

## Careers Provision in the Education Bill: key outstanding issues

19th September 2011

### 1. Background

- 1.1. The Education Bill is now entering its final stages: the Government's plan is for it to receive the Royal Assent in November 2011. It is clear that the main elements of Government policies in relation to careers provision are unlikely to change. Within this framework, however, the members of the Strategic Forum urge that attention be paid to four key outstanding issues, in order to maximise the potential benefits of these policies and minimise their risks.

### 2. Guidance to schools

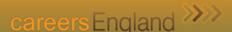
- 2.1. First, clearer specification is needed of the nature of the careers services young people should receive. Ministers have promised 'some short, focused guidance to be issued to schools to support them in fulfilling their new duty'. This guidance needs to specify that provision should include:
  - Access for all young people (not just those identified as potentially NEET) to face-to-face career guidance from a qualified career professional.
  - Underpinned by a high-quality careers education programme within the school or college.

### 3. Quality assurance needed

- 3.1. Second, closer attention is needed on how the quality of career guidance provision for young people is to be assured. In particular:
  - In order to ensure high-quality and impartial career guidance, it must be delivered by professionally qualified career professionals who subscribe to the required professional standards of a recognised professional body and are registered on a national register of qualified and competent practitioners.
  - The providers of career guidance services to young people must be required to meet the same quality standards as those required of the National Careers Service.
  - The promised Ofsted thematic review of careers guidance should cover provision in all sectors as a key means of evaluating the impact of these policies. For schools, it should include (a) how they are meeting, or planning to meet, their statutory duty to enable pupils to have access to independent impartial career guidance, and also (b) the quality of their own careers education provision, underpinning whatever external career guidance they commission.
- 3.2. This needs to be linked to a recognition that the proposed destinations measure, while useful for other purposes, will in no way provide an adequate measure of the quality of careers provision, since it will give no indication of the appropriateness of destinations in relation to individuals' needs and potential.

### 4. Breaches of the new statutory duty

- 4.1. Third, there needs to be clearer specification of how breaches in the provision of schools' new statutory duty will be dealt with, in the interests of young people and the reduction of competitive tension between schools, colleges and employers. To whom, for example, will an FE or tertiary college appeal when faced with obstruction from an 11-18 school or academy in terms of access for giving pupils information about post-16 options or deliberate misinformation about college provision?



## 5. Extending NCS remit to NEET young people

- 5.1. Fourth, the remit and funding of the National Careers Service (NCS) should be extended to cover the provision of tracking face-to-face career guidance and transition support to young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Such provision is a major potential weakness in the proposed arrangements (this is of particular concern in the light of the recent youth riots). It should include working in close partnerships with Jobcentre Plus and Local Authorities on local preventive strategies.
- 5.2. Tracking is not simply a data-collection exercise: where tracking and career guidance are undertaken by the same organisation, contact through tracking can be linked to an offer of help and support, ensuring that young people are able to access their entitlement. Delivering in such a way is critical to achieving the raising of the participation age.

“The government should act urgently to guarantee face-to-face careers advice for all young people in schools”.

Recommendation to the Coalition Government from Simon Hughes, the Government Advocate for Access to Education in his report to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, July 2011



Convened under the auspices of the CIHE, the UK Careers Sector Strategic Forum is a strategic leadership network of careers sector stakeholders. It aims to formulate a national strategic framework for careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) to address the issues of access, transparency, quality, equality, and continuity, and to identify areas where UK-wide co-ordination would be helpful.

Chair: Sir Martin Harris

Convening Committee: Keith Herrmann (Convenor), Ian Borkett (TUC), Vivienne Brown (Scotland), Margaret Dane (AGCAS), Paul Holme (British Chambers Manchester), Dr Deirdre Hughes (Careers Profession Alliance), Joyce M’Caw (Wales), Prof. Tony Watts

Tel: 079 00 697 544

Email: kherrmann@me.com