

iCeGS ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

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WELCOME

Welcome to the 2024 iCeGS Annual Review. The last review saw us take a retrospective look at the last 25 years as iCeGS celebrated its silver jubilee. It seems fitting that this year the focus is very much on looking forward to what we hope will be exciting and fruitful times for the careers sector. Professor Hooley shares some thoughts about what we are hoping for from the new government. It is refreshing that they have both policy and a commitment to improving careers support for all, which they see as a central element to improve skills and economic growth. Allied with this are numerous calls to focus more on careers guidance and significantly expand the number of practitioners within the career development sector.

The professionalisation of careers work is an area that iCeGS is highly committed to, we have worked with the CDI this year to understand how people become qualified in the career development sector and understand the challenges that surround training. This work will be highly impactful in establishing the future shape of professional qualifications for practice.

We are really excited by the Critical Perspective on Career and Career Guidance European project which is just beginning. This project will give iCeGS the opportunity to work across Europe with existing and new colleagues to research and understand the issues which increase the impact of policy and practice in career development. Building international partnerships and relationships is important to us and we have been lucky to welcome inspiring researchers to work with us. This year we welcome Ester Bonomi a PhD student from the University of Milan, Italy and Dr Mikka Kekki who is joining us as a Early Career Academic from Finland. Both are conducting interesting research which we look forward to supporting.

Finally, this year we said goodbye to one of our long-standing team, Nicki Moore, Senior Lecturer in Career Development who retired in early October. Over her time at iCeGS Nicki has contributed to numerous research projects, has led our masters and our CPD programmes and been the constant champion of professional practice and social justice. She has been the heart of iCeGS and she will be missed.

We look forward to 2025 with a sense of opportunity and hope for the future. Please engage with us, you can learn more about our work, publications and events through joining the iCeGS mailing list.



Siobhan Neary
Head of iCeGS and
Professor of Career
Development
Practice

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NEW YEAR, NEW GOVERNMENT »

After 14 years of Conservative Government, this year has seen a changing of the guard. But what will Keir Starmer's project of change mean for career guidance? Professor Tristram Hooley walks you through the likely changes.

After years of working with Conservative governments to try and move forwards the situation for career guidance, the election brought us a completely new situation. Not only are we dealing with a new set of ministers, a new government, a different political party and a new set of ideas, we are also, for the first time in a long while talking to a party that entered government with a policy on careers.

The Labour Party made a number of important and welcome promises about guidance in their manifesto:

■ **The reform of the public employment service.**

The manifesto promises to bring the National Careers Service and Jobcentre Plus together into a national jobs and careers service. This is not without its dangers for careers but is probably the right decision. This has already begun to gather pace and looks like it will be a key policy for the new government. At iCeGS we will be watching closely to see whether the new service mandates the use of career guidance professionals and expands access to careers services.

■ **Work experience and careers advice in schools.**

The manifesto promised two weeks of work experience for every young person and the improvement of careers advice in schools. The manifesto promised that £85 million was put aside for this task, so we can only hope that this survives Rachel Reeves' newfound enthusiasm for austerity.

■ **Youth Guarantee.**

The party are also promising to create a new 'Youth Guarantee' which doesn't explicitly mention career guidance, but presumably would need to include some way for young people to be identified and directed into the training programmes that are proposed. This could be delivered through the proposed new Youth Futures programme, which is an inter-professional hub (including careers advisers) which is designed to tackle youth crime.

These are three very substantial new policies which are likely to keep iCeGS busy for the next few years. It also looks like there is going to be continuity with The Careers & Enterprise Company which is also good news. Alongside these there are likely to be substantial reforms planned in skills and devolution and a bubbling crisis in higher education. All of these policies are likely to intersect with careers in a variety of ways.

All of this leaves us with the questions as to whether the careers sector is better off with this government than with the last one? So far we'd have to say that the signs are looking good. While the proposals are insufficient to create a truly world-class guidance system, they do look like they will be a big step forwards. But... none of them have actually happened yet and political manifestos have often proved to be an unreliable guide to what governments actually do.

