

Thursday 30th April 2020

Dear Sirs,

Taskforce on employment and career development as part of the response to COVID-19

COVID-19 is currently creating havoc in the labour market and there is an expectation of significant recession with almost unprecedented rates of unemployment. Already recruitment is down, people are being laid off and the future looks particularly grim for those young people who will enter the labour market from July.

Importantly, the government has recognised the danger that COVID-19 poses to employment and has quickly put in place support for businesses to prevent mass unemployment. This is welcome, but it is unfortunately little more than a holding mechanism.

Unless COVID-19 vanishes overnight there are going to be major economic, labour market, social and educational consequences to the crisis. Amongst other things this might result in young people putting off going to university and graduates finding that there are no jobs. Alongside this, apprenticeship providers are facing a funding crisis and many apprenticeship programmes have been seriously disrupted by the crisis. Older workers may see an increase in unemployment and the need for systemic occupational change and retraining will be evident across many occupational areas.

These labour market problems are going to impact on a broad swath of the population. But, as is often the case, the pain is unlikely to be shared equally. Young workers, those in precarious work and the low skilled are likely to be worse hit, resulting in increasing inequality and decreasing social mobility. Without a swift and focused response, the impacts resulting from COVID-19 could last a generation.

These are **real problems** that without serious attention will exacerbate the social and economic consequences of COVID-19. As a starting point to address these issues the government should:

- establish an employment and career development taskforce to oversee the unfolding labour market crisis and provide dynamic ideas to mitigate the worst effects;
- promote and properly resource the National Careers Service as the service that is best positioned and qualified to advise citizens, young people and adults, about how they can respond to the uncertainty and changes that they are experiencing in their day to day lives; and
- develop a youth transition strategy before the end of the academic year to ensure that the young people leaving education this year do not become a lost generation.

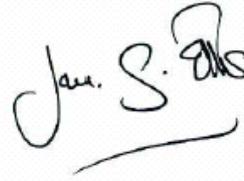
The undersigned organisations are keen to work with the government and its respective departments to start planning for the labour market post COVID-19. Getting a strategy in place now will save jobs and training places and support the economy through increased productivity. It will help individuals to preserve their skills and employability and contribute to wellbeing whilst offering hope that the present situation will not be permanent.

To start this discussion and arrange an online, round table meeting please contact Jan Ellis, Chief Executive of the Career Development Institute – jan.ellis@thecdi.net Tel: 01384 445626/07545887064.

Yours faithfully,



Clare Viney, Chief Executive, CRAC



Jan Ellis, Chief Executive, Career Development Institute



Dr Siobhan Neary, Head of iCeGS,
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Professor of Career Education, iCeGS, University of Derby

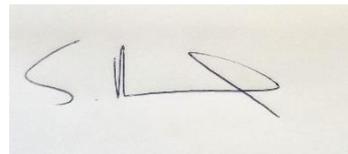


Steve Stewart, Executive Director, Careers England

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Alice Barnard, CEO, The Edge Foundation



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Other supporting individuals and organisations

Kathy Leahy, Kathy Leahy Limited

Helen Sanson, Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership