



RESPONSE TO THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY
***“Building Skills, Transforming Lives- a training and
apprenticeship revolution
Opportunity Agenda- Green Paper Number 7”***

{30th October 2008}

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Careers England’s member organisations have a successful track record of delivering ‘careers IAG’ services for young people, adults, employers and learning providers in many of the diverse and challenging communities in the UK.
2. We currently provide publicly-funded ‘careers IAG’ services for young people (13-19) and/or adults in 113 of the 150 Local Authority areas of England (where responsibility for young people’s services is vested upon an LA).
3. We have previously produced a number of Policy Papers and Discussion Papers outlining the economic and social benefits of career guidance for the health of the nation, particular issues to address in developing services for adults the need for an all-age strategy for such services, , and suggested prerequisites for a successful all-age strategy. These Papers have already been provided to the Conservative Party; further copies are available via the Careers England website (www.careersengland.org.uk) or directly from our Policy Adviser (paul.chubb@careersengland.org.uk).
4. Our response to the Green Paper on Skills (referred to above) is supported and endorsed by the Institute of Career Guidance. It majors on these issues:
 - The proposal for the need for a careers adviser in every school and college
 - The proposal for an all-age careers service for England
 - Matters to address as these proposals are developed into clear strategies for implementation.

B. “A careers adviser in every school and college”

5. It is essential that ‘careers adviser’ is clearly defined as a professionally qualified adviser, with distinctive skills in career guidance.
6. These advisers should be independent of the line management of each school and college; deployed into each institution by a specialist external agency which is their employer and which has its roots firmly in the labour market so that impartiality is assured and knowledge of the labour market underpins every aspect of careers IAG.

7. The Conservative Party should seek to learn from the best lessons of the Connexions era with careers advisers retaining broader skills and knowledge, together with effective partnership links with other youth support specialists in personal and social development provision. Equally, the policy during the Connexions service era when careers guidance was 'undervalued' and undermined must not be allowed to be repeated.
8. In each institution, directly employed by the school or college, there should also be a specialist trained teacher/lecturer with expertise in careers education who should work in partnership with the external specialist careers adviser.
9. Every institution providing 13-19 learning, including publicly-funded work-based learning, should be required by statute to have in place a careers education programme for all learners (throughout the 11-19 age range) which is driven by the need to ensure that every young person gains the skills for effective career planning and career management by the time they leave (what will become under the current Education Bill) statutory learning at 18+.
10. Robust quality assurance mechanisms must ensure that each institution's careers education provision meets national standards and should be subject to OFSTED inspection. Each specialist external agency must also be subject to requirements to meet national quality standards both as organisations and in respect of their careers IAG delivery.
11. Only in this way will the proposal for a careers adviser in every school and college bring the clarity of focus that is required for the new service – notably, the outcomes which are essential for every young person, assured quality of provision in every institution and every locality, value for money for the public purse creating enhanced social cohesion, raising skill levels and performance amongst all young people, and reduced future benefit dependency - bringing the improved economic performance so essential for the health of the country.
12. We support the need to take further steps to increase the esteem of work-based and work-located learning (in the eyes of teachers, parents and young people) and would suggest that the partnership model we outline above between schools/colleges and WBL Providers with a specialist external agency (the all-age careers service) will ensure that apprenticeships and further WBL options are better promoted, better understood and better valued. *{As appendix 1 we offer further thinking on apprenticeships within the STEM sector}.*
13. We fully support proposals to increase the standing of all work-based learning within England. To help to establish this, which would clearly endorse the drive to increase STEM sector apprenticeships too, we would advocate strong leadership to schools and colleges to ensure that a teacher with time and resource can take on curriculum leadership for careers education and work-related learning within every institution. This role has been eroded with the developments such as the teaching and learning responsibilities initiative. An increasing

proportion of schools delegate the role of careers co-ordinator to an administrator, librarian or learning mentor. Although these staff can offer a high level of support on information and advice they do not have the required influence on curriculum design and development to ensure all young people develop the skills and knowledge they need to make effective decisions and transitions. Some current research underway has identified at least six different models current in schools which challenges the delivery of a consistent level of service:-

- Model A- a qualified teacher who is a senior manager within a school
 - Model B - a qualified teacher who is a middle manager in a school
 - Model C - a qualified teacher with devolved responsibility for coordinating careers education
 - Model D - a non-teacher from an educational background
 - Model E - a non-teacher from a non-educational background
 - Model F – a non-teacher who is a qualified careers adviser
14. We would also advocate the development of clearer guidance on the skills and qualifications required of careers advisers working on a partnership basis with schools and colleges, together with a national standard on minimum levels of resourcing from the external provider. This should address not just the support for individual young people but also the level of assistance schools and colleges can expect in relation to curriculum development and training for their in-house careers education and IAG teams.
15. Although national standards have been established by DCSF for young people's IAG, which include support from Connexions for the planning and provision of programmes of career and personal development, this remains an area where more action (including inspection and assessment) is required to embed quality in every locality. This must be addressed within the overall strategy for the proposed new all-age service.

C. "An all-age careers service" for England

16. It will be essential that the proposed careers advisers, deployed in schools and colleges for young people, are an integral part of the all-age service, especially so that their specialist careers knowledge is informed by the overall all-age service's work in the labour market.
17. An all-age service will demand an all-age strategy for the initial training and CPD arrangements for those professional advisers delivering the new service. We would urge that Lifelong Learning UK (the Sector Skills Council) should be charged with ensuring that such a strategy meets England's needs *{as appendix 2 we offer further detail on our current thinking on this}*.
18. Within an all-age service, we are convinced that it would only be truly effective for each differing age group if there is an over-arching strategic direction for the service which is underpinned by both a

- distinctive strategy for service planning and delivery for young people within statutory learning (13-19) and a strategy for provision for adults.
19. We are also convinced that aspects of service delivery need to be different for groups of young people (e.g. 13-16s may well need and demand varying provision from 17-19s). There will also need to be assured transition arrangements in every locality, which should be strengthened by bringing together provision for all young people and adults within a single all-age service.
 20. Looking ahead it is clear that financial resources for public services will be at a premium. With scarce resources effective careers IAG will add value by helping individuals make effective and positive transitions leading to improved chances for progression, achievement and future economic performance.
 21. Extra focus needs to be brought to bear for those older teenagers who have most difficulty achieving effective transitions. This may not always be a popular point to make, but post-16 providers simplistically recruiting young people onto courses where there are 'vacancies' needs to be curtailed. Continued learning must lead to added achievement and progression, not repetition of skill level; challenging careers IAG should ensure that on-going participation results in raised skill levels.
 22. Beyond our doubt, this reinforces the 'not for sale' assessment that the Conservative Party's proposed new 'careers advisers' must NOT be employed by schools and colleges. Only if employed by external specialist agencies delivering the all-age service, will careers advisers be freely enabled to assist every young person to navigate his/her way through learning options, routes and providers with guaranteed impartiality – including reducing wasteful 'discontinuation' (drop out) from higher education.
 23. Effective tracking and management information systems (nationally specified and locally delivered) will be essential, not least to ensure that NEET (not engaged in education, employment or training) numbers are minimised and that in the critical years of transition from youth to adulthood generations of older teenagers and early twenties are no longer 'lost' – reducing human misery and improving economic activity for personal and social/national economic good. There is too much current confusion in service design as well with the targeted Youth Support arrangements; by focussing on the new service's role as transition and progression management the Conservative Party would bring clearer purpose, contribution, and added public as well as individual value to the outcomes secured by the service.
 24. Utilising a single national brand for the all-age service would immediately achieve the clarity for the public in respect of the availability of the all-age service England currently lacks.
 25. Just as careers IAG provision for young people must establish and maintain effective links with other relevant support agencies in networks, so too must provision for adults. Overcoming 'barriers' to participation, achievement and progression will demand that such

- effective networking is established by the all-age service in every locality and quality assurance mechanisms governing the new service must ensure that these are successfully secured in every locality.
26. A national all-age service requires a national framework. To be responsive to local variables, the service must be enabled to incorporate provisions to meet identified local needs.
 27. Online careers advice provision, both for young people and for adults (each of which may well be delivered separately) must be planned as an integral part of the overall strategy for the new service *{appendix 3 offers further thoughts on this}*.

