



# Next steps towards providing high quality career guidance for all

September 2018

## Purpose

This paper has been produced by the Career Development Institute (CDI) for submission to the Department for Education (DfE), to offer recommended actions to further improve careers services for all young people and adults in England, building on the Careers Strategy published in December 2017. Its publication has been timed to inform discussions about the next public spending review.

## Introduction

The CDI is the single, UK-wide professional body for everyone working in career guidance, careers education and career coaching. We are committed to improving the availability and quality of careers support for all, and to professionalising the sector.

In 2010 the Coalition Government announced plans to introduce a national, all-age careers service in England, building on the best practice of the *Connexions* service for young people and the *Next Steps* service for adults. In practice the changes that were introduced in 2012 were to devolve responsibility for career guidance for young people to individual schools and colleges and to establish a National Careers Service to provide career guidance to adults but with a focus on particular priority groups. Schools and colleges were expected to commission career guidance services from external providers and the National Careers Service was set up as a number of contracts with private providers.

Over the past six years a succession of surveys and research studies have reported that access to, and the quality of, services varies across the country. Eventually, in response to these findings, the Government published a national strategy to improve the provision for both young people and adults.

The CDI welcomed the strategy and is fully committed to working with the DfE, The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and key stakeholders to support the implementation. However, we can also identify significant gaps in provision that remain for certain groups of individuals, in particular the lack of access to career guidance for young people not in school or college and the less incentivised support for adults outside certain priority groups. Furthermore we can pinpoint some aspects of the strategy that will need to be extended if the desired improvements are to be achieved, sustained and effectively embedded into practice.

This paper sets out our proposals for further actions, to ensure that England succeeds in establishing the world class careers provision that the strategy aims to create, that will ensure a skilled and flexible workforce to meet the demands of the economy and that individuals deserve. We recognise that our proposals will require additional funding, but investing in careers provision will achieve sustainable economic and social benefits, as well as enabling all citizens to build their employability and to have fulfilling and rewarding careers.

## Career development support for young people

### *Extending elements of the careers strategy*

We welcome the careers strategy and were delighted that the Minister chose to launch it at our national conference in December 2017. It includes several measures that we believe will improve the provision of careers support for young people. We welcome, in particular, the requirements that all schools and colleges must identify a named careers leader and that the details of the leader and the careers programme should be published on the school's or college's website.

Further, we are pleased that this new requirement is to be backed up with support in the form of, firstly, Careers Hubs which will comprise groups of schools and colleges working collaboratively to improve their careers programmes and, secondly, a Careers Leader Training programme which will provide nationally funded places for up to 500 careers leaders to receive high quality training for this crucial role. Both forms of support provide access to funding to help schools and colleges build their capacity to develop high quality careers programmes. Schools and colleges within the hubs will have access to development funding and careers leaders participating in the training programme will be given bursaries.

We view those two key initiatives as trying to achieve the same ultimate aim, namely to help schools and colleges improve their careers provision: the Careers Hubs focus on developments within the organisation; the training programme focuses on developing the individual careers leaders. While we believe that, together, they will bring about improvements in the support for young people in schools and colleges, we are concerned that the resources currently allocated to the two programmes may not be sufficient to lead to sustained improvements.

The Careers Hubs cover just over 700 schools and colleges, which represent approximately one-fifth of the total number of schools and colleges in England, and the funding is available only for two years. If we are to tackle the current patchiness in provision, we believe that there should be a phased extension of the programme that results in all schools and colleges being part of a Careers Hub by 2022 (i.e. through another 20% of schools and colleges being brought on board each year from 2019 to 2022).

We are also aware that in the original pilot for implementing the Gatsby benchmarks in the North East, on which the Careers Hub model is based, schools and colleges received funding over a three year period and the DfE has agreed to fund them for a further two years. A similar national programme where schools and colleges worked together in consortia to develop technical and vocational education, including improved careers education and guidance, in the 1980s and 1990s, provided funding to each consortium over a five-year period. We, therefore, propose that not only should Careers Hubs be extended to all schools and colleges in a phased programme but also the funding should be made available to each hub for a period of at least three years. Experience suggests that this is the minimum period of development funding that is needed if improvements are to be fully embedded into day-to-day practice.

We were particularly pleased to see that the strategy includes a nationally funded training programme for careers leaders in schools and colleges, as this is something that the CDI has lobbied for consistently since we were first established. We note, however, that the strategy includes funding for only 500 places and we understand that more than 800 careers leaders have registered an interest in the training. We propose, therefore, that the funding should be extended to all careers leaders that wish to access the programme. This could potentially include all schools and colleges,

and it would make sense to achieve this over the same time period that we are proposing for extending the Careers Hubs, i.e. by 2022.

