

Improving Careers Support for Everyone in England

For the UK to remain competitive as we start to negotiate new trading arrangements across Europe and with other parts of the world, in a challenging global economy, it is vital that we continue to invest in education and training. But raising standards and skill levels alone is not enough, we also need to ensure a good match between individuals' qualifications and skills and the job opportunities available. This is why it is so important that young people in schools should have access to the highest quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), as well as increased contact with the world of work. Furthermore, if we want to tackle the challenges of social mobility, and enable everyone to live successful and fulfilling adult and working lives, we need to make sure we put in place the best possible arrangements for careers support for young people and continuing access to career guidance for adults.

The joint report of the Education, Skills and the Economy Sub-Committee of the Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees, published in July 2016, is the latest in a long line of reports to emerge over recent years expressing concerns about the state of CEIAG in schools. The inquiry found that careers support in schools in England is patchy and inadequate, with too many young people leaving education without the tools to help them consider their future options or how their skills and experiences fit with opportunities in the labour market.

The four organisations listed at the foot of this statement met in July 2016 to consider the report in the light of the Government's plans to publish a new strategy for improving careers support in England's schools, and agreed the following key points.

1. We welcome the Government's acknowledgement of the need for a new strategy and we have been working with the Department for Education to offer suggestions for improvement. The strategy was originally expected in the spring, then it was put back until the summer and now we understand it is to be published in September. We urge the Government to publish the strategy as soon as possible. The delay and uncertainty is not helpful to schools and careers organisations working with schools as they seek to implement plans for 2016-17.
2. We welcome the Education, Skills and the Economy Sub-Committee's suggestions that schools should be both incentivised to bring their careers provision up to standard and held to account. We are disappointed, however, that the subsequent paragraphs in the report focus only on accountability. Successful implementation of the new strategy will require more than just 'sticks': it will need 'carrots' as well. Evidence from several projects around the country indicates that, in return for modest levels of development funding and capacity-building grants, schools can significantly improve their careers support, particularly if such incentives are linked to accountability measures such as achieving a Quality Award for CEIAG. We would want to see firm proposals about incentives and support for schools, alongside further discussion with Ofsted about accountability.
3. We believe that the current three-pronged approach to quality assuring careers work in schools is fit for purpose. We welcomed the recommendation in the current Statutory Guidance from the DfE that all schools should work towards a CEIAG Quality Award nationally-validated by the *Quality in Careers Standard*. These awards provide a standard against which programmes in schools, and other learning providers, can be assessed and are complemented by the **matrix** Standard for services providing career guidance and by professional qualifications for careers advisers.

Nevertheless, we appreciate that the distinction between the Quality Awards, the *Quality in Careers Standard* and the **matrix** Standard is not always clearly understood and that the situation can appear to be complicated further by the fact that there are 12 different Quality Awards. We have, therefore, worked together to produce a short statement to explain the distinction and relationship between the different quality standards (reproduced as an appendix below) and we will work further with the 12 providers of the Quality Awards to explore ways of bringing greater coherence to the current provision.

4. We welcome the focus on more effective use of destination data to support schools' monitoring, review and evaluation of their careers provision and agree with the Sub-Committee's recommendations that the Government should improve the data. For destination data to be useful it needs to relate to recent leavers, cover a longer period of time after leaving school and enable schools to track the early post-school careers of individual pupils. Only then would a school be able to answer the question: "*did we get the careers education and guidance right for that student?*"
5. We welcome the calls for greater coherence and the Government's recent appointment of a single Minister responsible for co-ordinating careers provision for all ages – this will be most helpful. Similarly, we support the recent relocation of responsibility for further education, higher education and apprenticeships into the Department for Education, which should make achieving greater coherence easier to accomplish. The changes already made by the Government should enable all the various initiatives to be brought together into a coherent all-age strategy for careers and lay the foundations, potentially, for an all-age careers service.
6. We recognise the reasons for suggesting that responsibility for the National Careers Service might be transferred to the Careers & Enterprise Company. Before any such transfer were to be finalised, however, we believe there should be a review of the remit and contracting arrangements for the service – to which we would readily contribute. We would also want to see evidence that the Company had a drive and focus on careers equal to that which it currently has on enterprise. We would be pleased to work with the Company to help it achieve this and to contribute to the proposed consultation on any transfer of responsibility.