D. “Matters to address as these proposals are developed into clear strategies for implementation”

28. Current arrangements for services for both young people and for adults across England have been the subject of significant recent changes. Responsibility for 13-19 services is vested in the 150 Local Authorities whereas the careers IAG provision for adults is provided under a Regional Prime Contractor regime with 10 contracts (supplemented by a national online careers advice service, formerly under the Learn Direct banner).
29. Further changes to provision for adults are planned by DIUS with a new “Adult Advancement & Careers Service” planned for 2010.
30. Establishing a new all-age service under a new Administration would call for careful planning and implementation of transition arrangements, retaining the best of the current provision and addressing the deficiencies. Our comments upon the proposals for a careers adviser in every school and college, and an all-age service, identify crucial components which we believe are prerequisites for the establishment of successful new arrangements.
31. Governance arrangements for the new service at national level should be carefully considered. We would suggest that a national framework, supported by complementary strategies for service provision for young people and for adults, should be determined by a form of ‘national advisory board’ to the relevant Secretary of State. Such a board might draw upon the independent expert knowledge and skills from the worlds of learning and work, together with the important voluntary and community sector. There would be much merit in the board functioning with two Committees – one focussing upon young people’s strategy, the other on adults. The board could then determine its overall annual business plan strategy for the national all-age service with the benefit of discrete yet complementary strategies for young people and for adults. Ministers would have confidence that their policies for the new service would be informed by meaningful involvement of key voices from the community.
32. We would suggest that competitive tendering of contracts to deliver the new service might well be the most effective way to establish the overall new all-age service *{that said, discussions with Local Authority*

leaders would be recommended in respect of the geographic boundaries for such invitations to tender, please also see the following sections on our suggestions about the number and size of potential contract areas}.

33. To ensure that successful bidders could achieve meaningful economies of scale and therefore invest in service developments, innovation and in the development of the skills and competence of the workforce delivering the service, we would advocate that contracts should be awarded for periods of 5-7 years (with the provision for termination should contractors fail to meet national quality standards and performance measures during such a term).
34. We would have serious misgivings about the appropriateness of letting all-age careers service contracts on boundaries coterminous with the current 150 LAs; besides the concerns about potential waste of limited resources on too many local management and administrative costs, together with the likelihood of limited resources for innovation, we also have concerns about the potential for poor quality of provision leading to the unacceptable 'post-code lottery'.
35. Hence, we would urge that a review of more effective 'travel to work' and 'travel to learn' boundaries for the contract areas for the new all-age service should be an urgent priority. There will be much to learn from the emerging 10 Regional Prime Contract areas for services for adults since August 2008, from the sub-regional groupings of Local Authorities following the projected migration of funding from the LSC for post-16 learning, and from multi-area agreements being established by LAs.
36. These factors suggest that the optimum number of contract areas for the new all-age service might be between 45 and 70.

Careers England is ready to play its part in working with the Conservative Party in the next stages of its development of its overall Skills Strategy, particularly in respect of future specialist careers service provision for all ages.

*This response is supported and endorsed by the **Institute of Career Guidance** with whom Careers England has a strong working partnership and a 'memorandum of understanding' under which from time each organisation endorses the strategic policy papers of the other.*

The ICG is the largest professional membership organisation for those working in the career guidance sector. Its 4000+ individual members work as practitioners, researchers, managers and trainers in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

CAREERS ENGLAND
Board. pac. 30th october 2008

APPENDIX 1

“How can we encourage more STEM apprenticeships?”

