



Providing a careers guidance system that our nation needs

Purpose

This paper is produced by Careers England Ltd. It recognises and values the introduction of the national careers strategy and offers recommendations on the next steps needed to build the careers guidance system that our nation needs. It is also intended to influence thinking and planning related to the next public spending review.

About us

Careers England Ltd is the sole trade association for organisations involved in the provision of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) products and services in England for people of all ages. Our members provide aspects of some, or all, of the four components of CEIAG:

- Careers Education (Career Learning)
- Careers Information
- Careers Advice
- Careers Guidance

The members of Careers England Ltd comprise the majority of prime and sub-contracted deliverers of the National Careers Service. They also deliver careers guidance services for local authorities, schools and colleges across England.

Most of our members are charities and social enterprises. We also have a number of sole traders and other organisations who, although not delivery services, are engaged with the careers sector. Full details of all Careers England members, our activities and our publications can be found at <http://www.careersengland.org.uk/>

Challenges

We believe there are five main challenges and themes relating to careers guidance, skills and productivity which the next spending review must address. These are:

- Brexit – How do we develop our skills and talent pipeline whilst growing a skilled workforce needed to strengthen the economy?
- Social mobility – Ensuring we unleash the talent of our citizens to provide the ladder of opportunity for everyone.
- Reducing skills gaps and shortages – particularly in creative and STEM related employment areas but also in every occupational sector. Enabling young people, parents and other adults to navigate a complicated curriculum (T Levels, A Levels, apprenticeships, vocational courses etc.) to make the most informed choices.

- The Fourth Industrial Revolution – Individuals affected by technological change to their employment will need help to think through and manage their future retraining and career plans.
- Avoiding unnecessary increased debt – Career decisions have real cost implications; individuals need high quality careers support to work through the financial costs and benefits of various career and learning options.

Evidence shows that high quality CEIAG can help overcome these challenges.

Context

In 2010 the coalition government announced plans for an all age careers service in England. However in practice this didn't happen and responsibility for guidance to young people was devolved to schools and colleges, whilst the National Careers Service was established to provide careers guidance to adults with a focus on particular priority groups.

Over the past six years a breadth of research has reported a less than satisfactory situation. The Digital Skills Committee described our careers guidance system as “patchy”; the Social Mobility Commission said it was “failing our young people greatly”, and in 2013 Ofsted remarked that “too few schools are providing careers guidance that meets the needs of their students”.

In response the government published a national careers strategy to improve the provision for both young people and adults. Careers England welcomed the strategy and is fully committed to working with the DfE, The Careers & Enterprise Company, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and others to support the implementation.

This paper sets out our proposals for further actions to ensure that England succeeds in establishing a world class careers system. Our proposals will require additional funding but the investment is far less than the ongoing cost of not improving our careers system.

Proposals

1. Driving forward support to schools and colleges – the work to implement and drive forward the national careers strategy in our schools and colleges should be accelerated by:

- Providing £50m funding to ensure that every school and college delivers the requirements of Gatsby benchmark 8 – personal guidance. The £50 million (which is far less than the costings of the Connexions service) is based on a formula of days and timings of careers interventions and is calculated assuming the full costs of a Level 6 qualified careers adviser. There are a number of options of how to operationally fund schools to ensure the resource is ring-fenced to focus on achievement of Gatsby benchmark 8. The nature of the careers intervention will build onto the very best practice identified by The Careers & Enterprise Company projects on personal guidance
- Extending the funding for careers hubs to all schools and colleges in England by 2022
- Extending the funding for each careers hub from two to three years and setting financial incentives related to achievement of all Gatsby benchmarks
- Extending the funding for careers leader training to all schools and colleges in England by 2022

- Providing sustained funding to all schools and colleges to develop their careers programmes to ensure they can work towards the national Quality in Careers Standard – this could be on a match fund basis, where schools are incentivised to invest alongside government
- Requiring all schools and colleges to publish data on whether or not they have gained the Quality in Careers Standard
- Re-evaluating the statutory duty to provide careers education for all pupils years 7 – 11 in schools and up to 18 in schools & colleges
- Piloting CEIAG in primary schools and building on the success of previous programmes.

2. Consideration should be given to realistically funding the creation of an all age NCS as part of a national strategy for lifelong CEIAG.

In order to maintain the UK's position as the fifth largest economy in the world, we will need to increase investment in skills, learning and careers support. This is not only for those young people who have yet to start work, but also for those already in work to upskill, and for those who are unemployed and trying to secure employment. For this culture of lifelong learning to be successful, it must be underpinned by an all age careers service.

3. Building a professional careers workforce

Our partner organisation the Career Development Institute (CDI) makes an important distinction between the provision of careers information and advice, and the provision of careers guidance. Anyone offering careers guidance should be appropriately qualified by holding a professional qualification in careers guidance. This is not currently the case for those delivering the National Careers Service; guidance from national contract centres and in many schools and colleges. We propose:

- The introduction of bursaries to encourage more individuals to train as professionally qualified careers advisers thereby increasing the quality and quantity of the careers workforce
- The requirement of all careers advisers working in the National Careers Service, whether providing face to face careers guidance or offering guidance via the helpline, to hold or be working towards a professional qualification in careers guidance at Level 6
- A commitment to additional funding from government to ensure these training requirements can be met.

Next steps

Thank you for allowing us to feed into this consultation. Careers England would be pleased to discuss this paper with the DfE, CEC, ESFA and other partners.

Steve Stewart OBE
Executive Director
Careers England Ltd