



RESPONDING TO THE DfE TASK FORCE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

We offer this response to Dame Ruth Silver (Chair of the Task Force on the future of the careers profession) and to the Department for Education (December 2010)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Board of Careers England received the report and the recommendations of the Task Force at its meeting in September. It resolved to offer a formal response to the recommendations through consultation with the CE membership and with detailed reviews of the 14 recommendations by the four Task Groups of CE (13-19, Adults, Quality and Workforce Issues).

1.2 Each Task Group met in October/November and determined a series of proposed responses, which were presented in detail to the CE Mini-Conference held at Bromley on 14th December.

1.3 Responses following those presentations and comments at the Conference were reported to the Board on 15th December. As a result of which this paper was authorised for preparation and presentation to Dame Ruth Silver and to the Department.

1.4 The 14 recommendations of the Task Force are shown in the Appendix to this paper.

1.5 Our responses include offers by Careers England to play a part in actions to lead to the implementation of the recommendations. These offers are made in the knowledge that, whilst Ministers accept the recommendations, the Coalition Government expects the careers sector to respond to the challenges raised by these recommendations.

2. The Role of Careers England

2.1 As the voice of leading employers in the careers sector, Careers England brings this distinctive perspective to the table in all responses to this report.



2.2 Whilst the Task Force started its work focussing upon service provision and the profession in respect of young people, by the time its report was completed there had been a change of Government and it was clear that the report would need to stand the test of sitting in the "era of an all-age careers service". Some of the Task Force recommendations only, however, apply to service provision in the school sector (such as recommendations 1 and 10); this needs to be borne in mind as the settings for service support for adults are very different.

2.3 Following the announcement by Skills Minister, John Hayes, of the Coalition Government's plan to begin to introduce a new all age Careers Service for England from September 2011, with full roll-out from April 2012, we have formally welcomed these plans.

2.4 Hence, the starting point for us is that we fully support the Coalition Government's proposals to introduce an all-age Careers Service in England. Within this new service, and the era of the all-age Service, there are issues which need to be addressed in addition to the 14 recommendations of the Task Force. These provide the context for our responses.

2.4 On 23rd November, 2010, Allister McGowan, Chairman of the Careers England Board of Directors, said:

"Not only do we welcome this news, but we have already begun offering our informed advice to the Minister and his officials as the shape and details of the new Service are developed and finalised.

The benefits of an all age service will include greater opportunity to secure transition support for older teenagers as well as offering comprehensive support to adults seeking career path moves. As a key employer voice, we look forward to working closely with colleagues in the broader careers service sector across England as well as with professional bodies which represent careers professionals.

The Minister's aspiration for the new service, including that its professionalism will win higher public recognition for the economic and social value of effective and impartial careers advice and guidance, demands that national quality standards must determine which organisations should be approved by Ministers to play a part in the new service. Enhanced requirements for the training and professional development of the new generation of careers advisers working in the new service will also be essential.

Resourcing the new Service in the current economic climate will be no simple matter. We believe that three current Departments of government will have significant interest in the new service: Education, Business Innovation & Skills



and Work and Pensions. Careers England members have strong links with all three, and based upon our experiences we are offering advice now on how resources might be secured which bring economies of scale and better value for the public purse from every pound which may become available for the new service.

We know that investment in the new service will bring economic benefits for the country, for employers, and enhanced social mobility for people across all age groups.”

3. The Response of Careers England

- 3.1 Our members are ready to support the implementation of the 14 recommendations of the Task Force in the context of the era of the proposed all-age Careers Service ('the new era'). Above all we believe that quality of future provision must meet robust national standards. Consistency of service accessibility must be secured. Higher quality standards and levels of qualification for professional staff will have cost implications. Starting revenues for the new service in 2011-12 and from April 2012 will be crucial.
- 3.2 We support the 'Partnership Model' (recommendation 1). In the new era we believe that careers education in schools must prepare all young people with employability and career transition skills. That is the role for schools and careers educators. Independent and impartial careers advice and guidance is the role of careers advisers, external to the school, bringing specialist expertise into schools, informed by the labour market.
- 3.3 Hence we offer to facilitate the establishment of the overarching national kite mark to validate the 18 different CEIAG quality awards for education (recommendation 10). Should the Department wish us to do so, we will initiate this in the New Year.
- 3.4 We also offer to assist Government with all steps being taken to establish a relevant, nationally approved quality standard for all providers of career guidance to young people in schools, colleges, work-based learning and in the community (recommendation 11). We argue that meeting such a standard must be a mandatory requirement for all providers which schools "secure" in the new era to provide careers advice and guidance for their students.
- 3.5 We welcome the moves already well under way to create a stronger and more unified profession. Careers England will readily respond to invitations to play our part in the work being led by the new Careers Profession Alliance (CPA) as set out in recommendations 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8.