1. The ‘STEM’ Programme got under way in October 2006 with eleven Action Programmes addressing a range of key themes including teacher recruitment and CPD, enhancing and enriching the curriculum so that young people are engaged by STEM subjects and improving the quality of advice for young people.
2. It is recognised however that awareness of STEM and the STEM programme remains poorly developed among schools and colleges and partners in industry, professional associations et al.
3. There have been efforts to engage industry involvement with the National Council for Educational Excellence and BP Council for Industry and Higher Education, but encouraging more STEM apprenticeships will require a much more coherent approach with industry (perhaps along the lines of the 1986 Industry Year?).
4. There are positive examples led by some of the Sector Skills Council to develop apprenticeships within their industry sector. Within the STEM arena the work of Cogent is particularly strong and this example could be followed across the STEM arena.
5. The current government’s communications campaign is strongly focused on encouraging more young people to continue their STEM education to level three but with a focus on Physics, Maths and Chemistry A levels. There needs to be a much more inclusive communication campaign for young people and their parents who need to be able to consider the full range of different pathways into a STEM career. The recent announcement about apprenticeships as a ladder of opportunity to higher education is particularly welcome and the Foundation degree development is important in this arena.
6. We believe there are problems associated with the current approach of establishing a range of initiatives and organisations with overlapping roles and remits. The Connexions services have a remit for placing young people into work and training, and yet the recent policy proposals which will see a National Apprenticeship Service with a separate communication and administrative infrastructure, could lead to confusion and duplication of effort as well as potential for conflicts of interest, which the Conservative Party’s proposals should urgently address.

APPENDIX 2

Careers Advisers: Workforce Planning & Development

- 1. How can we develop a workforce of competent and confident practitioners to deliver impartial careers IAG to young people and adults in England which achieves social and economic wellbeing?**
2. As will be seen from our review of the current provision below, there is an urgent need for an all-age strategy in England. Provision for young people's services is relatively good. Provision for adults is much less so.
3. We suggest that a better national all-age strategy can achieve this by focussing on the following areas:
 - Recruitment
 - Induction
 - Initial Training (Mandatory & Essential)
 - Qualification Routes
 - Continuous Professional Development
 - Succession Planning

3. Recruitment

3.1 We need to recruit the *best people* with the *right attitude* who want to work with us to make a difference to young people and adults, who reflect the diversity within the local community.

3.2 We have been through significant change as a workforce over the past three years and have relied on our self-motivated and flexible employees, with transferable skills, to change direction and achieve our goals. As we move forward in an ever changing landscape, both our future success and our ability to provide excellent services to young people and adults are inextricably linked to recruiting the right people who can deliver excellent service. This will require a suitable level of funding and investment into the Careers Guidance profession.

3.3 A key component of this method is to identify the ideal innate characteristics (those ingrained & natural) of future employees and then, once recruited, to put them into positions where they can deliver these excellent services.

3.4 Before the model can be implemented we need to be clear on who the *right* people are to take our future careers businesses forward. To do this we must continue to build great leadership teams and follow three fundamental principles:

- When in doubt, don't recruit, keep looking
- When we know we need to make a people change, act

