

Careers England position paper Apprenticeships

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

www.careersengland.org.uk/

Executive Summary

Careers England strongly supports the growth in quality and quantity of apprenticeships. We believe apprenticeships are a major contributor to economic growth and increased productivity for our nation and improved social mobility of individuals.

We welcome the improvement in quality but believe more is needed if apprenticeships are to have the strong reputation they deserve.

There are concerns about the present careers system provides to young people. More is needed to ensure that:

- Every young person has access to impartial, independent CEIAG
- Teachers (particularly those with a careers leadership role) are supported and well trained on post-16 options
- Apprenticeships are recognised as a positive post-16 destination.

Introduction

For the Government's Industrial Strategy to be successful, it is vital that we continue to invest in education and training, and drive forward improvements in quality. But raising standards alone isn't sufficient; we also need to ensure there is a good fit between the training and qualifications that young people and adults undertake and the skills required in the labour market in order to reduce the significant skills gap that exists in our economy. That's why young people should have access to high quality CEIAG, as well as increased contact with the world of work. Furthermore, if we want to tackle the social mobility challenge, and enable everyone to have successful and fulfilling lives, we need to make sure we put in place the best possible careers support for young people and adults.

The growth in apprenticeship opportunities will be a major contributor to improved productivity and economic development. Careers England supports the expansion of *high quality* apprenticeships. But we feel strongly that:

- Particularly with the introduction of the Levy, there needs to remain a strong focus on ensuring quality – not only of individual apprenticeships but of the whole apprenticeship system (sufficient opportunities at higher levels and for new entrants to the labour market).
- All young people, and their parents, need to understand and be aware of apprenticeship opportunities so that they can act as an engine of social mobility.

To make the most of the positive impact apprenticeships can have, we need to address the fundamental weaknesses in the current system of CEIAG.

Rebuilding our careers system

Careers England welcomes the announcement in January made by the Apprenticeship and Skills Minister, Robert Halfon MP, of a new careers strategy to be launched later in 2017. There is now strong consensus that the eight Gatsby benchmarks are the correct direction of travel in terms of careers support.

We also welcome the Minister's comments in his speech at the Westminster Academy on 30th January, where he highlighted the need to:

- Improve the prestige of careers support
- Expand the quantity and quality of careers provision
- Meet the needs of a skills economy
- Support the most disadvantaged and improve job security.

For the new careers strategy to be successful, deliver the eight Gatsby benchmarks and achieve the aims detailed above by the Minister, we believe it should require:

- All schools to achieve a national quality award which is validated by the Quality in Careers Standard (QiCS)
- All careers guidance providers to achieve the matrix standard
- All careers advisers working with young people to be qualified to Level 6 as specified by the Career Development Institute (CDI).

In addition, particularly relating to apprenticeships, there should be a strong focus on apprenticeship starts by young people in the new school destination data and a greater focus on this by Ofsted as part of its inspection regime. These four simple measures will have a huge impact on our careers system and the delivery of apprenticeships, to ensure the following:

- All schools will work towards the Gatsby benchmarks and have a strong, sufficiently resourced careers programme
- Young people and their parents will have an increased awareness of the value of apprenticeships, which will be recognised as a worthy and reputable post-16 option
- Professional careers advisers will all be trained to have a strong understanding of apprenticeships, resulting in young people receiving impartial, independent careers advice and guidance.

The future

Careers England looks forward to working with Government, policy influencers and partners to help shape the new careers strategy in relation to apprenticeships so that it truly rebuilds our careers system.