"REST ASSURED THAT AT iCeGS WE WILL BE WORKING AS HARD AS WE CAN TO ANALYSE THE LATEST IN GOVERNMENT POLICY, PUSH THEM TOWARDS BETTER AND MORE EVIDENCE BASED POLICIES AND LET THE REST OF THE SECTOR KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON."



Tristram Hooley,
Professor of Career
Education

PROJECTS »

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-UK)



In 2024, iCeGS led a comprehensive evaluation of WWF’s Sustainable Futures Programme, focusing on its impact across students, educators, and business stakeholders. We used both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the programme’s effectiveness in promoting knowledge growth, encouraging behavioural change, and enhancing engagement with sustainable careers.

Through surveys, students reported a significant increase in their understanding of sustainability and showed a strong interest in pursuing careers related to sustainability after participating in the programme. Focus groups with educators and interviews with business leaders also provided valuable insights into how the programme influenced students’ thinking and behaviour towards sustainability, as well as how it aligned with career education initiatives across schools.

The final report offered recommendations to WWF-UK and Partners to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and improve the overall coherence of the programme. By addressing the identified barriers and enhancing strategic outreach, the Sustainable Futures Programme is well-positioned to expand its impact and encourage deeper engagement from both the education and business communities.

Training and qualifications in the career development sector



iCeGS has recently been working with the Career Development Institute (CDI) to undertake a piece of research to understand how people become qualified to work in the career development sector in the UK. We have been conducting interviews with key stakeholders in the sector, as well as holding roundtable discussions with practitioners, students, employers and training providers. There has also been a survey that has been distributed through iCeGS, the CDI and social media to encourage anyone working in the sector to have their say on pathways to qualification. The research is in its final stages and we’re hoping that the findings will help address critical issues in the sector such as:

- Ensuring the sector has sufficient trained and competent professionals to deliver career development.
- The challenges individuals face when seeking qualifications in career development.
- The difficulties employers encounter recruiting professionally qualified staff.
- The obstacles qualifications providers face is delivering relevant and effective qualifications.

Critical perspectives on career and career guidance



iCeGS has just been funded to lead a four year European project to bring researchers together to explore how careers are changing in the contemporary world and consider what response is required from public policy and practice. It will explore the following research questions.

- How can the challenges and changes that are happening to careers in the contemporary world be understood?
- How can policymakers respond to contemporary challenges to individual’s careers?
- How can career guidance practice adopt a more critical stance to address the changing world more effectively?

The project will foster debate around these questions by stimulating publication projects, brokering relationships between researchers and developing new research directions. It will also support the public communication of research insights, findings and projects to policymakers and practitioners.

For further information visit:
www.cost.eu/actions/CA23112/

Effective Transition Fund (ETF)



iCeGS in partnership with colleagues at the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and the Behavioural insights Team (BIT) have been undertaking a longitudinal evaluation of the Careers & Enterprise Company’s Effective Transition Fund. The project which focused on careers support for over 1000 disadvantaged young people in years 10 and 11 explored a range of models delivered across ten Careers Hubs in England. The models focused on providing one to one guidance and coaching support, enrichment activities, employer encounters, personal development workshops and action planning.

The outcomes from the research have provided a strong evidence base as to the impact and importance of building relationships with trusted adults and the role of representation in inspiring young people. Outcomes identified over 90% of participants had achieved a sustainable post 16 destination where they were happy with their choices.

The project funded by JP Morgan has been re-commissioned for a second phase, iCeGS and IES will continue as the project evaluators.

Scan the QR code To read full report:
or [click here](#)



EVENTS »

THE 7TH NATIONAL CAREER LEADERS CONFERENCE

The Career Development Institute and the International Centre for Guidance Studies hosted the 7th National Career Leaders Conference on June 19th, 2024. The conference is targeted at middle and senior leaders in schools and colleges who have responsibility for their organisations' programme of careers education and personal career guidance. It also attracts interest from those tasked with supporting this group, for example careers hub leads and widening participation practitioners. The event was held at the University of Derby, Kedleston Road campus for the third time. We welcomed 213 delegates to the event. This year, our headline sponsors were Unifrog. All delegates received a conference 'goody bag' which was sponsored by Specsavers. An evaluation which collected data from a post-event survey and an analysis of social media posts (#NCLC2024) showed that the event was well received:



It's my favourite conference of the season – The National Career Leaders Conference. Looking forward to catching up with colleagues and meeting new people!"

