single minister with responsibility for careers for both young people and adults. There is, therefore, a real opportunity to put in place a genuinely all-age provision, accessible to everyone.

- The introduction of the National Careers Service in 2012 was a missed opportunity to introduce in England the vision of an all-age careers service set out initially by the Minister at the time (November 2010), John Hayes. The National Careers Service does not provide face-to-face careers guidance for young people and neither is the full range of its services available to all adults. The current National Careers Service should be replaced by an all-age career development service that offers support to young people in schools and colleges, to young people who have left education, and to adults both in work and looking for work.
- The reconstituted national service that we propose should set out a clear framework of careers support that must be made available to everyone, but which is implemented at a local level and monitored regularly. This will require leadership from Government, involving both a funded implementation plan and appropriate accountability measures.
- To ensure the quality of careers guidance provided by the new service, all careers advisers employed by the service should be professionally-qualified in careers guidance to at least Level 6.
- To ensure access to support the service should be located in places that can easily be reached by clients both young and older, and it needs to be adequately funded.
- Schools and colleges should be able to use the new service but should also continue to be free to make their own arrangements.
- It will, however, be important to put in place robust quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that all young people receive high quality support. The CDI is a member of the consortium that oversees the *Quality in Careers Standard*, and we propose that all schools should be required to achieve this quality mark.
- Further, it should be recognised that for a school-based model to work effectively, schools should be helped to put in place appropriate management arrangements. This means appointing careers leaders, with access to relevant professional development to take on the role.
- Finally, the statutory duties to include careers and employability education in the school curriculum should be reinstated and extended from age 11 to age 18.
- To incentivise schools to put in place these necessary arrangements, development funding should be made available, conditional upon achieving the *Quality in Careers Standard*.

As stated at the beginning of this response, the CDI would be pleased to work with the Department for Education (DfE) to help develop and implement the strategy.

### **The strategy for careers is needed urgently**

The current policy arrangements for careers support in England, for both young people and adults, have been in place for five years. The DfE announced in December 2015 a plan to publish a new strategy for improving careers guidance in schools and colleges but by December 2016 it seemed that this was to be dropped. We were, therefore, pleasantly surprised to learn, in January 2017, that not only was the Government still committed to publishing a strategy but also the strategy would now extend to all ages.

The Green Paper states a commitment to publish this strategy “later this year”. We urge the Government not to delay. If it is not published until after the summer we risk yet another year group of young people missing out. We welcome the proposals in the Green Paper but we need them soon. We recommend that the Government should set out a timetable of consultation on the comprehensive careers strategy, culminating in an intended publication date of July 2017.

We would be pleased to add further detail to the points in this response.

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