

# Career education & guidance in the time of Covid

Policy briefing note in advance of a public meeting on Tuesday 2nd March, 2021

*The evidence says careers advice works, so we'll fund it, with an additional £32 million to recruit careers advisers and provide bespoke advice and careers guidance for over a quarter of a million more people. Rishi Sunak (July, 2020)*

Career education and guidance (career guidance) describes a wide range of activities designed to support individuals and groups to make effective transitions and to manage their careers. In the current environment when unemployment is rising for both young people and adults, career guidance is more important than ever.

The government's new white paper makes some welcome proposals to improve careers provision. But it lacks ambition, largely ignores the current crisis, and does not address the need for career support for people outside of compulsory education. Given the current crisis, there is a need to move forward quickly with the white paper's proposals and build on them with an emergency plan to invest in career guidance.

Key issues that this plan should address are as follows.

- *How can we ensure that schools and colleges can continue to deliver high quality career guidance throughout the rest of the academic year, during the results period and into the next academic year?* Career guidance in compulsory education has been dangerously disrupted throughout 2020 and into 2021, but young people need support and a Careers Guidance Guarantee as they make transitions and enter an uncertain labour market.
- *How can young people be supported once they leave education?* The transition from education to employment is a key moment when career plans change and talent is wasted. Young people need to have access to clearly defined and timely support once they leave education.
- *How can the support available to adults through the National Careers Service be scaled up?* The Chancellor set out a clear plan to increase the capacity of the National Careers Service in the Plan for Jobs. But bureaucracy has prevented this vision from being realised. There is a need to free the National Careers Service to work with all everyone who is unemployed, on furlough or being made redundant.
- *Improving the coordination of the plethora of government careers, employment and retraining schemes.* The government has recently funded several employment support schemes. It is difficult for individuals to talk to career development professionals, figure out which programme they should access and what they are entitled to. It is also challenging for those working in the system to refer to the right place. At its worst, this results in people being enrolled onto the latest government programme by unqualified work coaches rather than getting a more complete set of options from a career guidance professional.
- *Setting out a timetable for the creation of a new long-term lifelong careers strategy.* The 2017-2020 Careers Strategy resulted in substantial improvements in the quality of careers services. There is a need to follow up on the white paper with a new dedicated careers strategy.

The Career Development Policy Group are holding a free online public meeting on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March (12.30-14.00) to discuss how best to take these issues forwards with government and other key stakeholders.