- 3.6 As employers, our Full Members in particular, offer to work with the CPA and others in the sector to support the work-based route into the careers profession (recommendation 5). We also recognise our responsibilities as employers recruiting, training and developing our staff within the careers workforce, to provide support and opportunities for training and CPD which enhance their specialist knowledge and skills so that they are enabled to uphold the required professional standards in the new era (recommendations 7 and 9).
- 3.7 We have already produced a comprehensive review of the evidence that effective careers services can have on social mobility¹. In the light of that already existing evidence, we will actively support recommendation 12 in seeking to ensure that further evidence of the positive impact that effective careers advice and guidance, built upon solid foundations provided through careers education, can have upon the social mobility, achievement and economic well-being of all young people.
- 3.8 We will work with Government and the sector to ensure that impact measures in the new era secure greater success for all young people and for adults. Progression and enhanced participation measures will need to be developed and required as schools take on new duties for “securing” careers advice and guidance as we understand will be proposed in the forthcoming Education Bill in early 2011.
- 3.9 Partnerships will be essential between schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and all providers of career guidance within and outside the all-age Careers Service. Evidence of good practice will need to be harvested and promulgated across the country.
- 3.10 We offer to assist Ofsted to implement and review the outcomes of the proposed thematic survey (recommendation 13), and through our involvement directly on the continuing Task Force reviews of progress we will support the reporting of achievements in implementing these recommendations – alongside any barriers identified and suggested remedial action – to Government.

4. Conclusion and next steps

- 4.1 We stress that we set our response in the context of the new era.
- 4.2 Our role as the leading employer voice in the sector is to bring that perspective to the table, to support others (especially, but not exclusively, in

¹ Careers England (August 2010): “Social mobility of young people and adults in England: the contributions and impact of high quality careers services” (Dr. Deirdre Hughes).



this context the CPA), and to offer – where it would be beneficial- to facilitate or to take a lead in aspects of actions.

- 4.3 We will always work to secure the highest quality of provision for all young people and for adults in respect of careers advice and guidance. Wherever the public purse pays for careers support, the public has the right to be assured that the provider of that support (the professional involved and his/her employer) meets and upholds the highest national professional and organisational standards.
- 4.4 In addition to sending this paper to Dame Ruth Silver and to the Department, therefore, we are making this more widely available to interested parties as a public document.
- 4.5 We are ready to play our part in shaping the new all-age careers service, and establishing arrangements which will enhance social mobility, achievement and economic well-being for all young people and adults. Contact can be made with us via our website www.careersengland.org.uk

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APPENDIX

The Task Force recommendations in summary

Chapter 1: The careers profession in context

Careers Advisers and Careers Educators provide careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) programmes to young people in schools and colleges. They work in partnership, bringing together Careers Advisers' specialist expertise with Careers Educators' knowledge of the school context. Using this 'partnership model', they can provide a CEIAG programme that is impartial, contemporary and focused on the abilities and interests of each individual student.

Recommendation 1: The Task Force is persuaded of the importance of the partnership model, and recommends that Government should seek to maintain and strengthen this model as it develops its future vision for careers education and guidance.

Chapter 2: A stronger, more unified profession

Careers Advisers and Careers Educators are part of a wider community of practice which covers those who provide careers services to young people and adults, in a wide range of contexts and settings. This community of practice is only weakly professionalised. It does not have the essential characteristics of a strong and autonomous profession: the capability to speak with one voice, and a common set of professional standards and a code of ethics.



