



“Yes, Mr Gove, Careers Advisers *are* Supermen and Superwomen”

The Career Development Institute (CDI) watched with growing concern as the Education Select Committee questioned Secretary of State Michael Gove on Wednesday 18 December 2013.

Under the chairmanship of Conservative MP Graham Stuart, who has shown himself to be a strong advocate for the power of effective careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools, the Committee listened in what appeared to be evident exasperation as Mr Gove outlined his CEIAG vision for young people which, he asserted, has and is improving under the current provision.

Reacting to the Secretary’s comments, the CDI’s newly appointed Chief Executive Jan Ellis said:

“The CDI’s clear purpose is to improve and assure the quality and availability of career development opportunities for all throughout the UK. We support schools to provide a strong and balanced work related curriculum that embraces employer inputs within a properly planned careers education and guidance programme. However such a programme can only be fully complete if it offers the opportunity for independent careers guidance for those that need it, provided by a qualified career development practitioner, who will have

exactly the list of qualities, skills and knowledge that Mr Gove listed; a skill set that no employer can match in full.

To help schools deliver their statutory requirement to provide independent careers guidance we are offering our support to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education to develop a directory of careers guidance services for schools, working in partnerships with the government funded National Careers Service. We want to help schools to secure the qualified, independent and unbiased provision they need to best meet the needs of young people. Senior leaders in education and teachers know that this means more than ad hoc inputs from local employers, useful though these may sometimes be."

Declining the invitation to name and shame, as one Committee member put it, Mr Gove went on to comment that "there was a lot of garbage talked by a few self interested individuals" about the state of current provision, adding that there was "no evidence that we have made a bad situation worse."

CDI President, Karen O'Donoghue said she knew CDI's members would feel dismayed by some of the Secretary of State's comments:

"Mr Gove is right to highlight two urgent areas for action – the critical importance of raising educational standards and the power of inspirational business people offering real insight into the world of work. However, it's hardly reasonable to discount the views of the ministerially appointed National Careers Council, Ofsted, the CBI, Association of Colleges, The Association of School and College Leaders and the British Chambers of Commerce as being self interested when they have urged government to do more to support effective careers provision. It's also sad to see that the political position in England is so significantly

at odds with the investment being made in government funded provision in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.”

In response to the Secretary of State’s scepticism on the capacity of careers advisers to understand the labour market now and into the future, or to consider the psychology and motivation of young people, Ms O’Donoghue added:

“Properly trained practitioners do indeed demonstrate the labour market knowledge and assessment skills Mr Gove seems to doubt. It is the CDI’s view that properly qualified Career Practitioners (specifically those operating at post graduate/QCF Level 6 and on the UK Register of Career Development Professionals) combined with an effective Careers Education curriculum as well as strong local employer links creates social and economic impact; raises ambitions and achievement and challenges stereotypes. There is plenty of robust evidence from the UK and internationally. If ever there was a case for wearing the super hero cape in the land of skills, it can easily be made by the career development sector.”

The CDI will review The Secretary of State’s comments in more detail and issue a detailed statement in the New Year.

ENDS.

Notes to editors:

1. The Career Development Institute was established in April 2013. The purpose of the CDI, is to improve and assure the quality and availability of career development opportunities for all through the promotion of public understanding of Career Development; the development and maintenance of standards of professional practice

in Career Development, and the provision of advice on Career Development to policymakers, practitioners and other interested parties.

2. The Career Development Institute currently has 4,000 members drawn from schools, careers service companies and private practitioners.
3. The Career Development Institute maintains the UK Professional Register for Career Development Practitioners. Registration requires a recognised qualification at post graduate equivalent or at QCF Level 6; a commitment to ongoing professional development; sign up to a Code of Ethics for Professional Practice.
4. The Institute works in partnership with government departments, schools, colleges, universities and employers to support the provision of excellent careers information advice and guidance for all those that need it.

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