The **Career Development Institute (CDI)** is the UK-wide professional body for everyone working in career education, career information, advice and guidance and career coaching.

Careers England is the trade association for employer organisations and traders involved in the provision of products and services promoting careers education and guidance in England.

Assessment Services Ltd is the assessment body for the **matrix** Standard, the Government-owned quality standard for organisations to assess and measure their information, advice and guidance services which ultimately support individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life-goals.

The **Quality in Careers Consortium** oversees the *Quality in Careers Standard* which nationally validates the CEIAG Quality Awards in England. The Consortium Board comprises representatives of the Association of Colleges, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, the Association of School and College Leaders, the Career Development Institute, Careers England, the Higher Education Liaison Officers Association, the National Association of Head Teachers, and independent CEIAG consultants.

Appendix: **Quality standards for careers education and guidance**

This joint statement, from Assessment Services Limited and the Quality in Careers Consortium¹, has been produced in response to the House of Commons Education, Skills and the Economy Joint Sub-Committee's call for greater clarity about the relationship between the **matrix** Standard and the **Quality in Careers Standard**.

*"The Joint Sub-Committee accepts the differences between the **matrix** Standard and the Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Quality Awards which are nationally-validated by the **Quality in Careers Standard**.*

*Together, the **matrix** Standard and England's CEIAG Quality Awards (nationally validated by the **Quality in Careers Standard** to ensure national consistency) have traditionally provided the complementary functions required for effective external quality evaluation of services and of programmes in different market places covering schools, colleges, work-based learning and beyond including higher education.*

*Currently there are 12 providers of CEIAG Quality Awards which are nationally validated by the **Quality in Careers Standard**. These Awards concentrate upon evaluating CEIAG programmes in schools, as well as in many Sixth Form Colleges and in Further Education; they cover programmes predominantly for young people.*

*Currently over 1100 schools and colleges either hold or are working towards one of these Quality Awards. They assess the quality of the programmes of the underpinning careers education as much as the careers information, advice and guidance – they also ensure that accredited schools, colleges and other learning providers are accessing externally-provided independent careers guidance services which are quality assured by the **matrix** Standard. This is the crucial link between the different functions performed by the CEIAG Quality Awards and the **matrix** Standard.*

*The **matrix** Standard accredits services providing information, advice and guidance (IAG) covering not only careers matters, but also more broadly the IAG delivered on learning, work and life choices. It covers a wider range of organisations across a variety of provision for all ages, for example the National Careers Service, training providers, colleges, third sector, and trades unions. Currently over 2100 organisations, covering in excess of 4,000 sites, are accredited to the **matrix** Standard.*

*At present, Government policy is that Schools and Sixth Form Colleges are encouraged to work towards achieving a Quality Award for CEIAG nationally-validated by the **Quality in Careers Standard**, and to work in partnership with external career guidance services that have achieved the **matrix** Standard. The current statutory guidance from the Department for Education recommends that all schools should work towards achieving a CEIAG Quality Award.*

*Having a mixed student population of both young people and adults, most Further Education Colleges are also direct providers of career guidance services and, as they are in receipt of Skills Funding Agency funding, they are required by Government policy to achieve the **matrix** Standard. They are also encouraged (but not required) to work towards a CEIAG Quality Award in order to assure the quality of their provision of careers education as well as their careers IAG.*

We welcome the intention to have a greater awareness and clearer message about quality standards in the sector, and we will work together, in order that all people accessing careers education, information, advice and guidance can be assured both of the quality of the services and of the programmes they are receiving."

ⁱ *Assessment Services Ltd is the assessment body appointed by the Government which is responsible for the management and delivery of the **matrix** Standard. The Quality in Careers Consortium (which nationally validates Quality Awards for Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance in England's schools and colleges) is a voluntary unincorporated association of professional bodies representing schools, colleges and work-based learning providers alongside specialist careers organisations - it owns the Quality in Careers Standard. The **matrix** Standard is owned by the Government and is managed and delivered through a single delivery partner, Assessment Services Ltd.*