Recommendation 2: The Task Force welcomes the action recently taken by the main careers professional associations to establish an overarching group for the membership bodies, the Careers Profession Alliance, as a single authoritative voice, and recommends that Government should demonstrate its active support and encouragement for this process.

Recommendation 3: The Task Force recommends that the Careers Profession Alliance should develop common professional standards and a common code of ethics for careers professionals, and that all organisations represented in the Alliance should expect their members to adhere to these standards.

In order to assure a high quality careers service for young people and adults, the common professional standards should include a minimum entry-level qualification for careers professionals and a commitment to continuing professional development (CPD).

Recommendation 4: The Task Force recommends that members of the careers profession should be expected to achieve a minimum level 6 (QCF) qualification before starting to practise, that the Careers Profession Alliance, working principally with Careers England (and involving the broader base of employers of careers professionals), should support such transition arrangements as are necessary for those individuals currently practising below this level, and that consideration should be given to raising the minimum level to level 7 within five years.

Recommendation 5: In support of a more diverse workforce, the Task Force recognises the importance of the work-based route into the profession (leading to a level 6 qualification) and recommends the development of a single career progression framework which is capable of incorporating the concepts of 'Careers First' and 'Careers Last'.

Recommendation 6: The Task Force recommends that the organisations forming the Careers Profession Alliance should expect their members (whether individual members of the careers profession or employers of careers professionals) to demonstrate a commitment to CPD.

In addition to updating core knowledge and skills, continuing professional development also helps careers professionals to keep pace with the dynamic contexts in which they work, and to develop knowledge and skills in new areas of economic and political priority.

Recommendation 7: The Task Force recommends that initial training and CPD should include a focus on labour market information (LMI), information and communications technology (ICT), and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), all of which are crucial to all members of the careers profession in delivering high-quality career guidance; and that, through CPD, there should be opportunities for further development of 'specialisms', leading towards the concept of an Advanced Careers Practitioner.

Recommendation 8: The Task Force recommends that the organisations in the Careers Profession Alliance should consider requiring their members to self-declare the nature and amount of CPD they have undertaken each year, with a random sample being required to provide evidence to assure quality.

Chapter 3: The careers profession at work with young people



Careers Advisers and Careers Educators are the foremost providers of CEIAG to young people. As with all careers professionals, Careers Advisers and Careers Educators should be trusted to recognise the importance of careers professionalism to their own skills and competencies.

Recommendation 9: The Task Force recommends that both Careers Advisers and Careers Educators, where they consider themselves to be careers professionals, must uphold the professional standards and meet other expectations of the careers profession.

Schools and colleges play a crucial role in supporting young people's CEIAG. There are a range of measures available to schools and colleges to help them assure students and their parents of high-quality CEIAG.

Recommendation 10: The Task Force recommends that an overarching national kite mark should be established to validate the different CEIAG quality awards for schools, colleges and work-based learning providers.

Recommendation 11: The Task Force recommends that any organisation that is making arrangements for the provision of career guidance to young people should ensure that the provider meets a relevant, nationally approved quality standard, and that Government should support the establishment of such a standard.

Examples of good CEIAG do exist, and schools, colleges and work-based learning providers need help to spread this good practice throughout the system.

Recommendation 12: The Task Force recommends that the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, the Training and Development Agency for Schools and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, working with Ofsted, the Careers Profession Alliance and Careers England (and involving the broader base of employers of careers professionals), should help schools, colleges and work-based learning providers to learn from and share examples of good practice.

Recommendation 13: The Task Force recommends that Ofsted should carry out a thematic review of CEIAG for young people, in a variety of contexts, to help identify excellent CEIAG provision and to establish a baseline for future development; and should carry out a further such review within three years to evaluate the progress that has been made.

Chapter 4: Taking responsibility

Our recommendations place much of the responsibility for change with the careers profession itself, but, in order to be fully effective, the recommendations need to be supported by all parts of the careers community, including schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and employers. Government can help to facilitate the process.

Recommendation 14: The Task Force recommends that Government should assure itself that the careers profession is rising to the challenge of implementing the Task Force's recommendations by commissioning reports on progress in March 2011 and March 2012.

careers England



promoting social mobility, achievement and economic well-being