



PRESS NOTICE

1.3.2011

“Urgent and important matters to address on the future of careers advice and guidance:

THE EDUCATION BILL and the ALL-AGE CAREERS SERVICE”

[Please see notes to Editors below re: the provisions of the Bill in more detail]

“The time has come for Ministers to act in order to make the proposed new scenario better – for the benefit of all of England’s young people and for all of the other potential users of the new all-age careers service (aaCS)”

So says Careers England as today it sets out an urgent and important ACTION PLAN for the Coalition Government.

“There are both urgent, short term, matters that we call upon Ministers to address – as well as fundamental principles of major importance for the longer term future of the economic and social health of the country hence we set out four major issues in our ACTION PLAN for Ministers to consider today”:

1. Ministers need most urgently to remind Local Authorities that their current statutory duty to provide universal careers advice and guidance for young people remains in place today, and does so until such time as the new legislation is not only enacted but implemented. *“Failure to do this would amount to condoning those LAs who have been cutting statutory services and are closest to failing in their duties.”*
2. Ministers also need before Easter to write to all state-funded Secondary Heads and Chairs of Governors about current arrangements, transition plans and what the newly proposed arrangements will look like. This should explain the proposed timetable for change and (once careers education becomes no longer statutory) stress that all Schools will remain expected to prepare young people for transitions at 16+ and through the 16-19 phase. *“Particular attention must be paid to assisting all young people to enhance their employability skills and career management life-skills.”*
3. Ministers need urgently to involve their aaCS Advisory Group in meaningful, open and transparent discussions on: the transition to the aaCS; the design and commissioning of the aaCS; budgets; quality assurance (including mandatory quality standards for organisations



procured to provide the aaCS); and on professional standards of competence for the specialist careers advisers they rightly seek to form the core workforce of the aaCS.

“Consultations of substance have not begun on these issues with the Advisory Group and it is misleading to suggest otherwise in Written Answers to PQs.”

4. Ministers need to be persuaded to make changes to strengthen the Education Bill (current Clauses 26 & 27) either by amendments to the Bill, or at a minimum through Parliamentary Assurances during the passage of the Bill. Top priorities, we argue, are:
 - a. The Bill proposes a new duty on Schools to secure independent careers guidance, which must include the whole 14-19 cohort (transitions after 16, as much as pre-16, are increasingly complex), and must cover all options/routes/providers of learning and work.
 - b. All Schools (and parents, young people and their future employers) must be assured that every ‘approved’ provider of the newly secured careers guidance will meet the same robust national quality standards required of the aaCS providers, and that all specialist careers advisers delivering such services to any School in England meet the professional standards of competence required of the aaCS workforce.
 - c. All providers of this newly secured careers guidance must be required to contribute to the universal client record management system (CCIS) which LAs and the new aaCS will together (as yet undefined how) need to maintain across the age range.
- “Quality and professionalism must be assured everywhere in England and for every single young person – second rate will not do”.*

ENDS

FURTHER INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Careers England is the Trade Association for employers in the careers advice and guidance industry in England. It has offered a supportive to the proposal to establish an all age Careers Service (aaCS), but increasingly the lack of details on transition from the current arrangements, on future budgets et al is leading to serious frustration and widespread concerns. The concerns of Careers England are shared by colleagues across the careers sector, at strategic and operational levels.
2. The ACTION PLAN proposed above by Careers England is in part in response to the Education Bill published on 26 January 2011 which includes in current Clauses 26 (Education and training support services in England) and 27 (Career guidance in schools in England) two major changes in relation to the provision of careers services:
 - **First**, it includes a new statutory duty for schools to ‘secure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance’ between the ages of 14 and 16. Points to note include:
 - The duty applies to all maintained schools and pupil referral units. It does not apply to academies, but DfE officials have indicated that Ministers will expect the duty to be extended to academies through their Funding Agreements with DfE.
 - It is unclear why, in the light of the planned extension of the age of participation in learning to 18 from 2015, the duty does not also apply to the 16-18 age-group.
 - ‘Independent’ is defined as being provided by persons other than those employed at the school. The argument for this in principle is to assure impartiality.
 - **Second**, the Bill repeals the current statutory duty on schools in England to provide pupils with programmes of careers education. Points to note include:
 - The duty to provide careers education will remain in place in Wales.
 - The current position in England is that schools are required to teach careers education but free to determine its content. This is also the case with religious education and sex education – where a statutory duty is to remain in place.
 - There is a risk that the repeal will be perceived by schools as indicating that careers education is viewed by the Government as unimportant. If Ministers do not wish this to be the case, what steps is the Government planning to take to avoid this risk?
3. There are also other provisions linked to these major changes. In particular, the Bill removes the statutory duty for schools and colleges to provide careers advisers with access to pupils or students and with facilities on their premises. It appears that this is presumably linked to the Bill’s proposal that schools will ‘secure’ such services rather than providing ‘access’ to them. Ministers have indicated that they would expect the relevant arrangements to be agreed in the negotiations between the school and its external provider.



4. Finally, the Bill includes provision regarding data on pupils, designed to make it possible to generate data on pupil destinations after they leave school (or college). The Government has declared its intention to publish such information, as a means of encouraging schools to deliver good outcomes for pupils.
5. The Bill makes no proposals concerning the aaCS. Ministers consider they have sufficient powers already to establish this. But there are major concerns today that the very announcement of an aaCS being established from April 2012 has triggered savage cuts in current Connexions Services (which incorporate the careers service for young people in England currently). And Ministers appear to be standing by as Local Authorities make these cuts. They have also failed thus far to issue guidance and explanations to schools about the proposed changes. Nor are they any further forward than headline views on what the aaCS will look like in any substance.
6. Hence Careers England has issued this public statement calling upon Ministers to act.