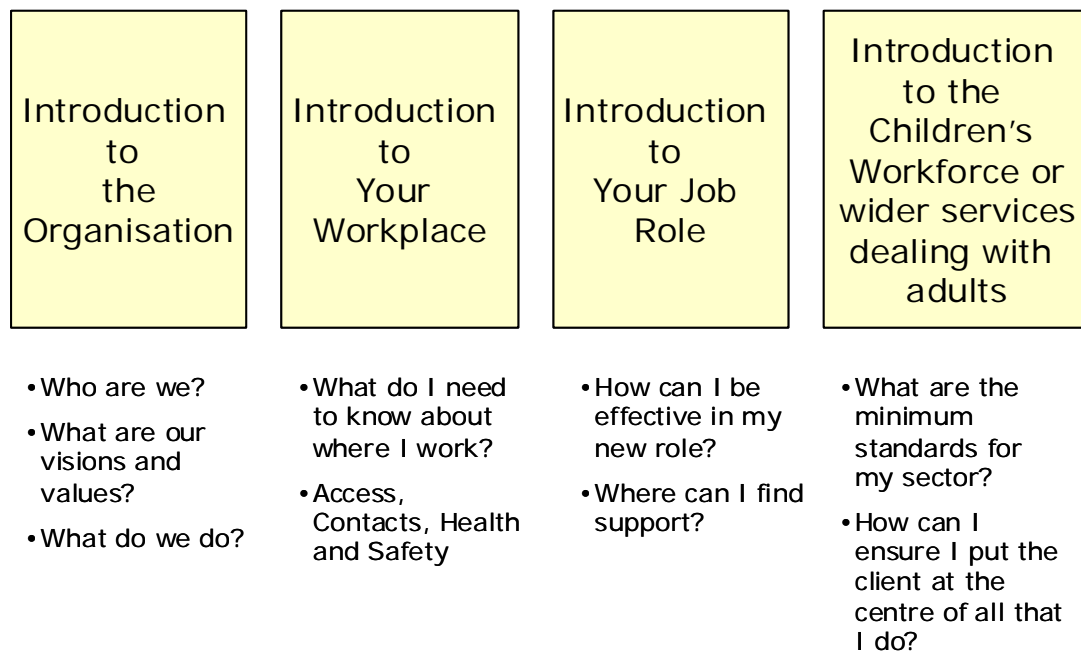
- Put our best people on our biggest opportunities, not our biggest problems

4. Induction

4.1 A robust induction is essential for all new staff coming into the IAG field which must be tracked and supported by line managers.

4.2 Induction standards have been produced by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) which can be used to provide a structured start for staff in their first 24 weeks of employment. Similar standards are required for adult guidance. Achievement of the standards will ensure that staff are safe to take on the appropriate level of responsibility for the individuals they support.

4.3 An effective induction can be broken down into four main components:



4.4 Similar practices and provisions need to be established for careers advisers working with adults. Current discussions with Lifelong Learning UK (SSC) should lead to new and better provision for advisers working with adults in England.

4.5 We would advocate that the proposed new all-age service should fall within the footprint of a single SSC, and in line with provision for the remainder of the UK, that SSC should be LLUK.

5. Initial Training & Development (Mandatory & Essential)

5.1 A comprehensive Training & Development plan is needed for all practitioners within both the Children’s Workforce and those working with adults and delivering impartial careers IAG. As will be seen below, there is no national current strategy for advisers working with adults, but we offer comments on that for young people which would provide the platform for a national all-age strategy.

5.2 An ideal plan can be broken down into four key components:

<p>Induction</p> <p>Essential courses and processes to provide a solid introduction to working within the IAG field such as Child Protection and Diversity Awareness</p>	<p>Working Safely</p> <p>Essential courses and processes to provide a safe working environment for all staff such as Personal Safety, First Aid, Fire and Risk Assessment</p>
<p>Knowledge & Understanding</p> <p>Essential courses and processes to assist with professional practice development, accreditation and qualifications such as Interviewing Skills, NVQ Motivational Strategies</p>	<p>Personal Development</p> <p>Essential courses and processes to enable personal development such as IT skills and self development</p>

5.3 A skills development path for each job role should be followed which should be aligned to the Common Core of skills required for the role and which maps to the National Occupational Standards for Learning Development & Support Services (currently under review) for services for young people.

5.4 Every opportunity should be taken to work in partnership with local authorities and commissioners of the services to ensure that true multi-agency development programmes are available. This would help to break down barriers between silos operating within the Children’s Workforce.

5.5 Similar strategies need to be appropriately developed for advisers working with adults. The National Occupational Standards for advice and guidance need to be reviewed urgently, and should be under the guardianship of LLUK as soon as possible (see more below).

6. Qualification Routes

6.1 Again we will demonstrate that strategies are in place only for the part of the workforce working with young people. All-age strategies are essential for the future.

6.2 Currently, practitioners delivering impartial IAG services across England require minimum standards for professional qualifications which are transferable across the Children's Workforce. The Integrated Qualifications Framework will assist towards allowing progression, CPD and mobility across the workforce by creating qualifications that are appropriate and encompass shared values.