### *Support and accountability*

Since 2012, when schools and colleges were given the responsibility for securing access to career guidance for their pupils and students, they have been given no extra funding to take on this additional task. We recognise that resources are now being provided for building the capacity of schools and colleges to develop their careers programmes, through the Careers Hubs and the Careers Leader Training programme. However, at the moment this funding will not reach every school and college.

We propose that development funding should be made available to schools and colleges, but conditional upon a commitment to working towards and then achieving the Quality in Careers Standard. We welcome the DfE's strong recommendation that all schools and colleges should work towards the Standard, and we believe that making it a condition for funding would help to ensure that the money was spent appropriately. Schools and colleges could, for example, be allocated 40% of the development funding on receipt of a written commitment from the governing body that they would work towards the Quality in Careers Standard and then they would receive the other 60% once they had gained accreditation or re-accreditation. This would help achieve the goal of all schools and colleges providing careers programmes that met the Standard.

We further propose that schools and colleges should be required to state whether or not they had gained the Quality in Careers Standard as part of the details of the programme they are required to publish. This would let students, parents and other stakeholders in the community know that the school or college had a good quality careers programme.

### *Careers education*

While we welcome the careers strategy, the CDI is disappointed that the Government did not take the opportunity to re-instate the statutory duty on schools to provide careers education in the curriculum. Access to high quality career guidance, delivered by fully qualified careers professionals is important but needs to be integrated with access to good quality careers education, through which young people learn about the world of work and future study options, and develop career management and employability skills. This is an implicit part of the Gatsby benchmarks but even that framework does not state explicitly enough the need for a discrete provision of careers education.

Research commissioned by the DfE in 2015 showed that since the statutory duty to provide careers education was removed in 2012, 16% of schools had dropped it from the curriculum. Careers education was part of the statutory curriculum from 1998 to 2012 and no clear rationale for removing this requirement has ever been given. We believe that not only should the requirement to provide careers education in the curriculum be re-instated for pupils in Years 7 to 11 in secondary schools but also it should be extended to age 18 in schools and colleges, in line with the raising of the age of participation in learning.

### *Young people not in school or college*

A major concern for the CDI is the lack of career guidance for young people who, for whatever reasons, are not in school or college. The current policy for career guidance for young people in England assumes that everyone under the age of 19 is in a school or college. But we know that this is not the case. Tens of thousands of young people are not on a school or college roll: some are 16 or

17 year-olds on apprenticeships and or other work-based training with an employer or private provider; others are 11-16 year-olds being home-educated; and others are simply not in the system and not identified because the enforcement measures for ensuring everyone participates in education or training to age 18 are weak. Plus, there is also the question of where young people should go for personal career guidance during the holidays, particularly over the summer when examination results are published.

Current arrangements assume that local authorities will provide some of this support but we know that this is extremely patchy. The career guidance made available by local authorities varies considerably from one area to another, and from one year to the next, as their budgets have been cut.

We propose that this serious concern should be addressed by extending the remit of the National Careers Service to provide face-to-face career guidance to all young people aged 16-18 not in a school or college. This would bring the service closer to the all-age service originally envisioned in 2010. To achieve this will require building both the capacity of the service and the skills base of the advisers to work with young people as well as adults.

We recognise that if an all-age service were to be established today it would look quite different from one that might have been set up in 2010, simply because we have moved a long way towards establishing a school-and college-based model to meet the needs of young people within formal education structures. Nevertheless, the test of an all-age service is that it should reach all young people and all adults, and it is a sad indictment of current arrangements that not all young people have access to personal career guidance.

### *Provision of career guidance in schools and colleges*

While we accept that the school-and college-based model is here to stay, in the short-to medium-term at least, we wish to re-state our ongoing concern that not all schools and colleges are securing the level of personal career guidance to meet the needs of all their pupils and students. We urge the Government to authorise the National Careers Service to provide personal career guidance services to young people in schools, in term-time and during the school holidays, through its L6 and above qualified career advisers, and to explore ways of incentivising schools and colleges to purchase such services.

We are also extremely concerned about the skills shortage of qualified careers advisers and that the current workforce is insufficient to meet the demand if all schools and colleges are to provide the level of personal guidance set out in Gatsby benchmark 8. We urge the Government to reintroduce bursaries to encourage individuals to train as careers advisers, similar to those offered in 2012.

## **Career development support for adults**

### *Access for all adults*

Career provision for all is an enabler for the UK's industrial and other related strategies with their focus on re-skilling and productivity. There is a strong link between personal agency, self-driven learning and engagement at work. This in turn drives performance.