One of the main goals for delegates was to meet up with colleagues and to network. The post event evaluation demonstrated that delegates had achieved their goals, and this had improved slightly on previous years. The university's hospitality team did a wonderful job in providing an excellent lunch which was welcomed by all delegates as they visited the exhibition which was held in the Atrium at the Kedleston Rd site.

With three keynote speakers, a panel and 18 workshops many delegates felt that the programme surpassed previous years activities.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The annual career development practitioner research conference has become an anticipated feature of the sectors events calendar. The event is co-hosted by the pre-eminent organisations in the UK career development sector: The International Centre for Guidance Studies, The Career Development Institute, AGCAS and NICEC. This year as in previous years, the event was hosted online on February 6th and this year we welcomed 103 delegates from around the world. The event included an online poster competition, two keynote speeches and eight workshops. Our international panel had speakers from Australia, Kenya, and Denmark.

The event is targeted at inspiring practitioners to develop their own research practice for example in evaluating their impact and that of their programmes and practices more effectively. For this reason, we have always encouraged practitioners to be part of the programme, sharing their practice and inspiring others rather than as an academic conference. This has always been a winning approach and this year, when asked about motivation for attending the event. One delegate told us it was:



To gain a better insight into the research element of careers education and allow me to further develop the provision we deliver."

The speakers and workshops received high ratings in the post event evaluation. In terms of impact we were pleased to see that delegates wanted to apply their learning from the event in practical ways:



In practical ways with my students but also for my own professional development."

Overall, the team felt that this had been a valuable and impactful event and one to be repeated in 2025.

"ALL THE SPEAKERS WERE INSPIRING AND INTERESTING IN DIFFERENT WAYS. ALL OF THE SESSIONS WERE RELEVANT AND USEFUL. I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE I WASTED A MOMENT."



Career Leaders Conference 2024

LEARNING AND TEACHING »

Central to iCeGS' ongoing work is our commitment to training career practitioners for the career development sector. This year has been our first year teaching on our revalidated Masters.



Pictured: Nicki Moore, Prof Siobhan Neary, Dr Hannah Blake and Dr Tom Staunton.

It has been an exciting year seeing students develop their academic and practice-based skills across the course and then seeing them graduate in November. One of the particularly exciting things has been seeing international students coming and being part of the programme, we were particularly excited by having students from Nigeria and Turkey engaging with our programme.

It has also been exciting to see the range of activities students have been getting up to on our new programme. Particular highlights were in the form of a very engaging poster session where students presented on the ethical dilemmas facing career practitioners in the career development sector as well as a set of stimulating dissertations dealing with issues such as parental influence, cross-culture children and the work of Sunny Hansen among others.

We held professional discussions for the first time this year and it was a really important moment for reflection for us and the students as well as a celebration of how far they have all come on the programme. Training practitioners and seeing them developing their understanding of the evidence base for guidance, being able to think critically and creatively remain at the forefront of what we stand for as a centre.

We continue to deliver on the CEC's career leaders programme. Increasingly our delivery has been focussed on working with Career Hubs to deliver in-situation training. Career leaders remains a vital agenda for the sector. It is particularly exciting for us to be delivering this training in a range of contexts across England.

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STAFFING »

Nicki Moore retires



Nicki Moore has been one of iCeGS most valuable staff for more than 15 years. In early October 2024 she retired. Here she discusses her career at iCeGS.

It seems like a lifetime ago when I decided to train to become a careers adviser, but a quick calculation shows that it was only 28 years!

As I approached the date for my retirement from the International Centre for Guidance Studies and the University of Derby, I have reflected on what has been a wonderful and fulfilling career. One of my motivators to train as a career development practitioner was a growing awareness of how young people with special needs were supported to live their best lives. As I asked questions about this, I realised that careers advisers had an important role to play in helping vulnerable and disadvantaged young people to imagine themselves in life and work roles and then to support them to

achieve their dreams. In all the work that I have done throughout the years this commitment has never left me. First as a generic and then specialist practitioner, operational and development manager and finally as an academic researcher and teacher.

