**Career Development Institute response to the**

**Call for Evidence: Character and Resilience**

The Career Development Institute has responded to questions 10-16 and 27 as directed in the Call for Evidence.

10. We strongly agree that character and resilience are important in enabling young people to be successful and to thrive in later life.

**11. Thinking about the aspects of character and resilience that you think are most important in order for people to be successful in life, are there any that you feel are not covered in the list below? If so, please list these and tell us why you feel they are important.**

**a. Believing that you can achieve (e.g. being self-confident, believing in your own abilities)**

**b. Being able to stick with the task in hand**

**c. Seeing a link between effort today and payback in the future (e.g. deferred gratification, being aspirational and ambitious)**

**d. Being able to bounce back from the knocks that life inevitably brings to all of us (resilience)**

**e. Having strong personal qualities and values like kindness, generosity, a sense of justice, respect, integrity and humility.**

**f. Social skills, such as being articulate and able to mix and work easily with others, forming and maintaining long term relationships and commitments**

An important associated aspect of character not mentioned in the list is around self-awareness and being realistic about what you can achieve. This also means being realistic about one's own abilities and to some extent, the fact that circumstances and opportunity structures can also impose limitations. This is important so that at the same time as pushing boundaries, there is a degree of realism about what can be achieved, so that there is greater focus on an outcome with a sufficiently high probability of success and reduced risk of demotivation through failure.

Career management skills are about understanding oneself, understanding the labour market and having the skills to secure and grow in appropriate training/employment. Career management skills have important links to character and resilience.

**12. Which aspects of character do you think are most important in the workplace, or most valued by employers?**

**a. Believing you can achieve**

**b. Being able to stick with the task in hand**

**c. Seeing a link between effort today and payback in the future**

**d. Being able to bounce back from knocks**

**e. Having strong personal qualities and values like kindness, generosity, a sense of justice, respect, integrity and humility.**

**f. Social skills, such as being articulate and able to mix and work easily with others, forming and maintaining long term relationships and commitments**

**g. Others (please list)**

We believe that employers also look for a willingness to learn; ask for help when needed and a commitment to stick at something that at first feels difficult. Employees will often work with others in a team-based multi-disciplinary environment, so that appreciation of the role you play and the contribution you can make to the best team outcome is important.

**13. What activities and approaches do you think are most effective in supporting the development of character and resilience? What evidence do you have to support this (for example, any published evaluation studies, or data collection done within your organisation)?**

Qualified career development professionals are trained to provide one to one support as well as group activities to develop an understanding of the wider world of work and how an individual might fit into it, including the more challenging differences between education, training and the workplace.

This is done by the professionals themselves and through involvement with other education and training providers and employers. This is the basis of the Gatsby Benchmarks based on the research undertaken by the Gatsby Foundation. It is very important that the outcome from this call for evidence links as a coherent whole to the National Career Strategy and the wider PSHE agenda, rather than being regarded as a separate silo. The purpose of any additional activities or requirements as to character or resilience building arising from this call for evidence are inextricably linked to success in adult life. This includes both an economic return for society and social justice for individuals in society.

**14. We are keen to understand how access to character building activities can help make the greatest positive difference to groups of children and young people vulnerable to poorer life outcomes, such as those living in poverty/with economic disadvantage, having a disability or SEN, being a young carer, living in care and others. What examples of good practice do you have that demonstrate how barriers to participation in activities can be overcome for these groups?**

The whole framework of opportunities provided to these students needs to be coherent, fitting in and logically linking with other strategies to avoid overlap and poor use of scarce resources and be realistic/achievable. Students in further education colleges, for example, are often in college due to their failure to achieve good GCSE Maths and English results in secondary school; have bad experiences in school to overcome or lack motivation or ability to progress to level 3 courses. A higher proportion of these students are looked after children, children from homes with no direct experience of the working environment or with some learning disability or challenge to overcome. Any character-building activities used with these students need to help them adjust their behaviours and mindsets from what they cannot do (the negative) to what they can achieve (positive) and give them some pride in their achievements to date. This activity, whether occurring in groups or on an individual basis, needs to be driven by properly skilled professionals and based on an appropriate assessment of the student's aspirations and future capabilities to ensure that they enhance motivation and resilience and are therefore appropriate to their future SMART goals.

**15. What evidence do you have of specific activities or approaches that can be particularly helpful for these groups of children? Please be specific about which groups and provide details of the evidence you have e.g. references, links.**

We would refer you to the Career and Enterprise Company toolkits advising schools and colleges on the implementation of the Gatsby benchmarks, including the toolkit for SEND designed to improve the positive career outcomes for students. Aspects of the psychometric testing offered in personal career guidance interviews and wider self-awareness activities provided as part of a well-developed career learning programme, form an important part of confidence building and the development of vocational identities. We see these as essential foundations for resilience in transitioning to the world of work and a significant element of character-building in young people. As mentioned previously, it is important that the careers agenda and careers leader in schools works closely with the member of staff leading on the character and resilience agenda to avoid duplication and confusion.

**16. We are keen to understand how developing character and resilience in children and young people may contribute to reducing the likelihood of gang membership and youth violence (e.g. knife crime), and preventing anti-social attitudes. Are you aware of any character-related work focused on this area?**

We represent career development professionals and feel others will be better placed to comment on this area. Intuitively, we believe that the building of confidence, self-identity, aspiration and purpose will reduce the desire to belong to a gang in order to gain a sense of belonging and self-worth which such gangs exploit.

**27. Finally, please share any views or specific examples of character development which have not been captured elsewhere which you think will assist us to support schools and other organisations in character development.**

The Career Development Institute as the representative body for career development professionals (4500 working through the UK). Our members include both career leaders in schools/colleges and professional careers advisers. We work with the PSHE Association and with Ofsted to ensure that well-being and career development activities for pupils/students at schools and colleges are properly integrated into a coherent and planned package and viewed as such from the student's perspective.

We have concerns, for example, that increasing attention on one aspect of learning, such as relationships, may result in that area being enhanced at the expense of other elements rather than forming a well-balanced, coherent and credible offering. Overall, we welcome this initiative but feel very strongly that this cannot be addressed by imposing another standalone solution that schools and colleges need to implement; it calls for an integrated approach, taking account of what related services and curriculum activities are already in place.

We would welcome the opportunity to liaise with you directly on future phases of this work to ensure that what is devised can be efficiently and effectively implemented within schools and colleges as part of the wider well-being and career management skills agenda, also ensuring alignment with the Careers Strategy and overarching Industrial Strategy