



Response to the Labour Party Statutory Youth Service Consultation

Purpose

Careers England is pleased to be able to contribute to the Labour party consultation on the role and future of the youth service. The careers service in England has a long history of strong partnership working with youth service colleagues which goes back decades; and includes the development of the Connexions service in England during the time of the last Labour government.

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, and youth services on behalf of local authorities and those who deliver and manage National Citizen Service

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/>

National Charter for Youth Work

Careers England believes that the primary role of a statutory youth service should be the personal and social development of young people, either by direct delivery and / or working in partnership with other organisations providing support to young people.

We support the principles and functions outlined in the national charter but would suggest adding the following statement:

- Signpost and link young people to other organisations providing support and services to young people

We would also amend two of the functions to:

- Build the aspirations of young people to make the most of education and employment opportunities
- Work in partnership with other public, private and voluntary services for the interests of young people

Vision

The vision is strong; however we believe there is merit in the development of local area youth boards similar to the best Connexions Partnership Boards which brought together all agencies working with young people. This approach would help facilitate and promote information sharing, joint working and a partnership approach to problem solving.

Service delivery

The key age focus for the statutory youth service should be 11-18 years. That said, additional work should take place as and when required with primary school children and 18-24 year olds. It should primarily be a universal service but recognise that in the short and medium term resources will need to be devoted to key challenges such as knife crime, combatting extremism, loneliness and mental health support. Other agencies delivering services to young people need to be recognised, valued and included in a 'local youth offer'. NCS is currently a major part of the youth offer and should be a major contribution to the statutory youth offer for 15-17 year olds. A statutory youth service would provide good support to disadvantaged groups to access mainstream programmes such as NCS.

Youth voice

We need to rebuild and re-introduce many of the forums for young people to express their views – e.g. youth councils and youth parliament. It will also be helpful to require all organisations delivering services to young people to have in place youth advisory boards made up of young people who use the services on offer. NCS, for example, has a platform of 19 regional youth boards which sit alongside youth councils.

Workforce

There is merit in introducing a statutory national register for youth workers. This could be along the lines of the register managed by the Career Development Institute for the careers sector which provides a database of qualified careers staff and logs their continuous professional development. The part time and temporary nature of many youth work positions will provide a challenge for workforce development. Many new entrants to the profession enter via summer contract on programmes such as NCS or start as volunteers. Thought needs to be given on how to capitalise on this.

Careers England supports the concept of a legally protected title for youth workers providing the protection can be extended to other professionals; e.g. careers advisers. On the question of the joint negotiating committee, we would be cautious about national arrangements at a time when power is being devolved locally via elected mayors. If a national steer was required, it could be in the form of a national advisory body which makes recommendations.

Evaluation

The main ways to evidence impact is via inspection, measurement and feedback from users. The user voice (gathered independently) is a powerful way for customers to comment on the

quality of service they receive. In terms of measurable outcomes we would suggest the following is included:

- Engagement in post-16 education and / or employment
- Reduction in youth crime reported
- Participation in personal and social development activities

For further information or comment please contact:

Steve Stewart OBE

Executive Director

Careers England Ltd

Steve.stewart@careersengland.org.uk