During my journey I have met some courageous young people and their parents who have motivated me to drive forward quality standards and practice. I have also worked alongside some determined and committed professionals who have often been the unsung heroes of a much-misunderstood public service. This has been a journey of continuous learning and development, and I have been privileged to have been able to learn from the best in the business. Working at iCeGS has allowed me to keep asking important questions and to share the answers with practitioners across the world in order to influence new and developing practice.

And what does the future hold? As a teacher of transition theory, I have often been mindful of the saying '*careers adviser- heal thyself!*'. I know that this voluntary transition is both scary but full of promise. I have been developing an action plan (once a careers adviser, always a careers adviser) and hope to make the most of my free bus pass to roam the UK as well as travel more widely. As a lifelong learner, the U3A courses look super interesting! When you next see me, don't be surprised to be greeted in Spanish!

Congratulations Dr Staunton!

Tom Staunton, as well as being one of our senior lecturers, completed his PhD with the university this year and graduated in November. Supervised by Professor Tristram Hooley as well as Professor Alex Nunn, Tom's work explored the experiences of students using digital platforms for their career development. Particularly focussing on more sociological understandings of technology Tom's PhD looked at the role of Universities in inducting students into using digital platforms as well as exploring how students precarity is often exacerbated online. Tom's thesis is available through the Universities online research archive, and he has a range of dissemination plans over the coming year.



VISITORS



Ester Bonomi - University of Milan

I am a PhD student from University of Milan, and I have been spending three months at iCeGS as part of my visiting period. My thesis concerns the topic of career guidance policies at the regional level, comparing two Italian regions to understand their similarities and differences and the reasons behind these variations. Previously, I studied Administration and Public Policies and worked for a year as a junior research fellow in a research lab specialised in welfare and social policies. My research interests focus on the analysis of career guidance as a public policy and, more broadly, on the area of policies for young people, especially educational, labour, and youth policies.

Rie Thomsen

In June 2024 we were visited by our new Visiting Professor, Rie Thomsen. Rie is a professor at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University and also holds professorial titles at the University of South Eastern Norway and the University of Lower Silecia, Poland.

Rie's research revolves around lifelong career guidance practices and policies with a special interest in social justice and the role of communities. Furthermore, she has a strong interest in creating an inspiring environment for interdisciplinary and collaborative research in career guidance. She is the scientific coordinator of the European Doctoral School in career guidance and counselling (ECADOC). In 2012, she published the book *Career Guidance in Communities*. In 2013, she was awarded the National Guidance Award for her research and its usefulness in practice. She presented and shared the results and experience of previous and current participatory research

projects involving researchers and practitioners collaborating in research circles. The presentation discussed how to design and deliver effective participatory research.

We look forward to working closely with Professor Thomsen at iCeGS in the future.



NEW STAFF STARTING

Dr Miika Petteri Kekki Early Career Academic – Public Services

I joined the University of Derby as an Early Career Academic in October. I completed my PhD in Social Sciences at the University of Eastern Finland earlier this year. My thesis focused on the career guidance of adult migrants in Finland, with a special emphasis on the career practitioners working with this client group. Before coming to Derby I worked as a project researcher at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland. Earlier I have been engaged several years as a career practitioner and teacher both in Finland and abroad. My research interests are career guidance of migrants, integration policies, and career practitioners as street-level bureaucrats.



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FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR WORK

Our social media channels continue to bring you news about the Centre and the careers industry. You can find out more about what we do on our website, derby.ac.uk/icegs.

We have the following social media channels, and we post news regularly about the sector and information on events and research. Why not visit our social media platforms to find out what we are talking about:

Our webpage has a wealth of information about the careers sector, including our publications, project information events and opportunities.

-  @iCeGS
-  @icegsuod
-  International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS)



If you want to find out more about what we do and gain exclusive information about our events and future publications, please join our e-mail mailing list. derby.ac.uk/icegs



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