

UK Careers Profession Alliance

'One Voice Making an Impact'

Briefing Note 2: November 2011

'A profession that inspires confidence in the public, dedicated to delivering high quality careers services that help individuals to achieve their full potential and support economic productivity while ensuring equality of opportunity for all.'

Raising professional standards and quality assurance in career development activities and services for young people and adults across the UK

This is the **second briefing paper** of the Careers Profession Alliance (CPA) designed to inform interested parties on key decisions and progress being made by the Executive Group, chaired by Ruth Spellman OBE.

- The remit of the Careers Profession Alliance is to bring together the **professional bodies from public, private, voluntary/community sectors who are engaged in career development activities and services across the UK** in order to create a strong careers profession comparable with other chartered professions, both in public standing and in the rigour of its supervision of members.
- Key recommendations of the Career Profession Task Force in England are being implemented and developed within the context of an **overarching professional standards framework** that includes a single code of ethics, a career progression framework to be customised within each of the four home nations and a UK-wide Register of Careers Professionals.
- Strong linkages to professional standards and qualifications are being made to key elements of nationally recognised, existing and evolving quality assurance frameworks including:
 - The **revised matrix Standard**, which is the recognised national standard for providers to ensure the effective delivery of high quality information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work.
 - **Local quality awards** for career development activities in schools, colleges and work-based learning providers.
 - The **Quality In Careers Standard (QICS)** recently developed by Careers England which will validate at a national level existing local quality awards.
- Earlier work undertaken by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and other allied Sector Skills Bodies is being further extended within the context of establishing a UK-wide **Register of Careers Professionals and Career Progression Framework**. Initial funding is provided by the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills in England up until April 2012 and plans are underway to secure further funding from other relevant sources to support the necessary ongoing work.

Making progress

The CPA held its recent meeting at the new UNISON headquarters in London. Each month the CPA produces a short briefing paper to update all interested parties on key decisions and progress made by the CPA Executive Group. There are ten key messages that emerged from the last meeting held on 7th November 2011.

1. Executive Group members reported formally to the Chair on final agreed outcomes from the formal consultations exercise with members of the Careers Professional Associations, including their Boards and Councils.
2. The CPA is uniting behind one model for a new professional body, in accordance with the wishes of the majority of members from five careers professional associations, namely ACEG, ACPI, ICG, NAEGA and NISCA.
3. The new professional body will have a new governance structure and articles, subject to due diligence procedures. An initial draft Governance paper has been produced for Board level consideration. Each of the Associations who have yet to specify in writing their formal position to the CPA Chair have agreed to do so, including any specific matters which must be considered as part of a transition plan and due diligence procedure. This will bring to an end the 'in principle' stage of working together moving towards forming a new entity with a clear remit.
4. Each association has formally committed to seeking agreement from their respective Boards for a 'transfer of power' to a new Transition Board to be established from 1st January 2012 onwards. This will, in effect, replace the existing CPA Executive Group. At the next meeting, on 12th December 2011 the CPA Executive will agree a transition plan for movement to this new structure, subject to agreement from their respective Boards.
5. The CPA will further develop professional body services for those working with clients of all-ages in the four home nations of the UK and further afield. The interests and needs of careers professionals working with clients in a wide variety of settings including public, private, voluntary/community sectors will be catered for. The Institute for Employability Practitioners, operating within the Professionalisation of the Welfare and Employability Reform (POWER) group, has accepted a formal invitation from the CPA Chair to foster close working links on areas of shared interest. Discussions are also underway with other relevant careers professional bodies.
6. The new careers professional body will have an overarching framework of professional standards including three pillars of (i) entry standards; (ii) CPD; and (iii) a code of ethics and procedures for dealing with complaints and discipline. Open membership will be based on the dual principles of inclusiveness and progression in terms of attracting the widest possible membership of career professionals and raising standards of delivery through the introduction of an online Career Progression Framework. Work is underway to build upon existing frameworks for a new CPA Register of Careers Professionals with entry requirements, assessment of prior learning (APEL) and accreditation routes being fully considered.
7. The CPA Executive Group is meeting with government officials from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in December 2011 to provide an update on the development work and to explore areas of common interest.

8. The CPA expects to be actively involved in formal consultations on (i) new Statutory Guidance for Schools in England; and (ii) the recently announced plan for a new National Careers Council in England, specifically in relation to professional standards and quality assurance requirements. The Chair intends to discuss this more fully with John Hayes, Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning and his departmental officials.
9. In the coming weeks, the CPA intends to further develop sustainable relationships with employers who share our commitment to quality and standards in career development. This will include individual employers, consortia and trade bodies from a wide spectrum of organisations, including schools, colleges and higher education institutions.
10. A draft 'Memorandum of Understanding' was presented by UNISON for consideration by the CPA.



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