Developing Best Practice in the National Careers Service

Career Development Institute Annual Conference
8 November 2015
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The Skills Funding Agency (SFA)

- The Skills Funding Agency is a partner organisation of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)

- The Agency supports economic growth and competitiveness by funding and promoting adult further education and skills training in England, including Traineeships, Apprenticeships and the National Careers Service.

- The Agency delivers £4.1bn of skills training through contracts with over 1,000 colleges, private training organisations and employers.
The National Careers Service

- The National Careers Service provides high quality information and impartial advice and guidance to those who need it. It is available across England to any young person (aged 13 and over) or adult, including adults in custody.

- The service is delivered by more than 1,600 advisers by telephone, face to face and via the web.
The National Careers Service

• The service is delivered in 12 regions across England by 7 area based prime contractors, one national contractor (Serco) for the telephone helpline, and approximately 150 subcontractors.

• The newly reconfigured National Careers Service was reprocured and launched on 1 October 2014

• The new service has a strong outcome focus

• The area based contractors are drawn from the public, private and third sector
The Best Practice Programme

The Best Practice Programme is an important piece in the National Careers Service quality framework.
Moving towards Best Practice?

Establishing a sustainable model of best practice

- Good practice from literature
- Good practice in the field
- Best practice steering group
- Best practice implemented across National Careers Service

- Higher Ofsted ratings
- Better career management skills
- Better progression
- Higher customer satisfaction
1. What evidence exists which describes the **policies, systems and processes** that underpin the organisation of national careers services?

2. How can careers services maximise **customer satisfaction**?

3. How can careers services maximise their impact on **career management skills**?

4. How can careers services maximise their impact on individual’s **progression to positive learning and work destinations**?

5. How is effective **brokerage** between education and employers organised?
Best Practice Literature Review: Approach

- **Abstracts sourced (in English):** 26,600
  - Excluded (duplicates): 15,300
  - Included: 11,300
    - Excluded (time frame, range, focus): 4,200
    - Included: 7,100
      - Excluded (lack of fit): 4,000
      - Included: 3,100
        - Excluded (lack of method statement etc.): 2774
        - Included: 326
          - Excluded (poor match to research questions, poor quality etc.): 168
          - Included in at least one of the five reviews: 158
Best Practice Literature Review: Key determinants of customer satisfaction

**Individual**
- Who is the individual? What is their disposition, personal circumstances?
- What is their expectation about career guidance? Do they have any prior experience?
- What issue/s are they bringing?

**Contextual**
- What are the logistical arrangements that support clients to access career guidance? For example, how do they book an appointment and get there and how long do they have to wait?
- What is the environment within which the interaction takes place? e.g. is it light, warm, comfortable and so on.

**Delivery**
- Who is the adviser? How skilled are they, how personable and sympathetic, what do they look like?
- What is the mode of delivery? Face-to-face, groupwork, telephone, online. Is a particular approach or method used?
- What is the content of the delivery? What is covered or learnt?

**Post-intervention**
- How is the interaction followed up?
- What life events and progression does the individual experience following the intervention.
Best Practice Literature Review: Maximising the impact of careers services on Career Management Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written exercises</th>
<th>Individual interpretation &amp; feedback</th>
<th>World of Work Information</th>
<th>Modelling Opportunities</th>
<th>Awareness of wider support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reflections, thoughts and feelings on career development</td>
<td>• 1:1 feedback from career practitioners on vocational issues &amp; activities</td>
<td>• General info on economic &amp; labour market trends &amp; opportunities</td>
<td>• Often delivered through CAGS</td>
<td>• Building awareness of other support that can be drawn on to inform career choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Could be in vocational journals / diaries</td>
<td>• Importance of a ‘safe place’</td>
<td>• Specific information on career options and pathways</td>
<td>• Typically provide descriptions of occupations and associated education / training requirements</td>
<td>• e.g. role of familial / sociocultural environment in career development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Could include future career goals and plans</td>
<td>• Quality of the practitioner-client relationship</td>
<td>• Access to ‘specialist’ information</td>
<td>• Self-assessment tools to identify &amp; model career matches</td>
<td>• Guidance on how to make best use of this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Need for flexibility</td>
<td>• Education and training options</td>
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Best Practice Literature Review: Model for effective career guidance practice in support of positive progression

Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours
- Working with an approachable professional
- Encouraging problem solving
- Encouraging self awareness using career assessments

Supporting transitions
- Teaching job search skills
- Improving written presentation (i.e. applications and CVs)
- Enhancing career image (i.e. both interview skills and appearance)
- Encouraging proactivity by the individual
- Encouraging direct engagement with the world of work (e.g. work experience, volunteering)

On going support
- Utilising social support networks
- Peer group support (i.e. job search groups)
- Ongoing professional support
Best Practice Literature Review: Factors underpinning successful brokerage

Identifying the right personnel to be involved in brokerage work
- staff with an understanding of the world of education and the world of employers

Creating the right mode of operation between schools and businesses
- strong leadership, clear communication and commitment from both sides of the partnership and suitable opportunities

Identifying the appropriate driver for partnership
- for schools, partnerships work best when they are aligned to the needs of the curriculum
- for employers, there may need to be a business benefit

Clarity about what is required and what the commitments will be
- time, communication strategies, adding value
### Implications: working with education institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>With whom</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is the education institution aiming to achieve for students from the relationship with employers?</td>
<td>• Who within the education institution is going to be responsible for liaison?</td>
<td>• What kind of activities with employers is the education institution looking for?</td>
<td>• How will the impact of the relationship on students be monitored?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do these aims align to the needs of the curriculum/institution/staff?</td>
<td>• What skills do they have/do they need to undertake the role successfully?</td>
<td>• When should key activities take place in the school year?</td>
<td>• How will the education institution ensure that the role employers play is meeting the requirements of students?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What can employers provide that the education institute cannot provide itself?</td>
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<td>• What support might be needed?</td>
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Evidence from practice

- Measured at early stage of intervention – often on receipt of Action Plan
- Some follow-up work being considered by Primes to gather more detailed evidence of satisfaction

- Focus on:
  - scoping existing activity
  - awareness raising
  - providing a forum where schools and employers could meet

- Very early stage in relation to this outcome (<6 months into new contract)
- Caseload management identified as a priority for training

- Focus on:
  - Action plans
  - Group work
  - Use of online tools
  - Provision of information on work and learning opps

- Career Management Skills
- Progression
- Satisfaction
- Brokerage
Emerging evidence of impact of Best Practice Programme

Cultural disruption

• The Rules: from the management of conduct to the conduct of management

• From cautious collaboration to transparency and active sharing

• The ‘Hawthorne Effect’: measuring what matters

• Rebalancing process and product
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