Careers support is a key enabler for individuals in work, many of whom recognise the need for continuous learning and re-skilling to remain competitive. Whilst many employers provide careers support to their own employees to increase retention and mobility, many, especially SMEs, lack the

expertise and resources to do this. Adults in work often look outside of their employers for professional careers support, and this is likely to increase with more people needing or wanting to work for longer. We would argue that the market for career support is huge, with many adults being unaware of the changes coming as a result of automation and AI, which is placing them and England's economy at risk.

Careers support makes a difference to adults in work. It builds the career management skills that enable them to focus on their skills and career interests and motivates them to set goals for growth and stretch. It can also increase levels of personal agency and confidence, helping people avoid career crises or periods of unemployment. They are more equipped to make career transitions and see the relevance of lifelong learning.

We acknowledge that the introduction of the National Careers Service in 2012 has increased the availability of careers advice and guidance support for adults in England significantly. However we are concerned that access is not equal for all: resources are still focussed on certain priority groups. While we recognise the needs of these particular groups, we believe that many more adults could benefit from a universal level of service, regardless of their age, employment status or qualification level.

We urge the Government to review the remit of the National Careers Service and to resource the service at a sufficient level to make career guidance easily available to anyone who would benefit from it, whether in work or not and whatever age.

We also think that the role of careers advice and guidance should be considered every time a government department is forming a strategy that relates to working lives, the economy and skills.

### *Professionalising the service*

The CDI makes an important distinction between the provision of career information and advice, and the provision of career guidance. Anyone offering career guidance should be appropriately qualified and we define that as holding a professional qualification in career guidance and development at least Level 6 or above.

Gatsby benchmark 8 recognises this for the provision of personal career guidance for young people in schools and colleges. We believe the National Careers Service should adopt the same standard for the provision of career guidance for adults and that all its careers advisers should be qualified to at least Level 6; where they are not, they should have a different role title. We believe this should apply not only to all careers advisers providing face-to-face career guidance but also to those who offer career guidance to young people and adults via the National Contact Centre.

### *A new approach to organising and funding the National Careers Service*

Currently the National Careers Service is organised as a small number of regional contracts, funded through the ESFA. We question whether this is the most appropriate model for ensuring that the national service meets local needs and wish to propose that the Government considers an alternative approach.

Our proposal is that the funding should still come from central Government, through the ESFA, but that the contracts should be organised at the level of the 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The service could still be provided by private contractors if a LEP chose to commission the service, but it could also be delivered by staff employed directly by the LEP. Each LEP would be allocated funding to

commission or provide the National Careers Service in its area. Larger LEPs might operate the contract on their own; others might be organised into sub-regional consortia to facilitate an efficient and robust service.

This approach would have the advantages of better linking the service to the local skills strategy and of facilitating links between the National Careers Service and the work of the Careers Hub Leads and the CEC's Enterprise Coordinators in schools and colleges. The result would be a more coherent all-age service at a local level.

The DfE would set out the requirements for the service and the ESFA would both fund and monitor the contracts. The service would continue to be subject to Ofsted inspections and quality assurance through the matrix standard.

We would be pleased to work with the DfE and other stakeholders to examine the ideas contained in this proposal in greater depth.

### **Our proposals in summary**

The CDI proposes that the Government should:

1. extend the funding for Careers Hubs to all schools and colleges in England by 2022.
2. extend the period of funding for each Careers Hub from two years to three years.
3. extend the funding for Careers Leader Training to all schools and colleges in England by 2022.
4. make available to all schools and colleges funding to develop their careers programmes, conditional upon a commitment to working towards and achieving the Quality in Careers Standard.
5. require all schools and colleges to publish whether or not that have gained the Quality in Careers Standard.
6. re-instate the statutory duty to provide careers education in the curriculum for pupils in years 7 to 11 in secondary schools and extend the requirement to age 18 in schools and colleges.
7. extend the remit of the National Careers Service to include the provision of career guidance to young people aged 16-18 who are not in school or college.
8. build the capacity of the National Careers Service, and the skills base of its advisers, to work with young people as well as with adults.
9. permit the National Careers Service to provide career guidance to schools and colleges and explore ways of incentivising schools and colleges to purchase such services.
10. introduce bursaries to encourage more individuals to train as professionally qualified careers advisers, and thereby build the capacity of the sector to meet the demand.

11. review the remit and resourcing of the National Careers Service, with the aim of extending access to all adults that would benefit from its services.
12. consider the role of career guidance whenever a strategy that impacts on working lives, the economy or skills is being developed.
13. require all careers advisers working in the National Careers Service, both those providing face-to-face career guidance and those offering career guidance via the helpline, to hold, or be working towards, a professional qualification in career guidance at a minimum Level 6.
14. initiate a review of the organisation of the National Careers Service and explore the option of moving to LEP-based contracts.

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