6.3 At the present time a minimum requirement of a Level 4 qualification is essential – either Level 4 NVQ Learning, Development & Support Services or Level 4 NVQ Advice & Guidance. Practitioners can either join organisations with these qualifications or work towards them in a work setting. At the present time there is inconsistency in minimum qualifications within the guidance workforce.

6.4 Accreditation of Prior Learning is currently used for alternative qualifications gained which cover similar themes.

6.5 New qualifications will be available from 2010 to fit with the National Occupational Standards review currently underway with CWDC.

6.6 We urgently need LLUK to establish appropriate strategies for advisers working with adults.

7. Continuous Professional Development

7.1 Keeping Practitioners up-skilled with relevant knowledge through changing times is essential within the IAG workforce. Learning is continuous and as such organisations providing these services must continuously strive to keep current with changes affected their clients and their practice.

7.2 Organisations must encourage individuals to take every opportunity to learn and to improve their performance. Learning can consist both of formal and informal training courses, workshops, distance learning, conferences, policy documents, work-shadowing, mentoring, coaching and external accredited programmes.

7.3 Future developments in CPD should also consider modular learning with an emphasis on e-learning and sharing best practice throughout the Children’s Workforce, and must address the needs of advisers working with adults.

7.4 New national developments, such as the introduction of a new qualifications framework, need to cover not only the rollout of the development but also the rollout of the associated knowledge training to keep advisers up-skilled and informed in advance of the launch.

7.5 A framework of external support and supervision is also required for all advisers (outside of the school and college setting) and for adult advisers to ensure objectivity and support.

8. Succession Planning

8.1 Succession planning will also be essential to ensure that services to young people and adults are uninterrupted and that organisations have effective processes in place to ‘grow their own’ future workforce.

8.2 Development paths should include elements to cover an existing role as well as ‘stretch’ opportunities for future development into a new role.

8.3 Many advisers will wish to specialise in work with particular age groups. Some will wish to work across all ages. Benefits will accrue if national strategies enable what is best for each adviser, so that every professional within the new all-age service has the opportunity to make the best of his/her own career, thereby increasing the outcome that members of the public receive expert services from experts, well-trained, up to date, confident and competent in their role, as well as fulfilled in their own careers.

APPENDIX 3

“How do you think online careers advice can be best delivered?”

- Online careers advice provision must be planned within an overall service strategy, not as a separate or independent provision.
- A major benefit of online careers advice is accessibility. Although the proposed all-age careers service plans to reach into the community to offer face to face assistance, web-based services would appear to be the first choice of communication with a proportion of the population.
- As learning styles change in schools with young people becoming increasingly reliant on technology for learning (web, forums etc) so will their preferences for using online tools to assist their everyday life, including careers advice.
- Web services will need to reflect the trends in communications such as SMS (text messages) and the increased use of social networks such as “My Space” and “Facebook”. These mediums should be considered when promoting careers IAG services. Web access should also be serviced through remote community locations and through greater collaboration with the libraries infrastructure. Access to labour market intelligence (LMI) could be serviced more progressively with appropriate linkages to the developing local ‘Observatories’ (Local Authority driven analysis of economic data and trends).
- It is therefore crucial that online information and advice services are properly planned and delivered from the outset with a fully linked approach to existing facilities that are in existence.
- Although a national perspective needs to be presented to users of the web service of labour market trends and occupational information it is imperative that the users are able to drill down and look at local labour market information and local opportunities and use the expertise and knowledge of local careers advice specialists within the overall all-age service.
- It is also crucial that clear links are established between the new National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service (NAVMS), due to be launched April 2009, the recently launched Careers Advice Helpline (formerly Learn Direct), Learn Direct help lines and websites and the area Online Prospectus’. We would urge that each of these component parts should become within the national strategy for the new all-age service.
- A simplified approach to interactive web-based services is needed with clear links required between the existing numerous web services, to provide a national and local perspective for the end user.
